

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher will focus on many aspects aforementioned:

- (1) Background of the Study, (2) Research Problem, (3) Objectives of Research,
- (4) Theoretical Framework, (5) Limitation of Research, (6) Significance of Research, (7) Definition of Key Term, (8) Organization of the Thesis

1.1 Background of Study

English, being extensively utilized, has become a necessity for nearly everyone globally. It becomes a problem to communicate with people from another country if one does not know the language. Language mastery can be seen from how much vocabulary it has. Vocabulary is the key to communicating and understanding what other people mean. By using vocabulary, people can communicate with each other, not only explicitly, but also implicitly. So, this is the reason why mastering vocabulary is necessary.

Zhihong Bai (2018) claimed that vocabulary is an important part of language and an essential component of language development. The biggest difficulty in learning a language was a lack of vocabulary. Students will master a language more effectively if they have a large vocabulary. Students still struggle with learning English due to a limited vocabulary.

According to Vossoughi (2009), vocabulary is one aspect of language that should be taught and learned. Furthermore, we think, express feelings, and convey ideas through vocabulary. One of the linguistic components of learning English is vocabulary. It is the media linked to four skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking.

Vocabulary mastery is the key to using a second language. The students need to know and understand the vocabulary when they read, listen, write, and speak in English. Limited vocabulary makes the students unable to use English in phrases, speak, or convey something in English. English is considered a second language in Indonesia. It is an extracurricular subject in elementary school but a compulsory one in high schools. English Proficiency Index (EPI)

shows that in 2022, Indonesia ranked 81st out of 111th countries in the world and 15th out of 24th countries in Asia. Indonesia's score was 469 and under 'low proficiency level'.

Vocabulary is immensely beneficial for anyone learning a new language or foreign language. However, the teachers must be creative and make interesting teaching-learning activities to teach vocabulary so the students do not feel bored and interested in the vocabulary. Of course, learning vocabulary is very important, but we also cannot ignore other linguistic elements such as grammar and pronunciation. Although students master vocabulary, it does not mean they can use English perfectly. Mastering vocabulary does not ensure that students can use English correctly with grammar and good pronunciation.

From the researcher's experience at the junior high school level, the researcher and her friends felt that they have difficulties learning vocabulary. Therefore, they have difficulties in speaking and communicating with others. They also have difficulties in understanding English texts. In teaching learning activities especially in English lesson, they always combine Indonesian and English when speaking to their teacher and friends.

Another example, when doing listening exercises, not all students know what they heard in the listening section. Some students may be repeating what they heard and wonder what the speaker said. It can happen because of the lack of vocabulary and the audio is too fast and too hard to understand. Nonetheless, the researcher discovered certain issues with students' mastery of English.

Firstly, the lack of vocabulary. Like makeup, vocabulary is a base or foundation to mastery a language. Without knowing vocabulary, people cannot speak easily. Because of the lack of vocabulary, the conversation will be boring or mostly silent when people try to communicate.

Secondly, students cannot communicate and express their idea. When the learning activities are conducted, some teachers will ask the students some questions. Sometimes, the students are quiet because they do not know what to say or what is the answer to the teacher's question. It will be difficult for students if they cannot express their ideas.

Considering the big role of vocabulary in learning English, the researcher is interested in studying vocabulary difficulties in seventh grade students at SMPK Santa Agnes Surabaya

1.2 Research Problem

In accordance with the background, the following are research questions:

- a. What are the difficulties faced by the seventh-grade students at SMPK Santa Agnes Surabaya in learning English vocabulary?
- b. What factors contribute to the seventh-grade students' difficulty with vocabulary mastery at SMPK Santa Agnes Surabaya?

1.3 Objective of Research

The objective of the study in this research is to understand the challenges and contributing elements that lead to students' struggles with vocabulary mastery in the seventh grade at SMPK Santa Agnes Surabaya.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study examines students' issues with vocabulary mastery especially in vocabulary. According to Henry and Pongrantz (2006, p. 246) as cited in Syarifudin (2014), mastering a language requires comprehending the vocabulary both orally and written. The most critical aspect of learning language skills easier is vocabulary knowledge. One of the language elements that must be acquired is vocabulary. Students who learn vocabulary can quickly improve their language skills such as speaking, listening, writing, and reading. But having a large vocabulary is not always easy. Indeed, students still have difficulties in mastering vocabulary. The students' difficulties in mastering vocabulary can be caused by some problem.

In conducting this research, the chosen research methodology is a case study. A case study refers to an in-depth analysis of a particular individual, group, event, or situation.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Research

The primary limitation of this research lies in its specific focus on depicting the encounters of 7B students at SMPK Santa Agnes Surabaya. The study explores their views on challenges, the factors that contribute them, and their approaches that they use to overcome challenges in learning vocabulary.

1.6 Significance of Research

The research findings are likely to contribute to the following sides:

- For teachers

This study is expected to expand teachers' understanding in teaching vocabulary. By comprehending the difficulties students encounter and the factors that contribute to them, educators can improve the quality of teaching-learning experiences.

- For other researchers,

This research is anticipated to serve as a valuable reference for future researchers working on similar topics.

1.7 Definition of Key Term

There are several keywords that need to be defined further in so that readers are able to understand the idea definitions in this study; these terms are as follows.

Vocabulary

According to Nunan (1991) as cited in Syarifudin (2014) claims that a person's vocabulary consists of the words they are familiar with.

Vocabulary mastery

Vocabulary mastery refers to the comprehensive understanding or knowledge of the meanings of words in a language Vocabulary mastery refers to the comprehensive understanding or knowledge of the meanings of words in a language. (Wahyudi, 2016)

Student's Difficulty

According to Hornby (2001) as cited in Kusuma (2022) states that a difficulty occurs when a person finds something challenging to comprehend or understand.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

The following are the contents of this thesis, comprising five chapters:

Chapter I is the introduction of the study. It is divided into eight parts, namely background of study, research problem, objective of the study, theoretical framework, scope and limitation of the study, significance of the study, definition of key term, and organization of the thesis. Chapter II is the review of related literature. It consists of the nature of vocabulary, student's difficulties of vocabulary mastery, and previous related studies. Chapter III is the research methodology. It consists of the data, which includes general information on study design, data and source of data, location and participants for research, the instruments, data collecting procedure, data analysis technique. Chapter IV consists of the data presentation, data analysis, findings, and discussion, and Chapter V presents the conclusion and suggestions.