

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### A. Research Background

English is an international language that is the most widespread medium of international communication. In other words, English is a crucial language in the world and has been used by almost all countries around the world. According to Lucantoni, English is the world's language, with more than 60 countries where English now the dominant or official language. It is not only an international language but also plays an important role in many dimensions, such as education, business, politics, society, etc.<sup>1</sup> Indonesian government has determined English as a foreign language to be learned by the students from elementary school as a local content up to the university level. In learning English, there are four skills that must be mastered such as listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Besides that, language elements such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling also support the development of four skills.

Vocabulary is one of the language elements in learning English. Before students learn about English skills, they should learn about vocabulary as a first step. It is used to connect the four language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Furthermore, Vocabulary is the most important component of language. People who are rich in vocabulary, will be successful in four language skills above. On the other hand, Rivers in Nunan argues that adequate mastery of vocabulary is essential for the successful use of a second language because without an extensive vocabulary, we will be unable to use the structures and functions we may have learned for comprehensive communication.<sup>2</sup> Among other components, vocabulary is the most significant one, as Wilkins in Thornbury states that "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed". It means that even someone has good grammar, it will be useless if they do not know many vocabularies.<sup>3</sup> So, the success of students in learning a language is greatly influence by the number of words they can master. The

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<sup>1</sup> P. Lucantoni., *Teaching and Assessing Skills in English as a Second Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> David Nunan., *Language Teaching Methodology* (New York: Prentice Hall International, 1991), 117.

<sup>3</sup> Scoot Thornbury., *How to Teach Vocabulary* (London: Longman, 2002), 13.

students who have more vocabulary will be greater in expressing their abilities.

In fact, many students have graduated from the school with minimum ability in using English. One of the factors is the lack of vocabulary. Nurweni and Read manage the size of vocabulary in Indonesia. A total of 324 freshmen completed the Nation's Vocabulary levels Test. The results revealed that that their subjects had vocabulary size of 1.226 common words and 240 general academic words.<sup>4</sup> This fact is disappointing because vocabulary has been considered as one of the most important parts in second or foreign language acquisition. Indonesian students' poor vocabulary knowledge is a serious concern, and their quest for finding suitable way to improve vocabulary knowledge is getting more intense.

Based on the research background above, the researcher is interested in conducting research to analyze students' problems in learning vocabulary.

## **B. Research Focus and Scope**

The research focuses on the issues to be studied. This research is about analyzing students' problems in mastering vocabulary in an Islamic private school in Kudus. The reason for choosing seventh grade students is that they are still having lower vocabulary mastery.

## **C. Research Problems**

Based on the background of the study, the problems are formulated as follows:

1. What are the students' problems in mastering vocabulary in an Islamic private school in Kudus?
2. How do students overcome problems in vocabulary mastery in an Islamic private school in Kudus?

## **D. Research Objectives**

Based on the formulation of the research problems above, the research objectives are as follows:

1. To find out the students' problems in mastering vocabulary in an Islamic private school in Kudus.
2. To find out how students overcome problems related to vocabulary mastery in an Islamic private school in Kudus.

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<sup>4</sup> Nurweni, A., and Read, J., The English Vocabulary Knowledge of Indonesian University Students, *English for Specific Purposes* Vol. 18 No. 2 1999., 167

## E. Research Significances

This research is expected to provide benefits both theoretically and practically. This writing is expected to provide the following benefits:

### 1. Theoretical benefits.

The theoretical benefits of this research are to develop insight into educational sciences related to the analysis of students' problems in mastering vocabulary.

### 2. Practical benefits

#### a. For School

As input to students, teachers, principals, and other staff to improve the quality of education by learning in accordance with the subject.

#### b. For Teacher

To provide various learning benefits in increasing students' participation in the teaching and learning process.

#### c. For Student

To further improve student's learning competence by improving learning and the quality of learning process.

#### d. For Researchers

As the application of knowledge that received in lectures related to English. As a prospective teacher, learn to apply appropriate learning to deliver the teaching materials in accordance with the conditions desired by students in learning process.

## F. Definition of Key Terms

In this research, some terms apply. Therefore, to avoid misunderstanding on the terms used, the following terms are necessarily defined as follows:

### 1. Analysis

According to Audi, analysis is describing a concept or facts related to linguistics and explain in a simple way.<sup>5</sup> In this research, the term analysis refers to research design to analyze students' problems in mastering vocabulary in an Islamic private school in Kudus.

### 2. Students' Problems

Problems are generally thought of a task's situations, or people that are difficult to handle or control because of their

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Audi, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy Second Edition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 25.

complexity and in transparency. In everyday language, a problem is a question posed for a solution. The problems faced by students in an Islamic private school in Kudus in terms of vocabulary mastery.

### 3. Vocabulary Mastery

According to Hatch and Brown, the term vocabulary refers to a list, or collection of words for a particular language or a list of words used by individual speakers of that language.<sup>6</sup> It can be concluded that vocabulary is the total of number of words, list or groups of words in a particular language that a person knows or uses.

According to Porter, mastery is learning or understanding something completely and having no difficulty in using it.<sup>7</sup> It concluded that mastery means competence to understand and apply something learned.

It can be said that vocabulary mastery is a complete skill to understand the stock of words and their meanings of a particular language. In this research, vocabulary mastery comprehends the meaning of vocabulary, pronounce it, spell it, and know how to use it structurally and grammatically.

## G. Organization of Thesis

The systematic writing is as follows:

### 1. Beginnings

At the beginnings, it consists of cover/title page.

### 2. Contents

The main part contains the main issues in three chapters, namely:

CHAPTER I (Introduction) which consists of research background, research focus and scope, research problems, research objectives, research significances, definition of key terms, and organization of thesis.

CHAPTER II (Review of Related Literature) which consists of theoretical description, theoretical framework, and review of previous study.

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<sup>6</sup> Hatch, E., and Brown. S., *Vocabulary, Semantics, and Language Education* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Michael E. Porter, Strategy and the Internet, *Harvard Business Review* Vol. 79 No. 2 2001, 953.

- CHAPTER III (Research Methodology) which consists of research method, research setting, research participants/subjects, instruments and data collection technique, research data validity, data analysis technique, and research ethical considerations.
- CHAPTER IV (Research Findings and Discussion) which consists of research findings and discussion.
- CHAPTER V (Conclusions and Recommendations).
3. Closings  
At the end consist of references.

