

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

English is an international language that plays a crucial role in the current era of globalization, especially in the fields of trade, education, business, and tourism. In Indonesia, English is taught from elementary school to senior high school. In junior high school, English teaching is generally focused on the introduction of this foreign language. However, many students face difficulties in learning English, especially in vocabulary acquisition (Amalia, 2023). This happens because students have to learn a language that is very different from their daily spoken language.

In the process of learning English, there are elements of language skills and language functions that need to be mastered, including vocabulary acquisition. In the realm of language knowledge, vocabulary plays a crucial role in the learning process of students. The growth of students' vocabulary is a key factor in their language development. Mastering vocabulary involves more than just memorizing words; it also entails understanding meanings in specific contexts, often seen as a crucial tool in second language learning. Nation (2001) further describes there enables Language use and, conversely relationship between vocabulary use as complementary: knowledge of vocabulary Language use leads to an increase in vocabulary knowledge. When students struggle to master and enhance their vocabulary, it can pose a barrier to their understanding of the language,

particularly in speaking, listening, and reading skills (Harini *et al.*, 2024). To improve these abilities, mastering vocabulary becomes crucial for them.

Vocabulary is an essential component in foreign language learning, as the meaning of words often becomes the main focus both in textbooks and in classroom activities. Hornby (1995:1331) explains that vocabulary is the total number of words in a language, all the words known to a person or used in a particular book and subject, list of words with their meanings. According to Alqahtani (2015), mastering vocabulary is crucial in supporting communication skills, both orally and in writing. Achmad (2013) explains that with an increase in vocabulary, students can more easily communicate in English, become more confident, and participate more actively in class.

Therefore, vocabulary mastery plays an important role in the development of other language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. People can speak, write, read, and listen as much as they want when they have a greater command of vocabulary. Thornbury (2002:13) believes that without grammar, very little can be conveyed, and without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed. This implies that if one does not have a large vocabulary, having good grammar is meaningless.

However, despite its importance, improving vocabulary mastery is not an easy task. Teachers need to use creative and effective techniques to help students master vocabulary more easily and enjoyably (Habib, 2024). The researcher recognizes that while vocabulary teaching is crucial, other components such as teaching grammar and phonology must also be given attention.

Skytech (2020) as cited in Azmi (2023) mentions that there are several problems in vocabulary teaching, including students' difficulties in understanding words being taught because the vocabulary used is often too difficult. As a result, students often get confused when translating words in English, and their outcomes sometimes do not reflect the intended meaning. Furthermore, many students make mistakes in pronouncing English vocabulary, which causes them to become passive learners. Another issue is that students are reluctant to use newly learned vocabulary in conversations because many words have similar pronunciations but different meanings.

Vocabulary knowledge is the center of teaching and learning English because without vocabulary students cannot understand and cannot express their idea using English. According to Richards and Renandya (2002, p. 255), Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how learners listen, speak, read and write well. In listening, the students listen words, in speaking, they speak words, in reading, they read words, and in writing, they use words. Without sufficient vocabulary, people cannot communicate and express their feeling both in the form of spoken and written effectively (Purba *et al.*, 2024). The more people master vocabulary the more they can speak, write, read and listen as they want.

However, expanding vocabulary is not an easy task. Teachers need to choose the right method to motivate students so they can develop their vocabulary. This aligns with the opinion of Larsen and Freeman (2002), who state that for students to use the target language communicatively, teachers must have

the right methods, as well as provide appropriate media, teaching techniques, and strategies.

The purpose of teaching techniques is to develop the teaching and learning in a classroom and involve the students into the learning (Nur, 2014). She also adds that techniques in teaching and learning are beneficial either for teachers or students. For teachers, the use of techniques is in order to teachers become easier and better in teaching and learning process. Teachers can give the instruction to the students in the class so that the lesson can be captured, understood and used by the students well. Then, it is to facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes in the teaching and learning process. While for the students, the using of techniques get the students to gain motivation in learning, the material of the learning is clear so that it can be understood by the students and enable them in achieving the learning outcomes, students are not getting bored during the teaching and learning, and students could learn more since they do not focus only on teacher's utterances but also other activities. Thus vocabulary teaching techniques are important to be implemented by teachers in teaching English.

One of the major roles of the teacher then becomes to assist students to learn vocabulary as well as to equip them with strategies for learning words. It can be worded that it is quite sensible to help provide the students with teaching of vocabulary as much attention as other aspects of language presented, such as grammar, pronunciation, and spelling. To solve these problems, English teachers, of course, have to provide practical techniques on teaching vocabulary that the students are able to develop their learning of new words independently. Teachers

who teach vocabulary may employ different techniques. The techniques they use may help students to grasp meanings of words easily and to remember them for later use.

Based on the researcher's experience at MTsN 3 Pesisir Selatan, Eighth grade students at MTsN 3 Pesisir Selatan feel that learning English is difficult and boring because they don't have enough basic vocabulary mastery. Basic vocabulary mastery is a very important foundation for students when starting to learn English. When students begin to recognize certain vocabulary, they have difficulty applying it in sentences because they only remember the meaning of the words without understanding how to use them in the correct context. In addition, many words have the same meaning but are pronounced differently, which makes vocabulary use more challenging. Students often lose focus in class because lessons are mostly dominated by teacher explanations without any activities that directly involve students. Passive and monotonous learning causes students to lose focus, making it difficult for them to understand the vocabulary taught by the teacher.

Research conducted by Nugroho (2015) shows that students' lack of interest and time constraints can be overcome through the role of teachers providing motivation, using creative methods, and providing additional practice at home. In addition, research conducted by Wulandari (2016) shows that teachers use five techniques in teaching vocabulary to students, namely eliciting, translation, etymology, using illustrations and pictures and flashcards.

Furthermore, research conducted by Lelawati (2018) also shows that teachers apply various techniques in teaching vocabulary which are divided into two ways, namely using flashcards and making students practice the words they have learned. Research conducted by Kartikasari & Susiati (2020) shows that each teacher uses different ways to improve English vocabulary.

On the other hand, research conducted by Wulandari (2021) shows that teachers are required to use media and games as a method of delivering material. Research conducted by Irvani (2019) shows that the percentage of students' difficulties in mastering vocabulary in pronunciation is (36.92%), spelling (32.30%), grammar (30.76%), and meaning (30.51%).

Then, research conducted by Afidah (2020) shows that some students experience difficulties in mastering vocabulary, both from internal and external factors. Further research conducted by Fais (2022) shows that students experience several difficulties in learning vocabulary, namely pronunciation, spelling, meaning, and grammar so that examples are needed in presenting-training-revising vocabulary, and translating.

Research conducted by Azmi (2023) also shows that some students experience difficulties in mastering vocabulary, both from internal and external factors. Finally, research conducted by Salawazo et al. (2020) shows that the cause of students' vocabulary difficulties in learning English is the first student's difficulty in pronouncing words.

This research was conducted on eighth-grade students at MTsN 3 Pesisir Selatan because at this level, students have acquired a basic understanding of

English from previous grades but still face challenges in enriching their vocabulary and using it effectively in language skills. Moreover, the eighth grade is a transitional stage where students begin to encounter more complex materials, making appropriate vocabulary teaching methods crucial for enhancing their proficiency. The selection of MTsN 3 Pesisir Selatan as the research site is also based on the characteristics of the learning environment and the implemented curriculum, allowing for a more in-depth analysis of English vocabulary teaching strategies at this school.

Based on the phenomena explained above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "An Analysis of English Vocabulary Teaching and Learning at Eighth Grade Students at MTsN 3 Pesisir Selatan".

B. Identification of the problem

Based on the above case, Researchers identify several issues, including:

1. The lack of creativity in designing or selecting techniques can lead to the failure of achieving learning objectives.
2. A lack of vocabulary can cause students to struggle in understanding the process of learning English.

C. Research Question

The research questions for this study are based on the background of the problems elaborated above.

1. How is the process of teaching English vocabulary in the eighth grade at MTsN 3 Pesisir Selatan?

2. What are students' difficulties in learning vocabulary of the eighth grade students at MTsN 3 Pesisir Selatan?

D. Purpose of the Research

Specifically, this study aims to:

1. To know the process of teaching English vocabulary especially to find out the techniques used by teachers in teaching English vocabulary to 8th grade students at MTsN 3 Pesisir Selatan
2. To know dominant difficulty in learning vocabulary at the eighth grade students of MTsN 3 Pesisir Selatan.

E. Benefit of the Research

This research is expected to provide benefits both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research can enrich examples of techniques in teaching English vocabulary, especially for 8th grade students. Hopefully this research will contribute to further research in the field of teaching English vocabulary at the junior high school level. Practically, this research will provide an overview of the process of teaching English vocabulary in eighth grade and students' difficulties in learning vocabulary. In addition, this research will be useful for teachers who teach English at the junior high school level, especially in teaching vocabulary to 8th grade students. The results of this study can be used as a consideration to improve the quality of English teaching for 8th grade students, with a focus on more effective vocabulary teaching.

F. Operational of Key Terms

Analysis: According to Audi (1999, p. 25), analysis is a describe a concept or fact related to linguistics and explain in a simple way.

Vocabulary: Hornby (1995:1331) explains that vocabulary is the total number of words in a language, all the words known to a person or used in a particular book and subject, list of words with their meanings.

Vocabulary teaching techniques: are the ways and means adopted by a teacher to direct the student activities to achieve the objectives in teaching vocabulary.

Difficulty: According to Longman Dictionary (2009, p. 279), difficulty is a problem, something that causes trouble, difficulty is defined as something that is not easy to do or hard to do and understanding.

