

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

Vocabulary is a collection or series of words owned, known, and mastered by an individual or group, both spoken and written, and serves as a key component in linguistic communication. Vocabulary includes not only single words but also phrases, expressions, idioms, and technical terms used to convey meaning, express ideas, and understand messages.

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in language acquisition because it forms the basis for sentence formation, idea formation, and text comprehension. The broader a person's vocabulary, the greater their ability to communicate clearly, accurately, and variedly. Strong vocabulary mastery is an important component of English language learning, which is essential for communication skills, both orally and in writing. With a strong vocabulary, students can understand texts, express ideas, and interact with others in English; however, many students in Indonesia, unmotivated students, and students face limitations in using English outside of the classroom.

One of the important requirements for success in language skills is vocabulary acquisition; the more vocabulary a person has, the more likely he is to be fluent in language and the easier it is for him to share and gain knowledge orally and in writing.

According to Hornby (1995, p.1331), "Vocabulary is the sum of all the words of a language or all the words a person knows or uses in a

particular book, subject, and a list of words and their significance, especially those that have significance come with the course material. ”

This definition suggests that vocabulary is not merely a passive list of words, but a dynamic component of language that evolves as learners acquire new terms and adapt them to various communicative contexts. It includes both general vocabulary, which is used in everyday communication, and specialized vocabulary, which pertains to specific fields of knowledge such as science, technology, or literature. Vocabulary serves as a bridge between linguistic form and meaning, enabling individuals to convey ideas accurately, interpret messages effectively, and engage in higher-order thinking skills such as analysis and evaluation.

According to Hornby (1995), vocabulary has several important benefits in language learning. Here are some of them:

- 1) **Effective Communication:** A rich vocabulary allows individuals to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas more clearly and precisely. This is important for both oral and written communication.
- 2) **Reading Comprehension:** Having a broad vocabulary helps a person understand the text they read. The more words they know, the easier it is to understand the context and meaning of the text.
- 3) **Writing Skills Development:** A diverse vocabulary allows writers to convey messages in more varied and engaging ways. A diverse vocabulary also helps avoid repeating the same words.

In addition, Hornby's perspective implies that vocabulary mastery is deeply tied to the learner's exposure and engagement with language materials. Words gain meaning and significance when they are connected to authentic contexts, such as course content, reading materials, or subject-specific discussions. Thus, vocabulary learning should not be viewed as isolated memorization, but as an integral part of language acquisition that requires active use, repeated exposure, and contextualized practice. This comprehensive approach ensures that learners not only recognize words but can also apply them appropriately in academic, professional, and social situations.

Similarly, Tarigan in Gustian (2021) states that the breadth of students' vocabulary. This ideology argues that learning a language, especially English, should start with mastering vocabulary before learning other parts of the language. Learning English as a foreign language relies heavily on vocabulary.

This perspective emphasizes that vocabulary serves as the foundation upon which other aspects of language—such as grammar, pronunciation, and discourse are built. Without an adequate vocabulary base, students will struggle to express their ideas, comprehend texts, and participate in meaningful communication. A wide range of vocabulary not only facilitates comprehension but also enhances fluency, allowing learners to convey subtle meanings, choose appropriate expressions, and adapt their language to different contexts.

Furthermore, this view implies that vocabulary acquisition should be prioritized in the early stages of English learning and continuously developed throughout the learning process. Effective vocabulary instruction should combine explicit teaching of new words with opportunities for repeated exposure and contextual use, such as through reading, conversation, and writing tasks. By integrating vocabulary learning into all language skills, educators can ensure that students are not only able to recognize words but also actively use them, thereby achieving a higher level of communicative competence in English.

Meanwhile, Tarigan, as cited in Gustian (2021), also emphasized the importance of vocabulary in language learning. Some of the points he raised include:

1. Fundamentals of Language Learning: Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language learning. Without an adequate vocabulary, language learning will be hampered.
2. Social Interaction: A good vocabulary supports better social interactions, enabling individuals to interact with others more effectively.
3. Language Creativity: Having a large vocabulary allows a person to be more creative in using language, both in speaking and writing.

Meanwhile, in Pariaman City, there are still students who are lacking in understanding English vocabulary, where the data is obtained from the results of interviews with students. In addition, there are also other researchers who have researched vocabulary, namely those obtained from several researchers.

Research on vocabulary, namely Gustian, A. (2021), which reads as follows: "regarding vocabulary mastery in the context of language learning" Zhang, Y., 2013). However, in my research, it is slightly different, namely from the focus of the research, where the researcher only focuses on students' vocabulary understanding.

or how effective the L2 looks happens in a significant way” (McCarthy, 1997, pp. 140-141). Vocabulary mastery can be defined as a good understanding of the number of words present in a language or in alphabetical order. Vocabulary mastery can also be defined as a student's ability to understand a broad English vocabulary. As a result, many English teachers prioritize teaching English vocabulary compared to other English subjects such as reading, writing, grammar, and speaking.

Affects the quality of their language. Better language skills are associated with a wider vocabulary. Students who have a limited vocabulary often have difficulty in building English proficiency. building English proficiency, so to improve overall language proficiency, it is important to concentrate on vocabulary acquisition. Mastery, according to Hornby (2000), is a comprehensive understanding or skill that emphasizes one's ability to communicate with an extensive vocabulary.

However, in the current era, many high school students often face difficulties in mastering new vocabulary. This can be caused by several things, such as an uninteresting teaching method, lack of practice, and lack of feedback.

Vocabulary learning in middle school or high school has been identified as one of the biggest problems. Studies show that many students who graduate from school are unable to speak English well. A study conducted by Salam and Nurnisa (2021) shows that the cause is vocabulary deficiency. The results show that students face problems with vocabulary, including pronunciation, spelling, memorizing long syllables, and understanding the meaning of words.

On February 19, the researcher observed Madrasah Aliyah Negeri in Pariaman city. The researcher has interviewed two English teachers and one student of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri. The first teacher is Miss F. Miss F explained about the students' vocabulary there: ("Miss F") said that the students' vocabulary skills in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Pariaman City are very minimal. This is because students rarely use English vocabulary, especially in daily activities, but the overall vocabulary ability of students can be said to be moderate, so this makes it difficult for teachers to teach English.

Meanwhile, another English teacher, Miss S, said that the obstacle in vocabulary for students is that they rarely practice; actually, they have generally seen English content.

Meanwhile, according to some students, they said that what influenced their mastery of vocabulary was the lack of vocabulary they knew, both in reading, listening, and also in carrying out daily activities, besides that, students did not know how to express their ideas with good

and correct vocabulary, and they also did not know how to develop sentences.

On the date of On April 22, 2025, the researcher conducted interviews with students in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Kota Pariaman, namely to find out how much students at MAN Kota Pariaman understand English vocabulary or can pronounce English. Pariaman understands English vocabulary and can pronounce English. the following is a fragment of the results of interviews between the researcher and students.

Sentence: What is something you feel proud of? Why?

“ **to be honest in the my life**”, *sejaauh ini* I have no *yang dibanggakan*

Sentences : Can you tell me about a time when you solved a problem?

“ maybe when I have no problem with my friend I *menyelasikan masalah dengannya* with *meminta maaf kepadanya*”

based on the data above, it can be stated that most at the Madarasah Aliyah Negeri Kota Pariaman, students still have a problem with basic vocabulary that can be used in simple contexts.it seems they need to be trained in constructing sentence structure and using vocabulary in more complex sentences.

B. Identification of the problem

Based on the background above, I, as a researcher, found the problem contained in the problem identification, namely “the lack of mastery of vocabulary in English at MAN KOTA PARIAMAN.

C. Limitations of the study

The researcher limits this problem to Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Kota Pariaman, and it is limited only to Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Kota Pariaman students. This research only covers vocabulary mastery without discussing in depth in English language learning.

D. Research Question

Related to the focus of the research in general, the problem formulated is , How is Students' Mastery of English Vocabulary at MAN Kota Pariaman?,

E. Purpose of the research

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the levels of students' mastery of English vocabulary

F. Significance of the study

The significance of this research is as follows

a. For English Teacher

The researcher hopes that the results of this study can be useful information for English language teaching and can provide inspiration for teachers to adopt more innovative and interesting teaching methods, such as the use of technology and interactive activities, in improving students' vocabulary acquisition.

b. For The Learner

The researcher hopes that the results of this study can be a meaningful input for students in understanding language and understanding in mastering English vocabulary.

c. For future research

The researcher hopes that the results of this study will be valuable and useful information and reference, especially in language teaching, in investigating some of the language phenomena

