

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

English has become a crucial global communication tool in various fields such as academics, professional environments, technology, and social culture. In this era of digitalization and globalization, English proficiency is no longer a mere advantage but a necessary skill, especially for university students who are preparing to enter the workforce or continue their studies at a higher level.

One of the essential aspects of English proficiency is vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in language skills as it serves as the foundation for understanding texts, constructing sentences, and expressing ideas. However, vocabulary is not limited to basic or literal words. It also includes more complex expressions such as idioms.

Idioms are a part of vocabulary in the form of fixed expressions whose meanings cannot be understood from the individual meanings of their component words. For example, idioms like "spill the beans" (to reveal a secret) or "break the ice" (to initiate conversation) may confuse learners if interpreted literally. Therefore, from a

linguistic perspective, idioms are categorized under vocabulary, as they must be learned and memorized like other lexical items. In language learning, idioms are typically introduced and tested as part of vocabulary mastery rather than grammatical structure or pragmatic competence, although their usage does involve social and cultural context (Liontas, 2017). This means idioms are a figurative and contextual aspect of vocabulary that require full comprehension.

Unfortunately, in practice, idioms are often neglected in English language teaching, particularly in informal educational settings such as Islamic dormitories (ma'had). Based on the researcher's direct experience as both a *musyrif* (*musyrif* refers to senior students who serve as mentors and assist with academic and spiritual guidance in Ma'had) and a *mahasantri* (*mahasantri* refers to students living in Ma'had who receive both academic and religious education) at Ma'had Al-Jami'ah of UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu for approximately four years, English teaching remains monotonous and lacks variety. The methods used by *musyrif* are mostly conventional, involving writing vocabulary on the whiteboard, asking students to memorize it, and repeating it together. While this may be effective for short-term memory of basic words, it does not foster deep understanding or contextual

usage, particularly of idioms which require figurative comprehension.

This situation presents a real challenge in the learning process. Many *mahasantri* have memorized hundreds or even thousands of English words but still fail to understand simple idioms such as “once in a blue moon” or “call it a day.” They often struggle to grasp idiomatic meanings when watching films, reading Instagram captions, or listening to spoken English in videos. This leads to a lack of confidence in communication and can lower motivation due to the perceived irrelevance of what they are learning to real-life use.

The issue was confirmed by the results of daily assignments distributed by the researcher, who also acts as a *musyrif* responsible for English instruction at Ma’had Al-Jami’ah. The assignments were given to a population of 155 *mahasantri* in the second and fourth semesters and required students to write sentences and short dialogues using English idioms in appropriate contexts. The analysis revealed that only about 13% of students (approximately 20 individuals) could apply the idioms correctly in context. Meanwhile, 87% of the students misinterpreted idioms or failed to use them effectively, often interpreting them literally. For example, the idiom “spill the beans” was frequently interpreted as the physical act of spilling

beans, rather than its actual meaning of revealing a secret. These results reflect a significant gap in idiom comprehension and application, emphasizing the need for more contextual and engaging learning strategies.

On the other hand, various studies have shown that digital media, especially video, has a significant impact on improving vocabulary acquisition. Video, as a visual-auditory medium, allows learners to observe language use in authentic contexts, which facilitates understanding and enhances memory retention. (Sipayung, 2021) found that Instagram videos significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery due to their engaging, concise, and easily accessible content.

However, most of the previous studies have focused on general vocabulary rather than idioms. Research specifically examining idiom mastery through video content especially on Instagram is still very limited. Furthermore, no studies have been found applying this method in the ma'had context, which has unique characteristics as a boarding school-based institution with non-formal curriculum.

This is where the gap and novelty of the present study lie. This research occupies a specific niche by investigating the effect of Instagram video content on idiom mastery among *mahasantri* at Ma'had Al-Jami'ah,

an Islamic education institution that integrates academic and spiritual development. In this context, the researcher acts not only as an observer but also as a practitioner, having served as a *musyrif* who is directly involved in the English learning process in the dormitory. This position provides the researcher with an in-depth understanding of the needs, habits, and challenges faced by *mahasantri* in learning English, particularly idioms.

To address this issue, the researcher offers a new approach by utilizing English video content on Instagram as a learning medium for idioms. Instagram was chosen because it is widely used by young people and offers various features that support language learning. Features such as Reels allow the delivery of short and engaging videos; Stories can be used for interactive practice like idiom quizzes or polls; captions provide written context; and the comment section encourages interaction, discussion, and responses from *mahasantri*.

Moreover, Instagram is flexible and accessible anytime and anywhere, enabling students to learn without being limited by time or space. Learners can rewatch videos, save materials, and study at their own pace. This platform also allows informal, enjoyable learning outside of a traditional classroom setting.

The video content used in this study was developed independently by the researcher through an Instagram account called HANLY (Han Daily). These videos were specifically designed to explain English idioms in accordance with their real-life contexts. Each video presents a clear explanation of the idiom along with example sentences that reflect everyday situations, enabling students to understand how idioms are applied in context.

The videos are delivered in an engaging visual format, accompanied by explanatory text and pronunciation guides to assist with correct pronunciation. Light background music (background) is also added to create a pleasant and relaxed learning atmosphere. This design aims to increase students' focus, interest, and retention of idiomatic expressions. This is supported by (Aulia et al., 2024), who stated that visually appealing learning media can enhance student engagement and encourage more active participation in the learning process .

In conclusion, the use of English video content on Instagram is expected to address the challenges faced by *mahasantri* in mastering idioms. This approach not only facilitates meaningful and enjoyable idiom learning but also integrates digital technology into the informal

learning environment of ma'had. It is hoped that this study will contribute theoretically to the development of learning media and practically to improving the quality of English language instruction in ma'had settings, particularly in relation to idiom mastery as an essential part of vocabulary.

B. Identification of the Problems

Based on the background of the problem described above, the identified problems are as follows:

1. Students at Ma'had Al-Jami'ah face difficulties in mastering English vocabulary effectively due to the traditional teaching methods that are still being applied.
2. The teaching methods used by the *musyrif* are not interactive enough, which makes the students feel bored.

There is a need to explore the use of video content on Instagram as an innovative learning medium to enhance the students' vocabulary mastery.

C. Limitation of the Research

To keep the discussion focused, the researcher limits it to the effect of using English video content on Instagram, which was created by the researcher, on the

vocabulary mastery of *mahasantri*, specifically limited to idiomatic expressions.

D. Research Question

Based on the background above, the research question is as follows: Is there any significant effect of using English video content on Instagram toward *Mahasantri* Vocabulary Mastery at Ma'had Al-Jami'ah State Islamic University of Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu?

E. The Objective of the Research

To determine the effect of using English video content on Instagram toward *Mahasantri* Vocabulary Mastery at Ma'had Al-Jami'ah State Islamic University of Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu.

F. Benefits of The Research

This study aims to describe the influence of using English video content on Instagram on the vocabulary mastery of students at Ma'had Al-Jami'ah, State Islamic University of Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, as taught by the *musyrif*. The researcher hopes that after conducting this study, many benefits can be gained, as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefits

- a. Contribution to Educational Theory: This study enhances existing knowledge about the use of video

content as a learning medium, providing insights into its effectiveness in improving students' vocabulary mastery. It offers a theoretical framework for understanding how digital media can replace more structured teaching methods, particularly in institutions without a formal curriculum.

- b. Understanding Integration of Skills: By examining the relationship between video usage and vocabulary mastery, this study contributes to the theoretical understanding of integrated language skill development, which is relevant for teaching in environments without a standardized curriculum.

2. Practical Benefits

- a. For *Musyrif* and *Musyrifah*

- 1) The findings of this research can assist *musyrifs* in effectively implementing the use of video content, providing a more dynamic and interactive approach to address the limitations of the current teaching methods.

- 2) *Musyrifs* can use the results of this research to develop more varied and engaging learning strategies, thereby better meeting the students' learning needs.

- b. For *Mahasantri*

- 1) Students can benefit from improved vocabulary mastery, leading to greater confidence and ability in using English.
- 2) The use of video content also provides a more interactive and engaging learning experience, which can boost students' motivation to learn English.

c. For Ma'had

- 1) Although the Ma'had does not have a formal curriculum, this research can provide guidance for developing a more structured, digital media-based English teaching program.
- 2) The Ma'had can also utilize the results of this research to design improved training programs for *musyriks* in managing technology-based learning.

d. For Other Researches

- 1) This research provides a foundation for further studies on the use of digital media in learning contexts without a formal curriculum, offering findings that can be expanded upon or compared across various educational institutions.
- 2) Other researchers can use the results of this study to examine the effectiveness of various

teaching models in environments without a formal curriculum, particularly in Islamic educational institutions.

G. Definition of Key Terms

The following is an explanation of several terms used in this study to ensure that readers share a common understanding. This clarification also aims to prevent misunderstandings between the readers and the researcher. The terms are defined as follows:

1. English Video Content

English video content refers to audiovisual materials presented in English, used as a learning medium to improve *mahasantri*' understanding of idioms.

2. Instagram

Instagram is a social media platform used in this study as a tool for delivering video content related to idiom learning in English.

3. Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery refers to the students' ability to recognize, understand, and accurately use English words in both written and spoken contexts (Sari & Aminatun, 2021). In this study, vocabulary mastery is assessed based on the students' ability to

recall and apply new vocabulary they have learned from the English video content on Instagram.

4. *Mahasantri*

Mahasantri are students residing at Ma'had Al-Jami'ah who participate as research subjects in this study.

5. *Musyrif*

Musyrif are senior students responsible for facilitating the academic and spiritual development of *mahasantri*, including English instruction without a formal curriculum.

