

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

English is an international language and serves as a second language in certain countries, including Indonesia. Learning English requires time and effort. English is no longer considered a local content subject but has now become a compulsory subject. Students must master four skills when learning English: writing, reading, speaking, listening, as well as language components such as grammar, pronunciation, spelling, and vocabulary. One of the most important aspects of learning English is vocabulary. Many academics believe that vocabulary is a crucial component in language development. According to Joseph P. O'Rourke (1999), "Mastery of vocabulary is one of the factors involved in mastering English as a Foreign Language" (V. R et al., 2023).

Developing a broad vocabulary is highly beneficial for students, as it helps them understand what others are saying and express their own thoughts clearly. The first step to communicating in any language is achieving proficiency in vocabulary. Expanding vocabulary is essential for improving the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Rohmatillah (2014), students face many difficulties when learning vocabulary. It is difficult for them to approach it quickly in a short time because they never find the encouragement and excitement to face the challenge of

acquiring new knowledge of the English language (Nguyen et al., 2021). Learning vocabulary is a complex task, and EFL students face several challenges. This aligns with Nyikos and Fan (2007), who state that learning vocabulary is one of the most intricate tasks students must undertake. One of the challenges is that students need to learn and memorize thousands of words to achieve fluency (Risnawati et al., 2023).

Vocabulary is a crucial component of language proficiency. It is essential to know many words to enhance skills in learning a foreign language. Teachers often provide vocabulary, ask students to write it in their notebooks, and require them to memorize it for the next meeting. This traditional method can be quite boring, even frustrating, and may lead students to dislike English lessons (Yudha & Mandasari, 2021).

However, many students face difficulties in memorizing and understanding vocabulary, especially abstract words that cannot be directly seen or heard. To address this issue, it is necessary to implement effective teaching methods that cater to various learning styles and avoid monotonous approaches. Such methods can motivate students and encourage them to engage more enthusiastically in vocabulary learning.

Based on observations, students at MTs Nur Rahma, Bengkulu City experience difficulties in mastering English vocabulary, particularly in remembering and using new vocabulary in the appropriate context. This problem is caused

by several factors, such as limited exposure to English outside the classroom, a lack of variation in teaching methods, and students' low interest in material presented through conventional approaches. Often, the teaching methods used are monotonous, such as memorizing vocabulary lists without context or relying solely on textbooks without engaging learning activities. As a result, students feel bored, which leads to low vocabulary mastery. Research on the influence of the Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic (VAK) learning method is therefore important, as this method offers a more effective solution for teaching English vocabulary. The VAK method integrates three main types of learning activities visual, auditory, and kinesthetic which are expected to help students understand and remember English vocabulary more easily.

The observation was conducted on students at MTs Nur-Rahma, Bengkulu City. This school was chosen because it was newly established in 2022 and is still in the development stage, with limited teaching staff and facilities. The research was carried out in the seventh grade, where MTs Nur-Rahma has two classes: 7 Mekkah and 7 Madinah. The researcher selected 7 Mekkah as the sample, based on pre-observation results. Data was collected through classroom observation and interviews with teachers and students. It was observed that students in 7 Madinah were more active compared to those in 7 Mekkah, and their English proficiency was superior. Meanwhile, students in

7 Mekkah frequently asked about vocabulary when given exercises or when asked to construct sentences.

By employing the Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic (VAK) Learning method, which combines visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles, the learning process becomes more engaging and effective. Using this approach, teachers implement various strategies such as images, videos, discussions, and physical activities to cater to students' diverse learning needs. Research indicates that the VAK Learning method is effective in enhancing vocabulary mastery, particularly in foreign language learning such as English. For instance, a study conducted by Oes Udju (2022) at SMPN Haliulun demonstrated that the application of the VAK method significantly improved the vocabulary mastery of seventh-grade students by increasing their participation and interest in learning (Patrius Oes Udju, 2022).

The solution applied to class 7 Mekkah used the Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic (VAK) learning method. The vocabulary chosen in this study consisted of basic words, such as those related to body parts, household objects, objects around the school, and others. In the visual method, students were introduced to vocabulary through pictures. In the auditory method, students listened to words spoken by the researcher and were then asked to repeat the words or hold the object being mentioned. The kinesthetic method involved a game in which students were asked to point to objects mentioned by the

researcher. This approach encouraged the researcher to select the VAK learning method in order to investigate its effectiveness in improving students' vocabulary mastery.

Based on the background above, the researcher formulates the title as follows: "The Influence of Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic (VAK) Learning Methods in Enhancing English Vocabulary." This research is important because it can serve as a reference for future researchers in conducting similar studies.

B. Identification of the Problem

The main problem identified is the low mastery of English vocabulary among seventh-grade students of the Mekkah class at MTs Nur-Rahma, Bengkulu City. The teaching methods currently used tend to be monotonous, such as memorizing vocabulary lists without context or relying solely on textbooks without being accompanied by engaging learning activities. Therefore, a more interesting teaching method is needed to improve the vocabulary skills of seventh-grade students in the Mekkah class at MTs Nur-Rahma, Bengkulu City. To foster students' interest in learning, the researcher applied the Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic (VAK) learning method. The purpose of this study is to determine whether this approach can improve students' mastery of English vocabulary.

C. Limitation of the Problem

To keep the discussion focused, the researcher limits the scope to "The Influence of Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic (VAK) Learning Methods in Enhancing English Vocabulary."

D. Research Question

The questions raised in this study are: Does the use of Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic (VAK) learning methods have an impact on the improvement of English vocabulary among 7th-grade students in the Mekkah class at MTs Nur-Rahma, Bengkulu City?

E. The Objective of the Research

To identify and analyze the impact of implementing Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic (VAK) learning methods in improving the English vocabulary mastery of 7th-grade students in the Mekkah class at MTs Nur-Rahma, Bengkulu City.

F. Benefits of the Research

This study aims to describe the impact of using the Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic (VAK) Learning method on 7th-grade students of Mekkah at MTs Nur Rahma in Bengkulu City, facilitated by the teacher. The researcher hopes that after conducting this study, many benefits can be realized, as outlined below:

1. Theoretical Benefits:

- a. To add to the scientific literature on the effectiveness of the Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic (VAK) learning method in enhancing students' English vocabulary skills.
- b. To provide insights into more effective teaching approaches, particularly in the context of English language instruction at the MTs (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) level.
- c. To contribute to educational theories related to learning styles and second or foreign language acquisition.

2. Practical Benefits:

- a. To provide information to teachers at MTs Nur-Rahma, Bengkulu City, about effective teaching methods, such as VAK, that can be applied in teaching activities to enhance students' English vocabulary acquisition.
- b. To help students identify the learning style that best suits them, enabling them to maximize their potential in learning English.
- c. To offer guidance to educational institutions in developing more interactive and varied curricula or learning programs, taking into account different learning styles.

G. Definition of Key Terms

The following definitions are provided to ensure that readers have a similar understanding or perspective on the terms used in this study. The purpose of this is also to prevent any

misunderstandings between the readers and the researcher. These terms are explained below:

1. Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic (VAK) Learning

Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic (VAK) Learning is a learning method that categorizes individual learning styles into three main categories: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Students with a visual learning style tend to understand and remember information more easily through images, diagrams, maps, or other visual presentations. They prefer learning by seeing rather than listening. On the other hand, students with an auditory learning style are more effective in understanding material through listening. They grasp concepts by hearing explanations, participating in discussions, listening to music, or audio recordings. Meanwhile, students with a kinesthetic learning style prefer learning through direct experience or physical activities, such as conducting experiments, role-playing, or using manipulative tools.

The VAK approach allows teachers to design varied and student-centered learning, making the learning process more engaging and effective. For example, in teaching English vocabulary, this approach can be applied by using flashcards or videos for visual learners, pronunciation practice or songs for auditory learners, and interactive games involving movement for kinesthetic learners. Thus, the VAK approach not only enhances students' understanding of the

material but also helps them actively engage and stay motivated in the learning process.

2. Enhancing Vocabulary

Enhancing vocabulary is the process of developing the ability to understand, remember, and effectively utilize a broader range of words in both oral and written communication. A rich vocabulary is crucial in language learning as it enables students to comprehend texts more easily, express ideas clearly, and communicate with confidence. Several strategies can be used to expand vocabulary, such as reading regularly, which helps students discover new words in various contexts. Utilizing interactive media, such as videos or learning applications, can also make the vocabulary learning process more engaging and enjoyable. Additionally, practical exercises, such as using new words in conversations or writing, assist students in recalling and understanding vocabulary. The use of flashcards is effective for memorizing and revising words, while contextual learning, which teaches words within specific sentences or situations, makes them easier to grasp. Improving vocabulary requires time and consistency, but with diverse strategies, students can significantly develop their language skills, increase fluency, and strengthen their speaking, reading, and writing abilities.