

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Problem

In the context of English language learning at MAN 1 Bengkulu City, vocabulary mastery is a fundamental component that supports students' ability to develop other language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Despite its importance, many grade 11 students still encounter difficulties in mastering English vocabulary. The selection of grade 11 students as the research participants is based on important academic and contextual considerations. At this level, students at MAN 1 Bengkulu City have already been grouped according to their academic streams or majors, which allows them to follow a more focused learning orientation. This condition is considered appropriate for research because students have experienced English learning for a sufficient period and have developed more stable learning habits and attitudes toward the subject. In addition, this study specifically focuses on students from the language stream, as they receive more intensive exposure to language-related subjects, particularly English. Students in this stream are expected to demonstrate a higher level of language competence, including vocabulary mastery. However, the existence of vocabulary learning difficulties among these students becomes a relevant and interesting issue to explore,

as it may reflect deeper challenges in vocabulary learning despite greater exposure. Therefore, selecting grade 11 students from the language major provides a logical and meaningful context for analyzing students' difficulties in mastering English vocabulary at MAN 1 Bengkulu City.

These difficulties can be observed in students' limited understanding of word meanings, challenges in remembering new vocabulary, inaccurate pronunciation, and inappropriate use of vocabulary in context. Such conditions indicate that vocabulary learning remains a significant problem that needs serious attention.

Several factors appear to contribute to these difficulties. Students' lack of interest and enthusiasm in learning English vocabulary often leads to low participation during classroom activities. In addition, students have limited exposure to the English language, as English is mainly encountered during formal classroom instruction and rarely practiced in daily communication. Vocabulary learning is also frequently conducted using less engaging and less varied teaching methods, which makes learning activities feel monotonous and reduces students' motivation. These factors collectively influence students' ability to master English vocabulary effectively.

Based on these conditions, this research is designed to focus on analyzing the difficulties faced by grade 11

students in mastering English vocabulary at MAN 1 Bengkulu City. In line with the research questions, the study seeks to identify the types of difficulties experienced by students in learning English vocabulary and to determine the dominant difficulty that most significantly hinders their vocabulary mastery. Accordingly, the research objectives aim to provide a clear and in-depth understanding of students' vocabulary learning difficulties and the main factors contributing to these problems. Through this focus, the study is expected to offer meaningful insights that can support improvements in English vocabulary teaching and learning in the school context.

Classroom vocabulary is the most challenging aspect of communication and is labelled the most problematic area by teachers (Celik & Toptas, 2010). Even though learners know the language's grammar, communication will break down if they do not know the correct word. Various researchers, scholars, and language teachers have conducted studies over the past several decades to find out which strategies are effective for vocabulary learning (Levenston, 1979). Oxford (1990) argued that fluency in a language involves the memorization of vast volumes of 1549 vocabulary. A cause of forgetting was noted by Celce-Marcia (2001), Krashen (1997), and Brown (2000). Pupils who have limited word awareness aren't able to combine information

from different sources and generalise from words they've already learned to new words, says Schouten-van Parreren in 1989 (Rashid & Hui, 2022)

Vocabulary is important because it's the basis of all language. It's the raw building blocks that we can use to express our thoughts and ideas, share information, understand others and grow personal relationships. Even if we barely know a language and have zero grasp of grammar, we can still communicate (although we might end up sounding like cavemen!)

This connection between vocabulary size and second language attainment has been widely researched over the years. A robust vocabulary improves all areas of communication — listening, speaking, reading and writing. Vocabulary is critical to a child's success for these reasons: Vocabulary growth is directly related to school achievement. The size of a child's vocabulary in kindergarten predicts the ability to learn to read. Vocabulary knowledge is perhaps the most important factor when it comes to reading comprehension, both for native and non-native speakers. For example, if you sit down to read a book and you don't know the vocabulary used, you'll struggle to understand the meaning of the text. You might end up looking up the words in a dictionary, guessing the meaning of the words from their context, or you might simply give up and find something else

to read. This can be disappointing, disheartening and also shatter your confidence. (Importance et al., 2023)

Vocabulary knowledge plays an indispensable role in second language (L2) performance (O'Toole, 2022; Polakova & Klimova, 2022). According to I. S. P. Nation (2013), what is involved in learning a word includes form, meaning, and use. Among these aspects of word knowledge, many language learners find it particularly difficult to memorize word meaning (Brown, 2010; Chung, 2018; Chung & Fung, 2022; Schmitt, 2008).

In recent years, different modalities have been integrated into vocabulary teaching in the English as a foreign language (EFL) learning environment. Among them, pictures are considered to be beneficial to vocabulary learning, especially when it comes to word meaning (Andrä, 2020; Hasnine et al., 2019; Mayer, 2001; Sydorenko, 2010). Furthermore, first language (L1) translations also make a profound impact on L2 vocabulary learning, and learners often employ L1 translations to obtain word meaning (Alghamdi, 2016; Schmitt, 1997; Swan, 1997; Tavakoli & Gerami, 2013). In addition, verbal information (spoken words) is often used in EFL vocabulary learning and has been found to be useful (Dubois & Vial, 2000; Plass et al., 1998; Rassaei, 2018). Therefore, it is plausible to incorporate these modalities (pictures, L1 translations, and audio), in a

process widely known as multimedia learning (I. S. P. Nation, 2013) into the EFL vocabulary learning process to help learners acquire word meaning.(Yu & Liu, 2022)

Vocabulary plays crucial function in linguistic process acquisition. Vocabulary is additionally a vital ability for acquiring to read, talk, compose and hear. While not ample vocabulary, individuals cannot communicate and categorical their feeling each in sort of spoken and written effectively. The additional people master vocabulary the more they will speak, write, read and listen as they want. Wilkins in Thornbury (2004: 13) states that without descriptive linguistics brief or no can be brought, without vocabulary nothing can be carried. It implies even somebody bears smart grammar even so it will be futile if they are making not understand several vocabularies. In addition, it's supported by City (1996) that vocabulary is one amongst vital things to be educated in learning foreign language as a result of it'll be not possible to talk up while not form of words. Those arguments entail the grandness of education vocabulary because a remote oral communication. Incoming line with acquisition English language vocabulary, English language vocabulary is altogether contrary by Bahasa Indonesia viewed from form, as well as pronunciation and spelling, that entails and consequently the word apply. Additionally, the formula of even so saying the word is kind

of different from writing. The formula of English pronunciation is different than Bahasa Indonesia which the letter interpreted would be differ according to the sentences depend on the context. Students should learn on how to decide the appropriate which implies of the words and likewise however disconcert in exploitation the word affirmed the context.(Susanto, 2021) Based on preliminary observations conducted by the researcher at MAN 1 Bengkulu City, several students showed difficulties in mastering vocabulary during English learning activities. Some students had problems understanding the meaning of words when reading English texts, while others struggled with pronunciation and spelling. In addition, students often found it difficult to use appropriate vocabulary in sentences and to remember newly learned words. These difficulties made students less confident in using English and tended to limit their participation in classroom interactions.

Furthermore, vocabulary learning at MAN 1 Bengkulu City is influenced by various factors such as limited exposure to English outside the classroom, students' learning habits, and differences in individual language abilities. These conditions may contribute to the emergence of vocabulary-related difficulties experienced by students. If these difficulties are not properly identified and understood, they may hinder students' overall English learning progress.

Considering the importance of vocabulary mastery and the difficulties faced by grade 11 students at MAN 1 Bengkulu City, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth analysis of students' difficulties in mastering vocabulary. Through a qualitative approach, this study aims to explore the types of vocabulary difficulties experienced by students and provide a clearer understanding of the real conditions in the classroom. The findings of this study are expected to contribute useful insights for English teachers in developing more effective vocabulary teaching strategies and for future researchers who are interested in similar topics.

B. Identification of The Problem

Based on the background of the study, this research focuses on analyzing the difficulties experienced by grade 11 students in mastering English vocabulary at MAN 1 Bengkulu City. The study examines various types of vocabulary learning difficulties, including problems in understanding word meanings, remembering new vocabulary, pronouncing words correctly, and using vocabulary appropriately in context. These difficulties are closely related to several contributing factors, such as students' lack of interest and enthusiasm, limited exposure to the English language, and the lack of enjoyable and engaging teaching methods in vocabulary instruction. By identifying both the types of difficulties and the dominant difficulty faced by

students, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the main challenges that hinder students' vocabulary mastery.

C. Research Question

Based on the identification of these problems, the research questions in this study are formulated as follows :

1. What are the types of difficulties faced by the eleventh-grade students of MAN 1 Bengkulu City in Mastering English Vocabulary?
2. What factor cause to students' difficulties in mastering English vocabulary?

D. Research Objectives

This study aims to analyze the difficulties experienced by grade 11 students in mastering English vocabulary at MAN 1 Bengkulu City. Based on the Identification Of The Problem, the objectives of this study are to determine:

1. To identify students' difficulties in mastering English vocabulary at MAN 1 Bengkulu City.
2. To identify the factors that contributing to mastering English vocabulary.

E. Significant of The Study

This research is expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits in the field of English language education, particularly in vocabulary learning.

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of English language teaching, especially in relation to students' difficulties in mastering English vocabulary. The results of this study can enrich existing theories and references regarding vocabulary learning problems faced by EFL students, especially at the high school level.

2. Practical Significance

a. For English Teachers

This research can help English teachers better understand the specific difficulties students experience in learning vocabulary. By identifying these difficulties, teachers can design more appropriate teaching strategies, learning materials, and classroom activities to support students' vocabulary development.

b. For Students

This study is expected to increase students' awareness of the challenges they face in learning English vocabulary. Understanding these difficulties may encourage students to apply more effective learning strategies and increase their confidence in using English in both oral and written communication.

c. For Future Researchers

The findings of this study can be a reference for future researchers who are interested in conducting similar research

F. Definition Of Terms

Vocabulary plays important role in language learning. Vocabulary is also an essential skill for learning to read, speak, write and listen. Without sufficient vocabulary, people cannot communicate and express their feeling both in form of 70 spoken and written effectively. The more people master vocabulary the more they can speak, write, read and listen as they want. Wilkins in Thornbury (2004: 13) states that without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. It means that even someone has good grammar but it will be useless if they do not know many vocabularies. In addition, it is supported by Ur (1996: 60) that vocabulary is one of important things to be taught in learning foreign language because it will be impossible to speak up without variety of words. Those statements imply the importance of teaching vocabulary as a foreign language. In line with learning English vocabulary, English vocabulary is different from Indonesian viewed from form, including pronunciation and spelling, meaning and the word use. In addition, the way of how pronouncing the word is quite different from writing. Therefore, people especially

students who learn English often find difficulties in learning vocabulary. Thus, in this research, the researcher wants to investigate the students' difficulties and factors causing difficulties in learning vocabulary. (*A STUDY ON STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING VOCABULARY Rohmatillah Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Raden Intan Lampung, n.d.*)

Vocabulary is a crucial role in language proficiency as it serves as the foundation for effective language acquisition. The ability to acquire vocabulary is considered a prerequisite for learning a language. Therefore, the primary objective of this research is to investigate the difficulties encountered by students in their vocabulary learning process as well as the strategies they employ to overcome these obstacles in the context of English vocabulary acquisition. The participants in this study consisted of nine students at various proficiency levels in a lower secondary school, along with one English teacher. (As & Apoko, 2023)