

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

Vocabulary mastery is one of the main requirements that determine a person's success in terms of language skills. The greater an individual's vocabularies the more likely he or she is to be fluent in the language and the easier it is for him or her to share and get knowledge both 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 comes with the course material". This school of thought believes that learning a language, especially English should begin with vocabulary acquisition before moving on to other parts of the language. Vocabulary is the most important aspect of learning English as a foreign language. "Respectively of how well students learn grammatical structures or how effectively L2 looks to occur in any significant ways" (McCarthy, 1997, pp. 140-141).

A great talent or understanding of how many stocks of words in a language or alphabetical order can be regarded as vocabulary mastery. We can also define vocabulary mastery as students' capacity to fully grasp English vocabulary. As a result, many English language teachers prioritize teaching English language vocabulary over other areas of English language lessons such as grammar, speaking, reading, and writing.

Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are the four language skills that are generally taught to students in language instruction. Speaking and writing are considered to be productive or output skills, whereas reading and listening are categorized as receptive skills or input. All four skills must be taught at once to language learners. Students who can read and write well will also have high communication skills while speaking, as will those who can listen effectively. Listening and reading are receptive skills in language instruction, which means that they are meant to provide input of language for language learners. These two skills are anticipated to provide language learners with target language input. According to Gass and Selinker (2001), While the act of listening and reading alone is insufficient for acquiring a language, additional input is essential for learning a second (foreign) language. Listening is the first step in the process of learning a language, both English and other languages.

Vocabulary is an essential component of learning English; for students, it is the first step in mastering the language. A language should always start with vocabulary because it is so important. Written or spoken, it is regarded as elementary. English is introduced to and taught to students in schools as one of the required subjects, just like other significant disciplines. English is still thought of as a challenging subject and a challenging language for students to learn. The number of words in a vocabulary is the languages are made up of words (Hornby, 2002:6). According to the author Nunan (2005: 121), "the vocabulary is an accumulation of sentences that every person knows" which is why students would struggle to learn a language if they do not have an appropriate vocabulary". When it comes to learning English as a foreign

language, students find it difficult to talk or share their ideas. It requires students to have a strong command of the English language.

Vocabulary mastery is defined as knowing instead of just the words themselves and their meanings, but additionally the way the words look and are utilized in a context. Vocabulary is defined as 1) by Horn (1998: 1447) in Kasim (2011). Every word a person knows or uses. 2) Every word in a certain vocabulary. 3). The keywords and phrases that individuals employ when speaking. 4). A summary of terms with definitions, commonly seen in a language instruction book. The remark above implies that vocabulary is more than just vocabulary that learners have to learn; According to the research, when students learn English vocabulary, they must comprehend and absorb the meaning of the words to interact with one another.

Furthermore, the researchers discovered that many students still have low language mastery in the pre-research conducted in September 2023 on the eighth-grade students at SMP Gajah Mada Medan. Due to a lack of vocabulary, the students found it challenging to learn English. According to the preliminary observations, the English teachers used the conventional teaching method by using books, worksheets, and dictionaries. The teachers did not use the media in teaching. The vocabulary class was regarded as a boring subject. The students did not have fun or did not enjoy during the class. Their daily activities at vocabulary lessons seemed uninterested. Moreover, the test results of vocabulary during the examination were dissatisfactory. This problem of vocabulary mastery also influenced the students' achievement in communication. Furthermore, it has not done the same research about vocabulary mastery at SMP Gajah Mada Medan. This phenomenon is the reason why the researchers chose this school.

### **Kinds of Vocabulary**

According to experts, many different categories exist for vocabulary. Harmer (1991, p.159) claims that it is divided into:

1. Active vocabulary

Harmer defines active vocabulary as words that have been introduced to students with the goal that they will use them.

2. Passive vocabulary

The term "passive vocabulary" refers to terms that students will encounter but likely won't be able to construct on their own.

Furthermore, according to Good (1959, p. 644), vocabulary is divided into four categories:

1. Oral vocabulary

Oral vocabulary refers to the words that individuals use to communicate actively and understandably.

2. Writing Vocabulary

Writing vocabulary is the language employed in writing a piece of writing.

3. Listening Vocabulary

The listening vocabulary is the speaker's words that the listener understands, and it may also be argued that the speaker's message is successfully delivered to the listener because words in speech can be interpreted.

4. Reading Vocabulary

The latter are terms that are understandable when read aloud.

According to Freeman (2000: 9–21), there are several approaches to increase vocabulary competence:

- a. A literary passage translated  
Students translate a reading excerpt into their mother tongue from the language with the most speakers. The reading piece served as the focus of numerous courses, with subsequent lessons studying the passage's vocabulary and grammatical structures.
- b. Synonym and antonym  
Finding synonyms and antonyms within the reading passage is required of the students once they are given a set of terms.
- c. Complete the gaps  
A collection of missing word phrases is presented to the students. They fill in the gaps with fresh vocabulary or specific grammar structures, like prepositions or verbs in various tenses.
- d. Memorization  
Lists of vocabulary terms from the target language are presented to the students, and they grammatical structures in their native tongues and are required to memorize them.
- e. Make sentences out of words  
Students build up sentences in which they apply new terminology to demonstrate that they comprehend its meaning and application.
- f. Structure  
The subject for the student's writing in the target language is provided by the teacher. The topic is based on a portion of the lesson's reading text. Students may occasionally be requested to create a synopsis of the reading text rather than a composition.

Students are typically introduced to new words found in text before teachers explain what those words signify. Because of this, students think of learning vocabulary as learning a ton of new terms along with their definitions in the target language. They are unable to express themselves verbally in their proper context. The truth is that a lot of students understand how important to learn a foreign language, vocabulary is essential. They employ a variety of tactics to increase their vocabulary, such as keeping a bilingual dictionary with them at all times so they can look up any words they are unsure of. However, it soon becomes clear that bringing a bilingual dictionary is ineffective since students frequently forget the words they write down as soon as they do.

By mastering vocabulary, students can improve their expression and communication skills. This would make it easier for them to comprehend the meaning of English words spoken or written. Furthermore, comprehensive recognition of English language vocabulary could assist students in sharing their thoughts, ideas, and sentiments toward individuals more easily and effectively than using body gestures for those who lack vocabulary mastery. The more students

master the English language The more language they have, the easier it is for them to understand. meanings. This might be demonstrated in reading comprehension because language knowledge is essential for reading comprehension.

According to the explanation above, the researchers are interested in carrying out the study titled: “**An Analysis of Students’ Vocabulary Mastery at SMP Gajah Mada Medan**”.

## **1.2 The Problems of the Study**

The following are the study's problems:

1. How is the vocabulary mastery among the Eighth-Grade students of SMP Gajah Mada Medan?
2. What are the difficulties in vocabulary mastery for the Eighth-Grade students of SMP Gajah Mada Medan?

## **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

1. To learn about the vocabulary mastery of students in the eighth grade at SMP Gajah Mada Medan.
2. To find out the difficulties of students’ vocabulary mastery in the eighth grade of SMP Gajah Mada Medan.

## **1.4 The Scope of the Study**

The study is being conducted in class VIII at SMP Gajah Mada Medan with 30 students. Additionally, this study is only conducted in one class. The goal of this research is to learn about the student's vocabulary mastery and their difficulties in vocabulary mastery.

## **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

The advantage is that studies generally can be utilized as reference material for future research, and basic research can be used as resources for educators to enhance the quality of learning. After all, the goal already exists. The results obtained are useful for the author and other writers. There are several important advantages to be gained from conducting this research:

### **1. For the Teachers**

The researchers hope that this research will help educators who teach English improve their teaching skills.

### **2. For the Students**

The researchers think that This study will assist students in improving their vocabulary mastery as well as their abilities.

### **3. For the other Researchers**

The researchers believe that other people will be able to use this research as a source of information for researchers' interests in the same topic.

## 1.6 Relevances Studies

There are several precedents research studies on vocabulary mastery. In this study, the researchers cited some of them as comparisons and references, such as:

1. **The research done by Simanungkalit (2018)**, "An Analysis of Vocabulary Mastery in the Context of the Sixth Semester at FKIP-UIR English Language Education," school year 2017-2018. According to the study findings, FKIP-UIR sixth-semester English Language Education students had a low level of vocabulary knowledge in context. It was discovered using some language indicators, such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Only three out of the 26 total students received a "Good Level," three received a "Fair Level," and 20 received a "Poor Level." We can infer from the previous explanation that the majority of kids perform poorly in vocabulary mastery in context.
2. **The research conducted by Dewi Riyani Puspitasari (2018)** regarding "Use of Audio Visual Media to Improve Vocabulary Mastery in Grade 7 Middle School Students at Mts Ittihad Maiarif Nu 1 West Purwokerto", researchers conducted research including the lack of understanding in English words with research materials, namely storytelling, and games, moreover this research applied the CAR (Classroom Action Research) method with quantitative research. Dewi used tests given to students in the form of a series of questions and exercises that aimed to determine students' abilities and measure the extent of their vocabulary mastery.

All relevant research above is closely related to the study that will be conducted on SMP Gajah Mada Medan eighth-grade students, yet there are some important variances. "An Analysis of Vocabulary Mastery in the Context of the Six Semester at English Language Education at FKIP-UIR," **Simanungkalit (2018)** examines weak vocabulary using some language indicators, such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

Moreover, in **Dewi Riyani Puspitasari's (2018)**, "Use of Audio-Visual Media to Improve Vocabulary Mastery in Grade 7 Middle School Students at Mts Ittihad Maiarif Nu 1 West Purwokerto" researchers researched the lack of understanding of English words with research materials (storytelling and games) and applied the CAR (Classroom Action Research) with the quantitative method. The primary learning objectives may focus on the four skills; grammar, vocabulary, function, or strategic competence.

Meanwhile, in this study, the researchers solely analyze the students' vocabulary mastery at SMP Gajah Mada Medan's Eighth Grade and the obstacles that students encounter in vocabulary acquisition. Moreover, this study applies the Descriptive Qualitative method.