

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a general overview of the fundamental aspects underlying the research. It begins with the Research Background, which outlines the context and rationale for conducting this study. Next, the Research Focus is explained, indicating the main direction of the study. The Research Objectives are clearly formulated to show what the researcher aims to achieve. The Benefits of the Research are presented to describe the expected contributions, both theoretically and practically. The Scope and Limitations of the Research are then explained as a form of restriction to make the study more focused. Finally, there is a Definition of Key Terms to provide clarity on the important terms used in this research.

1.1 Research Context

English still plays an important role in education in Indonesia as the first foreign language. As the first foreign language, although English is not the main language like Indonesian. The ability to speak English is crucial to improving a country's competitiveness, especially in the era of globalization that encourages interaction between cultures and technological development. Globalization encourages intercultural interaction and the development of digital technology (Alfarisy, 2021). Policies relating to English language education are also aimed at preparing students to face global challenges while preserving the nation's cultural identity. Cross-cultural competence is an essential aspect of foreign language learning, which teaches students to not only communicate well but also understand global culture while maintaining Indonesian cultural values. This strategy is crucial to forming a

generation that can connect different cultures without compromising national identity (Havifah & Khosiyono, 2018).

As required, English language learning in Vocational High Schools (SMK) should be organized to meet the specific needs of students based on their main subjects. A needs analysis of SMK focusing on computer network technology (TKJ) showed that students need learning materials that emphasize practical communication and in-depth vocabulary, such as how to conduct professional conversations and write emails. These results indicate that grammar materials may not be a top priority, as students rarely practice them during exercises (Cahyati et al., 2015). However, further analysis shows that textbooks used in vocational schools often only cover general skills and lack specificity to meet students' needs. Therefore, bridging the gap between professional training and industry demands requires a more context-appropriate curriculum design, such as adding project-based modules and real-world communication simulations. This is supported by Nurdiana et al. (2022), which states that there is an 'English for Specific Purposes' approach, i.e., learning English according to industry demands. It involves effective communication in a professional context. Therefore, in order to meet the demands of the English language development industry in vocational high schools, it is necessary to master adequate vocabulary for communication.

Vocabulary is an important component in language acquisition. Students will find it difficult to communicate and understand texts without adequate vocabulary. Saripah (2022) stated that students who have more vocabulary allowed to communicate orally or in writing. They need vocabulary to get and transmit information. Vocabulary is very important for language acquisition. A person's

communication skills will be impaired without a good understanding of vocabulary. Vocabulary contains not only basic words, but also phrases, idioms, and technical terms used in various situations. In the context of education, a good command of vocabulary is essential for students, as this is the foundation on which their academic success is built. Students who have an extensive vocabulary tend to be better able to comprehend readings, participate in discussions, and express their ideas more clearly, which ultimately facilitates deeper engagement with the subject matter. Hadist and Rosdiana (2021) stated that Vocabulary is a basic competency that students must learn to be able to master to gain competence in other skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Without enough vocabulary, students cannot understand others or express their ideas. Vocabulary development helps in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, all of which are important skills in language learning. Research shows that there is a close relationship between vocabulary acquisition and academic success.

The close relationship between vocabulary acquisition and academic success is the reason why vocabulary should be prioritized in language education. Children's vocabulary mastery plays an important role in their achievement and success at school. (Zahro et al., 2020) Educators implement strategies that promote vocabulary acquisition in all subjects. This can include integrating vocabulary exercises into daily lessons, encouraging reading in a variety of genres, and providing opportunities for students to engage in discussions that challenge them to use new words in context. In addition, the incorporation of technology, such as vocabulary-building apps and online resources, can support students in developing their word banks outside of the traditional classroom environment. According to Thornbury

(2002), there are ten key principles in vocabulary teaching that can support effective vocabulary development in the classroom: *contextualization*, *repetition*, *retrieval*, *spaced rehearsal*, *mnemonics*, *recording*, *affective depth*, *semantic networks*, *language awareness*, and *personalization*. *Contextualization* involves presenting vocabulary in meaningful contexts to help students understand and relate to the words more easily. *Repetition* refers to exposing learners to the same vocabulary multiple times to strengthen memory, while *spaced rehearsal* emphasizes reviewing vocabulary at intervals to ensure long-term retention. *Retrieval* encourages students to actively recall words they have learned, reinforcing memory through active engagement. *Mnemonics* are strategies that help learners remember vocabulary through associations or creative techniques. *Recording* involves students writing down and organizing new vocabulary, making it easier to review and reflect. *Affective depth* refers to the emotional connection learners build with words, which can make them more memorable. *Semantic networks* help students understand how words relate to one another, such as through synonyms or thematic groups. *Language awareness* fosters students' understanding of how vocabulary functions in language, including word forms and collocations. Lastly, *personalization* allows learners to connect new vocabulary to their own lives and experiences, making learning more meaningful and relevant. By prioritizing vocabulary development, educational institutions can significantly improve students' overall learning experience and better prepare them for the demands of higher education and beyond. In language learning, vocabulary serves as the foundation of communication skills and text comprehension. In the context of language learning, vocabulary includes not only the words themselves, but also

their meaning, usage, and context of use. English vocabulary learning is part of the importance of a basic understanding of English as a medium of understanding knowledge and information in specific contexts globally (Ulumudin et al., 2023). A good understanding of vocabulary allows students to express ideas clearly and effectively, as well as understand the information conveyed by others. Without adequate vocabulary, students' ability to read, write, listen, and speak will be hampered. The process of vocabulary acquisition is often a challenge for many students. Learners often struggle to understand and use new vocabulary in the correct context.

Based on the difficulties, Amalia (2023) stated that students are not familiar with using English dictionaries, students lack understanding of English vocabulary in the material presented, students are not used to using English in everyday life, students are not able to mention vocabulary, synonyms, and antonyms in writing, and students are not able to write words according to the correct spelling. In addition, some factors that affect students' vocabulary skills are; lack of experience reading books or stories that use English, a learning environment that is less supportive of English learning, learning methods used are not appropriate, students' motivation in English, students' age and cognition, and the use of technology.

Difficulties are also experienced by students of grade 10 TSM SMK Islam 2 Wlingi, based on interviews conducted during the preliminary study, students explained that vocabulary conducted during preliminary study, students explained that vocabulary is difficult because of the similarity of pronunciation is difficult because there are similarities about pronunciation, spelling, word many meanings, the number of words, the variety of words in making sentences. This is what causes

learners to be reluctant to learn vocabulary. Learners feel lazy when learning English because they do not understand the meaning of the words. Learners feel that they do not understand the meaning of words in Indonesian.

Based on preliminary research conducted by the researcher, teachers stated that students experienced difficulties in learning English. This was also supported by preliminary results from students. Teachers stated:

“Because I feel that the student's English skills are lacking, I think that in order to improve them, we have to start from the basics, which is vocabulary. Therefore, I decided to use the vocabulary book to help students overcome their difficulties in learning new words.”

(INT01-ETCR-PRE,24/11/2024,08:30, Teacher's Room)

This teacher's statement is in line with the statement from the students, namely Student2, who honestly admits their limited English language skills.:

“Honestly, my English skills are lacking because I didn't study enough in junior high school.”

(INT02-STDNT02-PRE,24/11/2024, 09:45, Classroom)

Meanwhile, Student1 said that his vocabulary skills were still “fair,” indicating that his command of vocabulary was not yet fully developed:

“In my opinion, vocabulary is the words you know, and my level of proficiency is pretty good.”

(INT02-STDNT01-PRE,24/11/2024, 09:35, Classroom)

From these statements, it was clear that both teachers and students recognize that students' vocabulary skills still need to be improved.

In the process of learning vocabulary, students face several significant challenges, both cognitively and emotionally. Based on the interview results, students revealed that they had difficulty understanding and mastering English vocabulary for several reasons.

Student2 (S2) conveying:

“It's really difficult, because sometimes the pronunciation is the same but the meaning is different, then there's the spelling, and usually one word has many meanings, and usually one word in Indonesian can have many equivalents in English.”

(INT02-STDNT02-PRE,24/11/2024, 09:45, Classroom)

The same thing was also mentioned by student 1, who stated:

“It's quite difficult because sometimes the pronunciation is almost the same, but the meaning is different, and usually one word has many meanings depending on the sentence, so it's confusing.”

(INT02-STDNT01-PRE,24/11/2024, 09:35, Classroom)

Student 3 also mentioned the difficulties encountered when learning vocabulary:

“It's quite difficult, because usually when one Indonesian word is translated into English, there can be so many different vocabulary options, so sometimes I don't really understand.”

(INT02-STDNT03-PRE,24/11/2024, 09:55, Classroom)

The following is an explanation of the difficulties experienced by students during the observation process conducted by the researcher in the preliminary stage. The difficulties experienced by students in learning English vocabulary lie in the similarity in the pronunciation of several words, which often confuses them in distinguishing the meanings of several words. For example, words like “she” (she) and “see” (see) have significant differences in meaning despite sounding almost identical when spoken. Based on the preliminary observations conducted by the researcher, students encountered difficulties in pronouncing one of these words, namely ‘she’ and “see.” Students struggled to pronounce both words. Additionally, students also faced challenges in listening to these two words.

The second difficulty students encounter in learning English vocabulary lies in the spelling of words, which often differs greatly from their pronunciation. For

example, the words “though” (although) and “through” (through) have similar pronunciations but very different spellings, confusing students when trying to remember and spell them correctly. This challenge is exacerbated by the lack of consistency in English spelling rules, where certain letter patterns can have different pronunciations in other words, such as in “read” (pronounced /red/ in the past tense) and “read” (pronounced /ri:d/ in the present tense). Based on preliminary observations conducted by researchers, students often struggle with spelling words such as “though” and “through,” as the difference of just one letter in these words confuses students.

The third difficulty students encounter in learning English vocabulary lies in words that have multiple meanings (words with many meanings). For example, the word “run” can mean to run, to operate something like a machine, or to manage a business, depending on the context in which it is used. This uncertainty often confuses students, especially when they are only taught the literal meaning of a word without understanding its context or idiomatic usage. This difficulty is exacerbated by a lack of reading or listening practice in diverse contexts, which should help students recognize how the meaning of a word can change depending on the sentence and situation. In addition, students often have difficulty distinguishing relevant meanings in tasks such as answering questions or understanding English texts, which affects their overall comprehension. Based on preliminary observations conducted by researchers, students have difficulty finding the meaning of the same word in different sentences.

The fourth difficulty students experience in learning English vocabulary lies in the large and varied number of words. English has millions of words that continue

to grow with the development of technology, culture, and science, so students often feel overwhelmed in memorizing and understanding new vocabulary. Additionally, many words in English have synonyms and variations in form, such as the verbs “look,” “gaze,” and “stare,” which have similar meanings but are used in different contexts. Based on the researcher's observations, students struggle to distinguish between words like “look,” “gaze,” and “stare.”

This difficulty can be overcome by implementing a vocabulary book. In implementing a vocabulary book, teachers provide students with a list of foreign vocabulary words to write down in their vocabulary books. In the next meeting, teachers distribute reading texts aimed at helping students understand the meaning of the foreign vocabulary words that were given previously. After reading the text, students are given the task of identifying other foreign vocabulary words and writing them down in their vocabulary books. Next, the teacher gives a follow-up assignment in the form of sentence construction using the vocabulary that has been learned. To reinforce students' understanding, the teacher also conducts a quiz on the vocabulary that has been taught. In the next meeting, the teacher conducts a daily test to measure the extent of students' mastery of the vocabulary that has been learned.

The usage of vocabulary books in the learning process has the potential to significantly improve students' vocabulary skills. Various studies have found that adequate study material, such as vocabulary books, may have a significant effect on vocabulary mastery and general language skills. This is in line with the statement of Faizah and Imamah (2023), which states that storybook media can be an effective tool for increasing vocabulary among early childhood students and

provides implications for educators and policymakers in developing effective literacy interventions. Meanwhile, Amalinda and Widyasari (2022) state that the inclusion of vocabulary books in the learning process has the potential to substantially enhance students' vocabulary skills. Various studies have determined that proper learning materials, such as vocabulary books, can have a major impact on vocabulary mastery and general communication skills.

Research on vocabulary learning has been conducted extensively by previous researchers using various approaches and learning media. Several studies highlight the use of vocabulary notebooks as a means of improving students' vocabulary mastery, both in academic contexts and everyday learning. These results serve as a starting point, showing that simple media can have a positive impact on vocabulary skills.

Relevant previous research on this topic includes a study by Utama and Qomariyah (2022) titled "The Effectiveness of Vocabulary Notebooks in Enhancing Students' Vocabulary Mastery." The results of this study indicate that the use of vocabulary notebooks significantly helps students remember and use vocabulary through independent recording and repetition. Furthermore, research by Nggolaon and Mombilia (2021) under the title "Students' Engagement in Learning Vocabulary through Vocabulary Notebook" reveals that students show enthusiasm and active engagement when learning vocabulary using their personal notebooks, especially because they feel in control of the learning process. The study by Tran and Do (2023) titled "Vocabulary Notebook Use and Its Influence on EFL Learners' Productive Vocabulary" concluded that the use of vocabulary notebooks has a positive impact on the growth of students' productive vocabulary in the

context of learning English as a foreign language. Although these three studies provide important contributions to understanding the use of vocabulary notebooks, most still focus on final outcomes such as vocabulary achievement or student perceptions. Few have thoroughly examined how the implementation of this medium unfolds in vocational classrooms and how student engagement is formed at each stage of vocabulary learning. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the practice of using vocabulary books in the context of vocational schools, not only from the perspective of learning outcomes but also from the process and students' overall responses.

Based on several studies on the use of vocabulary books, there is an improvement in vocabulary skills. This improvement is not only seen in the aspect of the number of vocabulary words mastered, but also includes understanding the context, appropriate use of words, and the ability to distinguish nuances of meaning between similar words. These studies also show that learning methods involving vocabulary books, especially those that are systematically designed and structured, are more effective than passive learning methods such as reading without any active effort to learn and remember new vocabulary. The use of vocabulary books with exercises, example sentences, and comprehension tests significantly contributes to the internalization of new vocabulary into long-term memory. Some studies have even shown that this approach can improve not only passive skills (recognizing words) but also active skills (using words) in spoken and written contexts.

The researcher carried out this study because of the distinctive feature observed at Islamic Vocational High School Islam 2 Wlingi, where vocabulary books serve as the primary means to enhance students' vocabulary proficiency. This is especially

noteworthy given the present time, where digital tools are extensively embedded in language education. Although numerous schools have adopted digital tools and apps, Islamic Vocational High School Islam 2 Wlingi still depends on printed vocabulary books as a fundamental aspect of its English learning approach. Unexpectedly, this conventional method has demonstrated encouraging outcomes in aiding students' vocabulary growth. This distinctiveness was the primary reason the researcher decided to investigate the implementation of the vocabulary book in the classroom and the students' reactions to its use during the learning process.

1.2 Research Focus

Based on the background above, the focus of this research is:

- 1) How does the implementation of the vocabulary books in vocabulary development of the 10th-grade Motorcycle Engineering and Business (TSM) students of Islamic Vocational High School Islam 2 Wlingi?
- 2) How do students respond to the use of vocabulary books in vocabulary development of grade 10 grade Motorcycle Engineering and Business (TSM) students of Islamic Vocational High School Islam 2 Wlingi?

1.3 Research Objective

This research has the following objectives.

- 1) To describe how the implementation of vocabulary books in vocabulary development of the tenth-grade grade Motorcycle Engineering and Business (TSM) students of Islamic Vocational High School Islam 2 Wlingi.
- 2) To describe how students' responses to the use of vocabulary books in vocabulary development of 10th-grade grade Motorcycle Engineering and

Business (TSM) students of Islamic Vocational High School Islam 2 Wlingi.

1.4 Research Significance

This section explains the significance of this research.

1.4.1 Student

It is hoped that with the results of this research, students can find out about learning media that are very flexible and very easy to access, and are also expected to increase motivation and understand how to improve vocabulary skills. In addition, students can learn independently wherever they are.

1.4.2 Teacher

It is hoped that the results of this study will provide valuable insights for teachers on the applications that can be used and how to integrate learning media in vocabulary teaching, as well as the benefits that can be obtained from such an approach to improve students' learning experience.

1.4.3. Stakeholder

It is expected that the results of this study will have broad implications for stakeholders in education. By providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of digital learning, this research helps to shape educational policy, improve teaching practices, and foster innovation in educational technology.

1.5 Research Scope and Limitations

This section explains the limitations and scope of the research.

The scope of this research: 1) This research will involve students of class X TSM at SMK Islam 2 Wlingi. 2) This research focuses on vocabulary development through learning media in a vocabulary book. 3) This research uses a qualitative case study method with data collection using observation and interviews.

The limitation of this research: 1) This research was only conducted at SMK Islam 2 Wlingi, so the results may not be generalized to other SMK / SMA. 2) This research was only conducted in class X TSM, with a total of 28 students who may have different vocabulary abilities from the rest. 3) This research only uses a vocabulary book as a learning medium.

1.6 Definitions of Key Terms

In this research, there are several key terms, and this section will explain the meaning of these key terms.

1.6.1 Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a major factor in a language, as it is needed in speaking, reading, and writing. This means that a person's ability to speak is closely related to the amount of vocabulary they have. In general, vocabulary includes all the words and phrases known and used by individuals in the context of communication, both orally and in writing. Vocabulary is a fundamental element in language learning and use, affecting one's ability to communicate effectively

1.6.2 Vocabulary Book

The vocabulary book in question is a book that contains English vocabulary. This book is given by the English teacher and is used to improve students' vocabulary skills. The book is specifically designed to enrich students' vocabulary, covering a wide range of vocabulary difficulties, from basic words to more difficult terms. As such, it plays a significant role in comprehensively improving students' vocabulary, helping them to communicate more effectively and confidently in English.

1.6.3 Development

Development means an increase. The development intended in this study is an increase in the ability of learners in vocabulary. Vocabulary development in this study is expected to help learners learn vocabulary that can be used in the world of work. The increase in vocabulary is also expected to enable learners to speak using good English fluently. Vocabulary is the basic ability to pronounce sentences.

1.6.4 SMK Islam 2 Wlingi

SMK Islam 2 Wlingi is a vocational high school located at Jl Gajah Mada No 102, Klemunan, Majegan Kec Wlingi Blitar Regency, East Java, 66184. SMK Islam 2 Wlingi is a private school under the auspices of the Nahdlatul Ulama Maarif institution. SMK Islam 2 Wlingi has 4 departments, namely TKRO (Automotive Light Vehicle Engineering), TPM (Mechanical Engineering), TKJ (Computer and Network Engineering), and TSM (Business and Motorcycle Engineering).

1.6.5 A Case Study

The researcher used a qualitative method with a case study design. The case study in this research is used to explore or explore in more detail how vocabulary book learning media is used in improving vocabulary skills.

