CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Vocabulary is one of the key language elements that English learners must master. Vocabulary is all the words known in a particular language or a list of words that individual learners of a language might use, which is considered to have an important role in English learning. David Wilkins, one of the famous linguists as cited in Thornburry (2005:13), described the importance of vocabulary by saying that without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. That shows how necessary vocabulary is in English learning.

English is one of foreign languages taught at junior high school. It is reasonable enough to introduce English in junior high school since it plays an important role. The mastery of English could be a significant requirement in order to be successful in the process of learning. It could be seen from the fact that the most scientific books are written in English and the students are supposed to comprehend those books.

English language at junior high school is included of some elements such as structure, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation. Learning those language elements is intended to support the mastery of English skills like listening, speaking, reading, and writing, not merely for the sake of the mastery of elements.
As a foreign language, English is still considered as a new subject by junior high school students because they learn the subject for the first time. Consequently, they have some difficulty in understanding the subject material and especially that of the English vocabulary. This is the reason why the students’s motivation in learning English is low. This problem also happens in SMP Muhammadiyah Ajibarang. It can be seen during teaching learning process which done at eight grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah Ajibarang. Their motivation was low because they have less confidence, they were afraid when the teacher asked them to speak English. Beside that, the teacher was very reluctant to use impressive and interesting educational media. Mostly, the teacher was still focus only on the texts book (LKS), which seem to be too rigid for children. This situation makes students get difficulties in mastering vocabulary.

As we know that vocabulary is the basic element of language, which has crucial role in language learning. It is supported by the second suggestion by Napa in Sulasno (2000:2), He argued” vocabulary is one of the basic components of language and that no language exist without word”.

Vocabulary acquisition is really needed by English learners Because it support the students in learning the target language. Anyway , many students find it difficult to learn as they have to memorise the words terms of their meaning, spellings and pronunciation. It is why the writer tries to study the English vocabulary problem of junior high School students. In this study, the researcher takes the eight grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah Ajibarang.
B. Reasons of Choosing Topic

Vocabulary is a part of language element that supports students to master language skills. Many students get difficulties in learning vocabulary so the writer wants to know the students problems in learning vocabulary.

C. Problem of the Study

Based on the reason of choosing topic, the problems of this research can be stated as follows:

1. What difficulties do the students encounter in learning vocabulary?
2. What is the dominant problem faced by the eight grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah Ajibarang in learning vocabulary?

D. The Aims of Study

1. To know the vocabulary aspect in which the students get some difficulties.
2. To know the major problem faced by the eight grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah Ajibarang.

E. Contribution of the Study

This research hopefully can give some contributions as follows:

1. The teacher can some problems that are faced by the eight grade students in recognize and overcoming the problems in learning vocabulary.
2. The students are relize some problems related to Vocabulary learning in the classroom.
F. Clarification of the terms

To gain understanding between the writer and the reader, the writer states the clarification of the terms are as follows:

1. Learning Vocabulary

Learning vocabulary is not the same as learning grammar. Even according to Wilga Rivers, a leading linguist some years ago in Thornbury (2007:144), vocabulary cannot by taught, instead, it can be presented, explained, included in all kind of activities and experienced in all manner of association. However, vocabulary is ultimately, learned by individual, not commonly taught by the teacher.

2. Students Problem of learning

Resman in Sulasno (2000:1) said that there are some problems indirectly faced by students in learning vocabulary. The items such in pronunciation, spelling, memorizing, and using words in sentences or in oral communication.