

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Research

Vocabulary has an important role in foreign language learning. When students are rich in vocabulary, of course this really helps them in mastering the four skills which include listening, speaking, reading, and writing foreign languages. Richards and Renandya (2002) also stated the importance of vocabulary that vocabulary has an important role in foreign language learning and language proficiency which can affect how much students mastery in speaking, listening, reading and writing. For this reason, vocabulary is considered as one of the main factors that have a major influence on community communication.

The author argues that vocabulary is one of the important aspects of language learning because vocabulary contains meaning which is used in communication. According to Martanegara (1993), vocabulary is a language component that stores all information about the meaning and usage of words in a language. Rivers (in Nunan, 1991) says that the vocabulary is important to be able to master a second language or a second language. Willkins in Thornbury (2002) concludes that without vocabulary itself to communicate or convey messages. Kweldju (2004) and Priyono (2004) found that the limited vocabulary of students is a major problem for students in learning English. Kebiel (2012) has also investigated teacher and student perceptions of English vocabulary learning strategies. From the research, it can be concluded that

most of the teachers and students do not have the knowledge of how to implement the right vocabulary learning strategies.

Vocabulary teaching aims to understand the concept of foreign words, acquire more vocabulary, and use these words according to the right context for communicative purposes (Cahyono and Widiati, 2008). Meanwhile, Intraprasert (2004) says that the main objectives of vocabulary learning are: 1) to find the meaning of a new word; 2) to retain knowledge of newly learned words; and 3) to expand knowledge of English vocabulary.

Before pandemic, students of SMK Muhammdiyah 1 Purbalingga carried out offline English learning. They learn vocabulary through learning activities. The teacher instructs the students to read the text to build and enrich their vocabulary mastery. The teacher helps students learn vocabulary by capturing its meaning contextually. In early 2020, COVID-19 got worse, thus making teaching and learning activities in schools cancelled to comply with government regulations. The limited guidance from the teacher makes it difficult for students to learn English.

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed aspects of teaching and learning activities. This has a negative impact on students' self-motivation, where they have to try hard to learn vocabulary independently without guidance from the teacher. As long as students learn English, they still find many problems, especially in mastering vocabulary. Although they can learn vocabulary with the help of a dictionary, they still have difficulty in determining the meaning and how to pronounce the vocabulary. This research is intended to investigate and identify students' problems in learning students' vocabulary.

B. The Reason of Choosing the Topic

- a. Investigating problems in learning vocabulary is important to do because to find out what problems hinder students in learning vocabulary, so that researchers can determine what steps will be taken to improve students' vocabulary mastery.
- b. Vocabulary is a major part of learning English because it can help them in mastering the four skills which include listening, speaking, reading, and writing a foreign language.

C. Research Questions

1. What are the students' problems in improving their vocabulary during online learning?
2. What are the students' strategies to overcome problems in improving their vocabulary?

D. The Aim of the Research

This research was aimed at:

1. Finding out students' problems in improving their vocabulary during pandemic.
2. Looking for students' strategies to overcome problems in improving their vocabulary.

E. Contribution of the Research

1. For Student

The results of this study are expected to increase students' knowledge about the importance of learning English to improve their vocabulary mastery, so that they can write and speak using appropriate vocabulary.

2. For School

The results of this study are expected to provide information to schools about the problems experienced by students in English and provide information about the causes and ways to overcome these problems.

3. For Researcher

This research can be useful reference for other researcher to conduct research with the same topic. In addition, it can also be used as a motivation for other researchers to develop another research.