

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

In English language teaching, vocabulary is one of the critical aspects of successful language learning because it is essential to listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Pan & Xu, 2011, p. 1). It is difficult for us to deliver messages when we cannot produce (in speaking and writing activities) the words needed to provide our intended meaning (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 19). Similarly, we may have difficulty understanding when we encounter words (in listening and reading activities) that we do not know. So, Biber and Conrad (2001), as cited by Webb and Nation (2017, p. 19), stated that enhancing lexical knowledge strengthens the foundation of learning other aspects of language: pragmatics, syntax, morphology, and phonology.

Thus, the teacher must support students in enriching their vocabulary and guide them in using it for both education and life. The teacher gives more attention to language so that students can understand what they listen and read (receptive vocabulary) and what they speak and write (expressive vocabulary) when they comprehend sufficient words (Pikulski & Templeton, 2004, p. 1). According to He and Seepho, the students need to learn essential words in EFL for effective teaching and efficient learning. They added (as cited by McCarthy, 1990) that no matter students' grammar and pronunciation competency, without words to convey their intended meaning, communication in L2 has no meaning.

Many studies have shown the significant role of vocabulary in English language skills. Sen and Kuleli (2015) argued that students could do better reading if they have more vocabulary. In his research, Shen (2013, p. 84) found that specific vocabulary knowledge adds a noticeable 14.5% of explained variance in reading comprehension. This can be explained by the ability of students to infer from the context, activate content schemata, and know the polysemy of words. It is found that the learners often overestimate their understanding of words. Students could also achieve better in reading comprehension tests because they comprehended the vocabulary list before (Tze & Chou, 2011). In his research, Viera (2017, p. 99) showed that sufficient vocabulary instruction strengthens students' writing product since they can produce precise vocabulary terms.

Meanwhile, other studies stated that lack of vocabulary affects the inability to speak English (Khan et al., 2018). In other words, having a varied vocabulary, students would have a good speaking ability to convey ideas. In listening skills, oral vocabulary elicits adequate listening comprehension (Hazrat & Hessamy, 2013). They are considering how vital vocabulary is for students, and inevitably, students should master large numbers of words (Nation, 2000) to master the material (speaking, writing, reading, and listening).

Recently, some studies about vocabulary coverage of textbooks give a view about the number of words students should master. Aziez and Aziez (2018a) stated that vocabulary coverage of junior high school textbooks (JHS TBs) belongs to 4,000-5,000 frequent words. Other research (Mutiara, 2014) revealed that vocabulary coverage of JHS TBs in grade seven belongs to the 2,000 most frequent

terms of the General Service List (GSL) 1 and 2. In line with those studies, some English teachers in junior high school (JHS) respond to what students need: 1) students should master more vocabulary, and 2) there should be an effort to develop students' vocabulary mastery. On average, they added that students lack vocabulary mastery, not directly understanding the class material. Further, some students also realize they must enrich their vocabulary to understand the textbook material since a lack of vocabulary causes difficulty with English. To improve vocabulary, students must learn more about words, and one of the efforts to involve students in vocabulary mastery is putting vocabulary exercises in the learning activity.

Dunmore (1989) in Hashemzadeh (2012, p. 2) highlighted the need for exercise types in vocabulary learning, and he also emphasized the significance of context in understanding the meaning of unknown words. Wesche and Paribakht (1994, p. 14) stated that reading activities accompanied by text-based vocabulary exercises lead students to gain more substantial knowledge. They added English instruction would be more effective. A recent study done by Hashemzadeh (2012, p. 10) also indicated that providing vocabulary exercises increases students' vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary activity and even exercise are far from attention either in the textbook or classroom activity (Aziez & Aziez, 2018a, p. 67). And it would be interesting to relate vocabulary activity within the textbook (Orío, 2014, p. 37) to students' vocabulary input. The textbook, as the primary tool in a learning activity of any subject, including English, plays a vital role in facilitating teachers and students (Aziez & Aziez, 2018b, p. 66; Gak, n.d., p. 1).

Instead, the quality of textbooks is affected by the quality and the quantity of language input inside (Orío, 2014, p. 1), which would construct students' knowledge (Behnke, 2018, p. 383). The teacher must consider the textbook's quality since a well-designed textbook potentially makes learning more fun, lasting, and meaningful (Behnke, 2018, p. 383) cited from Morgan (2014). Still, it engages students' cognition through visual processing, analytical thinking, exercise, verbal reasoning, or even testing hypotheses. Further, the Textbook Committee of the Education Bureau, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (2016) explains the quality of the textbook in more detail. The principle of an ideal or good textbook is that it could support a student-focused curriculum. Equally, the textbook must be interactive in arousing students' interest, engaging them, and involving them in the learning process. In other words, textbooks tell, affect, and interact with students. An ideal textbook should achieve the purpose of developing textbooks (Hansen, 2018, p. 369), i.e., to target and frame teaching, disseminate content, set assignments, and supply scaffolding for student activities to provide homework support and guide teachers.

Now, related to students' vocabulary needs, Aziez (2011, p. 26), in his research, gives a view on inappropriate vocabulary load in a national exam (NE). In the junior high school national examination, a more significant proportion of dialogues requires students to know 109 new word families or 24.29% of the texts' total types (different words). A recent study about vocabulary input in English textbooks found that the vocabulary levels of Junior high school textbooks are too high (Aziez & Aziez, 2018a, p. 76). It is stated that Indonesian English textbooks

may fail to develop textbooks in which the high vocabulary level in the texts, exercise, and instruction may result in the textbooks' low readability index. Regarding the quality and ideal of textbooks, as explained in the previous paragraph, it is clear that the English textbook condition in Indonesia is far from ideal since it was not developed through careful consideration, especially in vocabulary input. Some English teachers in SMP Al Irsyad Al Islamiyyah Purwokerto also give opinions that the textbook used has not supported students' vocabulary mastery; 2) there is no specific discussion about vocabulary in the textbook from the government, "When English Rings a Bell" (Revised in 2017).

Regarding some of the factors above, some SMP Al Irsyad Al Islamiyyah Purwokerto teachers agreed to develop an English vocabulary workbook for the seventh grade. Following English teachers in the MGMP forum, they also support the development of a vocabulary workbook. Yet, the vocabulary workbook development is based on the vocabulary provided in the used book, "When English Rings a Bell." Developing a vocabulary workbook would be an effective medium to enhance students' word banks. Although the textbook would not be appropriate in the digital era 4.0, our educational practice still needs textbooks. Aziez and Aziez (2018a, p. 66) stated that influence is the centrality of the textbook in Indonesia; even the ever-growing use of an electronic device for instructional purposes cannot take over the role of textbooks so far in the classroom. Besides that, students also need media to enrich their vocabulary so they would not struggle to learn English material since they have sufficient words to help them understand the material.

Thus, this study will develop a contextual vocabulary workbook for seventh-grade students.

B. Limitation of Research

This study only develops a vocabulary workbook on chapter V of the seventh-grade Junior High School (JHS) textbook, revised in 2017, entitled "When English Rings a Bell."

C. Problem of Research

This study is applied to clarify some problems. The researcher concentrates on some issues as follows:

1. What are the teachers' and students' needs in vocabulary learning?
2. How could the developed workbook meet the teachers' and students' needs?
3. How is the validity of the designed workbook according to the expert?
4. How is the teachers' response toward the developed workbook?

D. The Research Objectives

This study is intended to:

1. Identify the teachers and students about the needs in learning vocabulary.
2. Develop a vocabulary workbook based on the target words from chapter five of the textbook "When English Rings a Bell" to enhance the students' vocabulary mastery.
3. Validate the developed workbook based on the expert justification,
4. Reveal the response from English teachers about the designed workbook

E. The Significance of Research

This research scientifically develops a vocabulary workbook to support students' vocabulary mastery in SMP Al Irsyad Al Islamiyyah Purwokerto. It is utilized as the medium in English instruction beyond the textbook used by the government. There are two advantages, practical and theoretical, of developing a vocabulary workbook:

1. Theoretically

The theoretical significance of the thesis lies in its potential to contribute to existing theoretical frameworks in education, language acquisition, and curriculum development, providing a foundation for understanding how contextual vocabulary workbooks can be practical tools for enhancing the language skills of seventh-grade students.

2. Practical value

a. For students

The book could be a learning resource for studying vocabulary

b. For teacher

- 1) Teachers could use the book in English instruction
- 2) Teachers may use it to improve student's vocabulary mastery
- 3) The teacher could use this textbook to enhance English material during teaching and learning.