

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Research

The first important thing for learning English is vocabulary mastery. Without sufficient vocabulary mastery, students will have difficulty comprehending the target language. David Wilkins (in Bloom & Reenen, 2013) summed up the definition of vocabulary, “Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed”. This shows how vital vocabulary is for foreign language learners like the majority of Indonesian students. According to Kamil & Hiebert (2005), defined vocabulary as knowledge of words and word meanings. The more vocabulary they master, the easier it is for students to comprehend English language content.

Vocabulary plays a significant role in every basic skill of English. Because every term that is used in a language is part of the vocabulary. The ability to understand word meanings is known as vocabulary (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005). It means we can't perform English without knowing the meaning of words in a language. That is also why it impacts the basic skills of speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Finochiaro in (Suardi & Sakti, 2019) stated that teaching vocabulary is crucial in language learning since acquiring a strong vocabulary enables students to acquire abilities including speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Therefore, to improve the four basic skills, learning an adequate vocabulary is a must.

Suardi and Sakti (2019) stated that “Success in learning English requires vocabulary acquisition”. To achieve good English, students must learn words alongside they learn other materials in the learning process. It can be said that it is a critical tool for foreign language learners as a limited vocabulary is detrimental to successful communication. Related to that Schmitt (2000 in Alqahtani, 2015) said that lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and the acquisition of a second language. Students who had less vocabulary experience some difficulties when learning a language. They had difficulty following the flow of learning, and difficulty did the assignments because they did not fully understand the questions or instructions given. On the contrary, good vocabulary mastery would facilitate students in conveying their ideas or thoughts. They can easily find the appropriate words to express their thoughts.

On the other hand, teaching vocabulary is not easy, especially for foreign language students. Nation (2006 in Suardi & Sakti, 2019) viewed vocabulary items are merely tedious lists of words that learners need to learn and store in memory. Memorizing is the main activity of vocabulary class, and it is often boring if the teachers do not use interesting techniques to present the words. As a result, the students get bored quickly and lose their attention. In addition, because they did not use English in their daily conversations, they didn't feel like they need to learn it as much. Several causes that make the difficulties in teaching vocabulary were mentioned by Suardi and Sakti (2019), namely, teachers have difficulties selecting the appropriate words to be taught, many students pay short attention to the class, students lack understanding of the vocabulary that has been

taught and have no interest to look for the meaning, and passive behavior during the learning process. From these problems, the researchers concluded that if the students have a lack of interest in learning English and did not engage in the learning process, teachers must find a way to raise the student's attention and engagement in vocabulary activities so they can improve their vocabulary mastery.

As many researchers said interest is the best teacher (Zhao, 2014). It means students' interests have an impact on the learning process, encompassing vocabulary learning. In definition, interest is a psychological state characterized by increased attention, effort, and affect towards a particular object or topic, and an enduring predisposition to re-engage with that object or topic over time (Harackiewicz et al., 2016). Students who have an interest in learning English get enjoy and focus on the learning process, they get curious and find a way to be satisfied in the topic that has been taught. Therefore, not only in the English time the students learn, but they also have the motivation to learn English outside the class.

Interest is a powerful motivational process that energizes learning and guides academic and career trajectories (Renninger & Hidi, 2016). From the statement, we can conclude that students' interest has an important role in the learning process. When a topic is related to what the students enjoy doing, their attitude about the subject will be more deep as they will have the courage to devote time to learning, discussing, and expressing their ideas clearly and concisely (McCarthy, 2014). By increasing students' interest in learning English,

students expected to be willingly paid attention to the lesson and were more engaged in learning. As a result, students would achieve good results in English lessons.

Seeing the influence of student interest on learning success. Researcher assume that students with a good level of interest in learning English also have good vocabulary skills. Based on researcher observations during English lessons in seventh-grade classes of MTsN 1 Blitar City, when English learning takes place there are still students who are not focused and busy themselves so they do not pay attention to learning. Seeing this situation, the researcher assumed that there were still many students who lacked interest in learning English, so they did not pay attention to learning properly. The researcher was curious whether the students who did not pay attention to learning well, how the acquisition of English achievement. With this phenomenon, the researcher wanted to carried out research at MTsN 1 Blitar City to see whether children who have a good interest in learning language also have good vocabulary skills, considering that vocabulary is a basic elemnt for mastering English as a compulsory subject at the school.

This research conducted by referring to several previous studies that linked to students' interest and students vocabulary mastery. First, the study on the relationship between reading interest and vocabulary mastery of fifth-grade students of SDN Gempol Sari conducted by Sintawati F., Nurfitriana M., Nupus N. (2015) showed that there was a significant correlation between the two variables. It can be seen that students' interest in reading affected their vocabulary mastery. The difference between their study and this research was the independent

variables, if the previous study used students' reading interests, this study used students' interest in learning English. Second, the study held by M. Ridho A., Nurdiana, and Afrizal (2022) about the correlation between students' interest in game activities and students' vocabulary mastery in the fourth semester at the English education department of UIN Suska Riau. Their study showed that there was no significant correlation between students' interest in the game and their vocabulary mastery. The difference between their study and this study was the topic of interest that was used as an independent variable if the previous was game activities while this research used learning English. The result was no correlation between the variables.

From viewing the previous studies, many topics of interest has been used for research variable that connected to the vocabulary skill. In this research, the researcher wanted to know if the topic was students' interest in learning English, whether it had a significant correlation or not with vocabulary mastery, since there was a statement by Amjah (2014) that interest is one of the strongest motivations for learning English. Here, the researcher used learning English as a topic which was different from previous studies that used various topics of interest. Considering the result, it hoped that teachers can make considerations for developing strategies and lesson plans for future learning development.

## **B. Research Problem**

Is there any significant correlation between students' level of interest in learning English and their mastery of vocabulary at the 7th Grade of State Islamic Junior High School 1 of Blitar City?

### **C. Objective of The Research**

To know whether there is any significant correlation between students' level of interest in learning English and their mastery of vocabulary at the 7th Grade level of State Islamic Junior High School 1 of Blitar City

### **D. Research Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub> : there is no significant correlation between students' interest in learning English and their vocabulary mastery in 7<sup>th</sup> grade of MTsN 1 Blitar City

H<sub>a</sub> : there is a significant correlation between students' interest in learning English and their vocabulary mastery in 7<sup>th</sup> grade of MTsN 1 Blitar City

### **E. Significance of the Research**

#### 1. For English Teachers

The teacher know the level of students' vocabulary mastery. Furthermore, teachers would determine how important is interest in the process of English learning. Teachers would search what an effective stimulant to make their English class more interesting to increase the students' engagement.

#### 2. For Students

The result of this research expected to provide a reflection for the students so that their vocabulary mastery and their motivation in learning English improve and the students can increase their scores in English.

#### 3. For Further Researcher

The result of this study might be used by other researchers as a reference to conduct future researches that have relation to students' interest in learning English and vocabulary mastery

#### **F. Scope and Limitation of The Research**

This current research focuses on correlation between students' interest in learning English and students' vocabulary mastery. The scope of this study is scores of students' interest in learning English level and the scores of students' vocabulary mastery. This research is limited only on the topic of interest of learning English and vocabulary skill of the seventh-grader students' of MTsN 1 Kota Blitar.

#### **G. Definition of Key Terms**

##### 1. Students' Interest in Learning English

Students' interest in learning English means that students give a lot of attention and curiosity, and voluntarily spend time to continue to engage, learn, and seek more knowledge about English.

##### 2. Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery in English refers to an individual's ability to explore and understand every word in the language.