

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the research problem, the research objectives, the significance of the research, the scope and limitations of the research, and the definition of keywords.

A. Background of the study

Vocabulary is the main foundation in learning English, because without sufficient vocabulary mastery, students will have difficulty understanding reading, listening, speaking, and writing in English. Vocabulary is an important component that supports the four language skills besides grammar.¹ It plays a key role in helping students comprehend texts, express ideas, and interact effectively in various contexts. Without a strong vocabulary, students are unable to grasp the full meaning of spoken or written messages and may struggle to express their own thoughts clearly. Therefore, vocabulary acquisition should be prioritized in English language teaching, and teachers need to apply strategies that help students develop vocabulary in a meaningful and engaging way.

Vocabulary mastery is very important so that students can communicate effectively, both in academic contexts and in everyday life. According to Nurhayati, vocabulary helps people in arranging sentences to communicate and

¹ Julia Afriani, 'The Effect of Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) on Student' Vocabulary Mastery at SMPN 8 Kota Bengkulu', *Teaching English and Language Learning English Journal (TELLE)*, 02.02 (2022), p. 138.

can make the language more varied.² In other words, vocabulary not only helps students construct sentences, but also enriches the variety of language they use. However, in reality, many junior high school students still have difficulty mastering English vocabulary. This problem is very apparent when students are given English assignments; many of them tend to rely on translation applications such as Google Translate to complete their tasks. As a result, students do not truly understand the meaning of the words used, so their vocabulary remains very limited. They are only able to copy the translation results without understanding the context and usage of the word in a sentence, which makes them less confident when they have to speak or write in English without the help of a translation tool.

During two observations conducted on April 23rd 2024, and April 30th 2024, the researcher identified several challenges faced by eighth-grade students at MTs Darussalam Rejotangan in learning English vocabulary. These observations were carried out during the implementation of the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) in the experimental class. One of the main findings indicated that students' vocabulary comprehension was still quite low. When working with narrative texts, many students struggled to understand key vocabulary such as "rescued," "hunter," and "trapped," which affected their ability to grasp the overall meaning of the story. Moreover, the researcher noted frequent difficulties in pronunciation and spelling. Words such as "forest,"

² Dwi Astuti Wahyu Nurhayati, 'Learning Basic Grammar Using Task-Based Learning: A Perspective on Analyzing Online Media Text', *IJELTAL (Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics)*, 4.1 (2019), p. 19, doi:10.21093/ijeltal.v4i1.284.

“helped,” and “cried” were often mispronounced or misspelled, for example as “cread” or “helpid,” showing that students were not yet familiar with the past tense form of common verbs. These errors also impacted their confidence when speaking or discussing vocabulary. Some students hesitated when asked to explain the words they had chosen, indicating a lack of confidence in their vocabulary understanding. Many relied on guessing the meaning of words rather than applying appropriate strategies, which often led to misunderstandings. This issue was worsened by students’ prior learning habits, which were mostly passive and centered around filling out worksheets, with little opportunity for interaction or critical engagement.

These challenges can be analyzed through the lens of Cognitive Load Theory, which emphasizes the importance of balancing the mental effort required in learning to prevent cognitive overload. According to the theory, effective learning occurs when instructional design minimizes unnecessary cognitive demands and optimizes meaningful engagement with the material.³ which emphasizes the importance of managing cognitive demands in the learning process. At the beginning of the VSS implementation, students may have experienced a high cognitive load due to exposure to new vocabulary and unfamiliar instructional methods. However, the steps involved in VSS such as word selection, contextual discussion, and presentation helped gradually reduce the extraneous load and promoted meaningful engagement with the material.

³ John Sweller, ‘Cognitive Load during Problem Solving: Effects on Learning’, *Cognitive Science*, 12.2 (1988), pp. 257–85, doi:10.1016/0364-0213(88)90023-7.

Inadequate vocabulary mastery significantly hinders students' ability to understand texts or communicate effectively so it is important to acquire more vocabulary.⁴ Therefore, it is essential for educators to implement learning strategies that not only support vocabulary development but also actively engage students in the learning process, making them more involved and responsible for their own learning. Strategies like the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS), when combined with effective instructional design based on Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), can help improve vocabulary mastery without overwhelming students' cognitive capacity. This combination allows students to focus on essential content while minimizing unnecessary mental effort, ultimately making vocabulary learning more efficient and meaningful.

The second observation, conducted on April 30th 2024, focused on the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English vocabulary. One of the main issues identified was the limited time allocation for English lessons. Teachers only had two sessions per week (totaling 80 minutes) to teach English, which restricted their ability to cover vocabulary material thoroughly and to implement engaging vocabulary-building activities. Managing large class sizes further compounded this problem, making it difficult for teachers to monitor each student's vocabulary acquisition and provide individual support. Additionally, teaching methodologies presented further obstacles. Some teachers still relied on traditional approaches, such as assigning vocabulary lists

⁴ Dwi Astuti Wahyu Nurhayati, 'USING PICTURE SERIES TO INSPIRE READING COMPREHENSION FOR THE SECOND SEMESTER STUDENTS Abstract', 14.2 (2014), pp. 176–89.

from textbooks or worksheets for students to memorize, with minimal exposure to authentic language use during lessons. For example, instead of encouraging students to actively collect and discuss new vocabulary themselves, lessons often focused on completing isolated exercises. This approach not only reduced opportunities for students to practice vocabulary in meaningful contexts but also failed to leverage the teacher's role as a language model. The researcher also noted a lack of diverse teaching media and interactive activities, which contributed to student disengagement. Some students were observed to be sleepy, leaving the classroom with permission, or simply not paying attention during lessons. Without dynamic and interactive vocabulary learning strategies, it became challenging to maintain students' interest and motivation in learning English.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that students need a supportive and conducive learning environment to become more actively engaged in learning English. This involves providing opportunities for them to freely express their thoughts through interactive and enjoyable learning activities. Such engaging activities are essential for enhancing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Therefore, it is important to implement a learning strategy that is not only enjoyable and communicative but also meaningful and student-centered. An effective learning model encourages students to be actively involved both physically and mentally, giving them chances to interact, practice, and think critically. Through critical thinking, students are guided to analyze, evaluate, and apply the vocabulary

they have learned in meaningful contexts, which strengthens their long-term retention and use. Referring to Bloom's Taxonomy (Crumb, 1983) as a guide, learning activities can progress from basic cognitive skills such as remembering and understanding vocabulary to higher-order skills like applying it in real-life contexts, analyzing its meaning, and even creating sentences or descriptions. To support this process, teachers can integrate relevant media or instructional strategies. One such strategy is the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS), which encourages students to identify and discuss key vocabulary from texts. This strategy not only enhances vocabulary mastery but also promotes learner autonomy and critical thinking in the learning process.

This study is also supported by previous research showing the effectiveness of VSS in vocabulary mastery. Waro found that the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) is effective in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery,⁵ especially in their English subject. Similar results were obtained by Nafisa who stated that VSS is not only effective in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery but also increases their learning motivation after being taught using the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy.⁶ In this study, it is expected that the use of the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) will have a significant impact, particularly on eighth-grade students at MTs Darussalam Rejotangan. This study aims not only to improve students' vocabulary mastery but also to

⁵ Chusnul Waro and others, *The Effectiveness of Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy on Students' Vocabulary Mastery Faculty of Educational Sciences, PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 2019

⁶ Amilaton Nafisa, 'The Effectiveness of Self-Collection Strategy on Students' Vocabulary Mastery', no. December (2022)

create a more effective learning experience by managing cognitive load. According to Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988), effective learning occurs when instructional design minimizes unnecessary cognitive demands and optimizes meaningful engagement with the material. Therefore, the implementation of VSS is expected to help students manage the mental effort required in learning vocabulary, enabling better understanding and meaningful application of vocabulary in various contexts.

In vocabulary learning using the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS), students are divided into small groups to discuss and share difficult and important words from the texts they study. Through this strategy, students actively collect, discuss, and understand vocabulary independently and collaboratively. This approach helps reduce students' cognitive load because they do not merely memorize words without context but connect vocabulary with meaningful definitions and real usage. Moreover, VSS promotes a more interactive and meaningful learning process. By actively participating in selecting and discussing vocabulary, students' motivation to learn increases as they feel they have an active role in the learning process. Group learning also strengthens students' social and communication skills as they work together to comprehend the material.

This study aims to measure the effectiveness of using the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) to improve English vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students at MTs Darussalam Rejotangan. The vocabulary taught includes basic words relevant to the learning context and daily life, with

activities such as selecting difficult and important words from texts, discussing their meanings, and using the vocabulary in sentences. Evaluation is conducted through tests that assess students' understanding, retention, and application of the vocabulary learned. This research focuses on utilizing the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) in teaching vocabulary to support the creation of more engaging and effective English learning methods for junior high school students. The findings aim to offer practical suggestions for educators and policy makers to incorporate VSS as a tool to enhance students' motivation, academic performance, and proficiency in English.

B. Research Problem

Based on the issues raised above, the problem can be expressed as follows:

“Is there any significant difference in vocabulary mastery of the students at MTs Darussalam Rejotangan taught using the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS), compared to those taught without VSS?”

C. Objectives of the Research

Following the formulation of the research problem above, the researcher emphasizes that the research objective in this study is to investigate whether there is a significant difference in the vocabulary mastery of students at MTs Darussalam Rejotangan who are taught using Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS), compared to those taught without using VSS.

D. Significance of the Research

a) Teacher

For teachers, this research is expected to provide an alternative strategy for learning English, especially in teaching vocabulary using the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy.

b) Students

The research is expected to assist students in learning English by employing innovative and enjoyable learning approaches that differ from typical English learning methods. With this research, students are also expected to be interested in learning English, particularly in enhancing their vocabulary. So that children can better understand and extend their vocabulary.

c) Future Researcher

Future researchers can use this as a reference for additional research on VSS (Vocabulary Self-collection Strategy) and other ways to increase the quality of English language learning teaching methodologies, including vocabulary mastery.

E. Scope and Limitation of the Study

1. Scope

The scope of the research covers teaching vocabulary using the vocabulary self-collection strategy of the eighth grade at MTs Darussalam Rejotangan.

2. Limitation

The researcher limits the research to the effectiveness of teaching English by using a vocabulary self-collection (VSS) strategy for students' vocabulary mastery in eighth grade of MTs Darussalam Rejotangan.

F. Definition of Key Terms

This section contains some explanations based on the titles stated in previous articles. The title is “The Effectiveness of Self-Collection Strategy Toward Students' Vocabulary Mastery of the Eighth-Grade Students at Mts Darussalam Rejotangan”.

1) Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy

The Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) was first introduced by Martha Rapp Haggard (1982), who emphasized that collecting vocabulary increases students' sensitivity to new words and fosters enjoyment in learning. Later, Haggard (2003) further explained that VSS helps students expand their vocabulary by connecting new words to meaningful life experiences. This strategy encourages students to actively select, discuss, and reflect on important words from texts, making vocabulary learning more engaging, contextual, and personally relevant.

2) Vocabulary Mastery

According to Arisman (2021), vocabulary mastery has an important role in understanding every language. It means that the student needs vocabulary because without vocabulary students cannot convey ideas, opinions, or anything else. Therefore, vocabulary is a core component aspect when

learning English. Vocabulary mastery involves knowledge of a word's meaning, use in context, form, as well as its relationship with other words. This theory emphasizes that vocabulary is an important component of language skills and is learned through various approaches, such as repetition and contextual learning.