

## ANALYZING STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN MASTERING VOCABULARY AT SMP PANGERAN ANTASARI

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to ascertain the vocabulary comprehension challenges faced by students. Lack of vocabulary makes it difficult for students to communicate in a foreign language. Because of this, scholars are inspired to investigate the issues that students encounter and the methods they employ to resolve them. The descriptive qualitative research approach used in this study is centered on vocabulary challenges. Because the students' vocabulary knowledge was still lacking and the previous study results suggested that they had trouble understanding English classes, the researcher decided to use eighth-grade students as research participants in this investigation. Researchers employed observation, document examination, and interviews to gather data. According to the study's findings, students encountered many. Difficulty learning vocabulary, such as having trouble recalling words in context. Out of all the students, only twelve were able to provide answers that were higher than the minimum. Aside from that, each student's average score is 57.5%, with a minimum of 40 and a maximum of 71. This demonstrates that pupils struggle with answering. Aside from that, they employ a variety of approaches to problem-solving, including teaching pupils new techniques, providing examples, and translating. determining the reasons behind the vocabulary learning challenges that kids face. The first language in which pupils struggle with word pronunciation is English. The second reason is grammatical form, since spoken and written English differ in this regard. Students do not pay attention to learning English further, know more words, and limit their time to sources of information about new vocabulary. Lastly, it's easy to forget the words.

**Keywords:** *Student Difficulty, Vocabulary Mastery, Vocabulary Difficulty*



## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is one of the important things we have to learn, especially if we study English. From vocabulary we can speak, write, and so on. However, if our vocabulary is low, it will have an impact on these four aspects. Meanwhile, if our vocabulary is larger, we can speak, read, listen, and write as we wish. Vocabulary writing and spoken English are different. This makes students confused. Vocabulary building is a crucial component of learning a foreign language, so language acquisition as word meaning is frequently stressed, both in literature and in the classroom, according to Aristya (2018, p. 1). As a result, students must first master vocabulary before learning English. According to Harmer (2007, p. 102) learning English involves more than just acquiring the four language abilities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It also involves studying vocabulary, grammar, and collocations. One of the linguistic aspects of learning English is expanding one's vocabulary. Vocabulary learning is a prerequisite for learning English language skills. Junior high school students must understand vocabulary when learning English. This is because early vocabulary-related events have a significant impact on pupils' language development. Students in junior high school are taught multiple methods for expanding their vocabulary. When the student grows older and takes it in high school, this will develop. While learning in middle school and high school is similar, middle school kids need more specialized attention due to their concrete or semi-abstract psychological development. The students learn vocabulary content words because the students are the main words that dominate the English language.

Students had trouble understanding vocabulary, according to research by Aristya (2018), which involved interviewing junior high school students in the Madiun district of East Java. Some students have trouble recalling certain verbs from their vocabulary, for example. It is challenging for them to comprehend language used in sentence patterns. Additionally, some pupils struggle to comprehend word meanings. Some pupils reported having trouble writing or pronouncing words in the English language. Every kid seems to face unique challenges when it comes to learning a language. According to Cameron in Gushendra (2017, p. 54-55), indicators of Students' difficulties in mastering vocabulary include students having difficulty pronouncing vocabulary, students having difficulty spelling vocabulary, students having difficulty mastering grammar, and students having difficulty understanding the meaning of vocabulary. That is the most common difficulty experienced by students in developing



vocabulary mastery. According to a study by Surmanov and Azimova (2020), the most important aspect of language learning is the acquisition and retention of vocabulary. The primary goal of this study is to identify the different kinds of vocabulary acquisition challenges that five schoolchildren encountered. The findings of the study showed that pupils had a variety of issues or challenges when acquiring language. One of the main challenges that students have is pronouncing words correctly. Another issue is that acquiring vocabulary can be challenging for pupils due to repetitive phrases, which are words with several grammatical forms. Salawazo et al. (2020) carried out another study titled "An Analysis of Students Vocabulary in Learning Vocabulary." This study examined the vocabulary of English language learners at the Pangeran Antasari Foundation Private Middle School in Medan during the 2018–19 school year. The findings indicate that pronunciation issues are the root cause of pupils' vocabulary learning challenges in English. Another factor contributing to pupils' difficulties distinguishing between spoken and written forms in the English language system is grammatical form. Additional findings indicate that pupils quickly forget words they have just learned. This occurs when most pupils don't take their English language studies seriously or when they don't have enough time to study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Gaining proficiency in vocabulary is the most crucial factor in facilitating the acquisition of key linguistic abilities. One of the language components that must be acquired is vocabulary. Students can readily enhance language skills including speaking, listening, reading, and writing if they have a strong vocabulary. According to Hatch & Brown (1995), learning vocabulary involves five key steps: 1) having resources to locate new words; 2) gaining a clear understanding of new word forms through both visual and auditory means; 3) understanding word meanings; 4) creating a strong correlation between word form and meaning, and 5) using these words in context.

According to Djiwandono (1996) in Siswati (2012, p. 13), there are two types of vocabulary acquisition: passive-receptive mastery and productive active mastery. The creation of comprehensive spoken and written texts depends on the acquisition of vocabulary, which is also necessary for the effective use of a second language. Vocabulary lessons are crucial for all language proficiency in English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language



(EFL) (for example, during listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Furthermore, developing a sufficient vocabulary is necessary for proficient second language learning as without it, we are unable to utilize the learned structures and functions for understandable communication.

Difficulties faced by students can be identified from student mistakes in the learning process. In English vocabulary, students often find errors in pronouncing words, spelling words, or even translating words. Lynne Cameron mentions aspects of word knowledge which consist of sound, spelling, grammatical changes, meaning, and usage.

These aspects are explained further below:

### 1. Pronunciation

Nurmalita (2016, p.253) says that pronunciation skills are the ability to say things. Aspects of pronunciation skills are accuracy, fluency, intonation, and emphasis. The pronunciation in English is different from Indonesian, including the pronunciation of vowels, consonants, and diphthongs.

### 2. Spelling

According to Reed (2012) in Ramdhini et al (2016, p.189), three parameters can be used to determine a person's ability to spell English vocabulary, including phonemic parameters, alphabet parameters, and mixed parameters.

### 3. Grammar

Grammar, or language structure, according to Roinah (2019, p. 158), is the set of principles used to arrange language components into a structured language. Students will find learning language concepts easier, particularly when it comes to stringing words together to form sentences.

### 4. Meaning

According to Harmer (2001, p. 16), vocabulary instruction should cover several topics, including grammar, word meaning (including synonyms, antonyms, connotation, and denotation), and word expansion through idioms, word combinations, and collocations. words with nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in them.

Practice vocabulary in two steps, according to Thornburg (2002). They :

1. Instructional Support. Five actions can be used in learner training: a) paying attention to form; b) paying attention to meaning; c) having good guessing skills; and d) supporting taking chances and not being scared to act. make errors, e) they are capable of organizing their education by, for example, utilizing a dictionary to look up word meanings in a language.
2. Games using words (Thornbury, 2002). Word games can be used to teach vocabulary by grouping words into groups. For instance, animals are the subject.

For those studying English as a second language or as a foreign language, mastery of vocabulary is crucial. According to Alqahtan (2015, p. 22), vocabulary mastery is crucial for the effective use of a second language and is necessary for the creation of coherent written and spoken texts. Vocabulary is essential for all language skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing, in both English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL). We will not be able to apply the structures and functions we have learned for thorough communication if we do not have a large vocabulary.

Rahman (2016), a student at Art State University of Mataram's Faculty of Languages and English Education Department, claims. An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Vocabulary Mastery: A Survey Study at Second Grade Students of SMPN 19 Mataram in Academic Year was the title of the research project. seeks to identify the types and contributing aspects of students' vocabulary mastery struggles. The second-graders at SMPN 19 Mataram served as the study's participants. Purposive random selection was used to pick 35 pupils. The descriptive qualitative method was used to analyze the data. Two different types of tools were employed in the data collection process: tests and questionnaires.

Several issues have been identified by Rahman et al. (2007) as contributing to pupils' difficulties in mastering vocabulary. These include the students' motivation to study English, their recall skills, their inability to recognize words in different contexts, and their pronunciation issues. According to the aforementioned statement, the author believes that vocabulary plays a significant role in helping students improve their abilities in the teaching and learning process. For this reason, teachers must start teaching vocabulary to students when they are still young to ensure that they will be able to acquire it. Reach the objectives of teaching



and studying a foreign language producing language in speaking, reading, and writing, and effortlessly acquiring vocabulary.

## RESEARCH METHOD

Researchers employed qualitative descriptive approaches in this study. This approach aims to characterize and apply the factual circumstances and features of case studies in which researchers look into the reasons behind students' vocabulary learning challenges as well as their vocabulary issues. Pangeran Antasari Middle School eighth graders made up the study's population. The sample consisted of thirty-three students. Tests of word comprehension and interviews were employed as data-gathering methods in this study. The kinds and reasons for students' vocabulary learning challenges in English are ascertained through interviews as well as vocabulary comprehension assessments.

### 1. A test of vocabulary understanding.

The test technique involves implementing an evaluation by having students respond properly to a sequence of questions. A test consists of a set of questions or tasks along with additional resources to evaluate an individual's or a group's skills, knowledge, intelligence, abilities, or talents. Put differently, a test is a tool that is used to assess a group of people's knowledge and skills (Han & Goleman, Daniel; Boyatzis, Richard; Mekee, 2019). There are three questions in the question. Students will list ten words from the surrounding environment that they are familiar with and can understand in this vocabulary test.

### 2. The interview.

"A conversation whose aim is to collect a picture from the interviewee's [lived words] regarding the UNT ITA's interpretation of the 'phenomenon being described' is what Kvale (1996: 174) defines as an interview. According to Schostack (2006: 54), who concurs with PRIAU, interviews are expanded talks between partners intended to elicit detailed information on a certain topic or subject and enable the interpretation of an event in light of preexisting meanings. can be drawn from the information provided by the interviewee. that an interview is a talk between two individuals held in a single session with a series of questions and responses intended to elucidate or get information pertinent to a topic. The interview consists of 3 questions to collect information from respondents.



Table 1. Qualification Categories of Student's Ability in Mastering Vocabulary

| No | Range  | Category  |
|----|--------|-----------|
| 1  | 81-100 | Very Good |
| 2  | 71-79  | Good      |
| 3  | 56-69  | Fair      |
| 4  | 46-55  | Poor      |
| 5  | 0-45   | Very Poor |

The first involves looking at student answer sheets and mistakes to determine language issues among students. Following identification, the researchers used the students' answer sheets and mistakes to categorize their vocabulary challenges.

## FINDINGS

First, using word comprehension tests as a basis for data analysis, researchers present their findings. In vocabulary comprehension assessments, researchers mostly concentrate on nouns and verbs. Three questions make up questions with nouns and verbs. 21 students were determined to have provided incorrect responses. where kids discuss verbs about their hobbies along with nouns from their home and school environments.

Next, the data results based on the questionnaire are presented. This question consists of 3 questions.

### 1. Please write down 10 Vocabulary (Noun) About School!

Only 12 students could answer correctly. Meanwhile, 15 students could not write their vocabulary words correctly, they were only correct in pronunciation but in writing they still got the placement wrong. and 6 students could not answer correctly.

### 2. Please write down 10 Vocabulary (Noun) About House!

Only 10 students could answer correctly. Meanwhile, 15 students could not write their vocabulary words correctly, they were only correct in pronunciation but in writing they still got the placement wrong. and 8 students could not answer correctly.



3. Please write down 10 vocabularies (Verb) about the hobby!

Only 10 students could answer correctly. Meanwhile, 15 students could not write their vocabulary words correctly, they were only correct in pronunciation but in writing they still got the placement wrong. and 8 students could not answer correctly.

The data results derived from the interviews are then given. There are three questions in this query:

1. Do you enjoy picking up English? In short, yes or no. Describe. Just twelve pupils gave a yes response. They give English's future potential as their justification. No, says the other students. The reason is that they feel English is too hard to grasp, have very little vocabulary in the language, and know very little about it.
2. Do you struggle with vocabulary? In short, yes or no. Describe! Ninety percent of pupils said "yes" to this question. It is mostly because they are "lazy about learning English" that they give this excuse. This indicates that the primary finding of researchers is the challenge students face when learning the language, leading to a high percentage of students' laziness in comprehending English vocabulary.
3. Is vocabulary development necessary to learn English? In short, yes or no. Describe. Every student gave an affirmative response. The majority of their justifications stem from the necessity of vocabulary to talk and write in English.

## DISCUSSIONS

Researchers discovered that there is a need to enhance students' language skill mastery based on the results of this study. Vocabulary serves as a fundamental building block for language ability and is mostly responsible for how kids talk, listen, read, and write, according to Richards and Renandya (2002: 255). However, both teachers and students find it difficult to increase vocabulary. Students must understand the value of learning skills if teachers are to raise student knowledge of how to improve learning. Learning vocabulary is crucial to learning English. According to Huyen and Nga (2003), this is one of the components that links the four concurrent skills of speaking, reading, listening, and writing. In addition, a student's motivation will affect how well they learn a subject. A key component of learning is motivation (Santrock, 2011). This is because a major determinant of the success and speed of learning a second or



foreign language is student motivation (McDonough; Ellis, in Al-Tamimi & Munir Shuib, 2009).

Based on the collected data, it was discovered that pupils had several challenges when learning language. Researchers offer data derived from vocabulary comprehension examinations that measure pupils' grasp of vocabulary. syntax According to these findings, 23 students (or 70%) answered the questions incorrectly. This indicates that a lot of students give incorrect answers to queries. Twenty-three pupils (or seventy percent) answered the questions incorrectly. Certain nouns have the right meaning, certain verb parts have the wrong meaning, and certain nouns have the right meaning. Researchers discovered that pupils had decreased interest in acquiring vocabulary in English based on the findings of their interviews. How to Pronounce It One of the things that makes studying English challenging for pupils is the distinction between written and spoken English. When children encounter terms like "muscle," "listening," "writing," "honest," "assessing," and "science," for instance. Certain words are problematic, particularly for those studying Indonesia. syntax In English, the spoken and written forms are distinct. Simply writing the words they hear "science" and "muscle" is what pupils do when they wish to write such terms down. Students find it challenging to acquire vocabulary in English because of this indicator. because it impedes their ability to speak English. Given how many words kids need to memorize, it is quite easy to forget them. restricted resources for word knowledge.

## CONCLUSION

Research findings and data analysis indicate that vocabulary acquisition is a challenge for pupils learning English. The following synopsis displays the factors found in this study:

- 1) According to this study, students find it challenging to convert English words or sentences into Indonesian and vice versa. In addition, students struggle with spelling, pronunciation, and word meaning comprehension. Due to a lack of experience, they also struggle to memorize or recall English vocabulary.
- 2) Several variables contribute to students' struggles with vocabulary mastery. It was discovered that the students were reluctant to use the dictionary. Additionally, they have less desire to learn English. They don't routinely practice speaking in English. They struggle to



learn vocabulary due to a variety of external conditions, such as poor facilities and unfavorable buddy influence.

When it comes to acquiring vocabulary understanding, the following recommendations are made for instructors, students, and other researchers:

1. During the teaching and learning process, lecturers ought to mandate that students keep dedicated notebooks in which they can document new insights they gain. After that, the book will be released and teachers will review it.
2. Every day, English language learners should pick up a new term, commit it to memory, and then store it.
3. Teachers' approaches to teaching comprehension or vocabulary acquisition in English will be of relevance to future researchers who wish to examine students' mastery of vocabulary comprehension.

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