

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

English is a language spoken worldwide, one of the most popular international languages, and is required for communication, research, and more. It is the mother tongue of hundreds of millions of people in many countries and is also spoken as a foreign or second language by millions of people around the world. The English language plays an important role in education, research, and global communication, with many scientific publications, documents, and information sources available. In addition, English is also used as an official or second language in many international organizations, making it a vital global communication tool in the context of the modern world. English is used as the main media in education, business, and social life in various countries. Therefore, habituation in English is needed to hone students' English language skills.

Having the ability to master English can be an added value for someone to be able to compete and will make it easier to get job opportunities, scholarships, and international relations. For students, mastering English can open wider educational and career paths in the future. English proficiency is one of the important aspects of language mastery that must be learned by students. Four skills in English must be mastered by students, namely listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, and writing skills.

Speaking is one of the important skills of all English language skills.

According to Rao (2019) states that speaking skills are the most important skills in acquiring foreign or second language learning. Similarly, Scottè (2013) states that language is speaking. This occurs because it appreciates the importance of speaking in various aspects of life. Speaking is the main means of exposing language and a requirement for communication. Richard (2008) mentions speaking is an individual's ability to produce and understand oral utterances. It means a person's ability to produce ideas orally to others which involves the use of vocabulary and proper grammar. In honing speaking skills, it is necessary to master vocabulary, because vocabulary is the key of language to communication in a foreign language (Zanoubia 2022). In line with Nurgiantoro (2016) states that “vocabulary is a very important component and can even be called as the key in learning a foreign language because by the richness of vocabulary, someone also determines the quality of the person's language skills” (p,338). This is often emphasized in English language teaching because speaking is more than just making sounds; it also includes the ability to engage, respond, and communicate well in everyday situations. Therefore, speaking ability requires mastering vocabulary skills as well as adapting to various communication situations.

However, there are several problems related to vocabulary mastery experienced by students such as difficulty in understanding the meaning of words, large number of words, difficulty in pronouncing vocabulary correctly, lack of self-confidence, low learning motivation, and others. This problem is also experienced by students at SMP

Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Jambi. Based on a preliminary survey on October 07, 2022, conducted by a researcher during PLP activities at the school, the researcher found that there was a problem, namely that students' English language skills were still at an unsatisfactory level. After interviewing Mrs. Hikmah English teacher at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Jambi, she revealed that the average student vocabulary mastery was quite low in grade nine, but several students had good English skills. English becomes difficult for students because they have limited vocabulary, and in the end, speaking becomes not fluent.

This problem can be seen in the students' scores, with an average score of 60 for vocabulary mastery and 65 for students' speaking skills, which are below the English KKM of 70. Therefore, the researcher will conduct this research entitled "The Correlation between Student's Vocabulary Mastery and Speaking Ability in English Learning of Ninth Grade Students at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Jambi."

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the background above, the problem in this study was identified in students' mastery of language components, such as vocabulary, students have limitations in mastering vocabulary. Besides, it also identified the problems of students' language skills, namely speaking, such as students' difficulties in speaking and understanding English, shyness, and fear of making mistakes when speaking English, making it difficult for students to express themselves.

1.3 Problems Limitation

Based on the problem identification above, the problem of this research is limited to find out the Correlation between Student's Vocabulary Mastery and Speaking Ability in English Learning of Ninth Grade Students at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Jambi.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the problems, the research problem is formulated as follows: "Is there a significant correlation between ninth-grade students' vocabulary mastery and their English-speaking ability at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Jambi?"

1.5 Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is to determine whether there is a significant correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and the speaking ability of ninth-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Jambi in the 2024/2025 school year.

1.6 Research Significance

The study is expected to provide useful insights into English language learning. The study's theoretical and practical foundations are expected to be beneficial in two ways.

Theoretically:

- a) The findings of this study are expected to be a useful source of information that can provide information to teachers of English as a Foreign Language about the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and students' speaking

ability. Thus, teachers can motivate and create new methods that are easy and appropriate for students in mastering vocabulary and improving speaking skills.

- b) The findings of this study are expected to be evidence that represents students' abilities in learning foreign languages.
- c) The findings of this study are expected to be one of the many sources or reading materials both to enrich the reference of students majoring in English in writing a thesis and to increase their knowledge in the process of teaching and learning English.

Practically:

- a) The results of this study are expected to provide information to English teachers about the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their speaking ability.
- b) The results of this study are expected to provide support to students so that students enjoy speaking.