

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of Study

The majority of individuals worldwide utilize oral communication as a means of interaction. The fundamental language skills consist of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, speaking stands out as a crucial skill that students must excel in. To comprehend spoken words effectively, one must have a strong command of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation to avoid any misinterpretations. Speaking serves as a vital form of oral communication for expressing ideas and emotions. Ultimately, speaking enables individuals to articulate their opinions, arguments, and personal experiences.

English is the initial foreign language taught in Indonesian schools. It serves as a means of communication for nearly all nations across the globe. The significance of this global language is recognized by individuals who understand its importance, making it an essential subject in schools, beginning from junior high school and, in certain locations, even from elementary school.

In essence, learning English cannot be separated from its

essential components. According to the 2004 English curriculum, one of the main objectives of English language education was “Pengembangan kompetensi komunikatif dalam suatu bahasa mencakup bentuk komunikasi lisan dan tulisan serta memerlukan penguasaan empat keterampilan bahasa utama: menyimak, berbicara, membaca, dan menulis”.¹ (To develop communicative competence in the language, both in spoken and written forms. This communicative ability encompasses the four essential language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

From the above statement, it can be said that one of the purposes of learning English is to develop verbal communication skills. At that time, students must be able to communicate well verbally, express ideas, emotions and convey information to others.

Mastering speaking skills is essential for effective communication, especially in English, as it is one of the four fundamental language skills. According to Norbert and Michael McCarthy, spoken language represents the primary medium through which individuals are exposed to language, and thus plays a crucial role in driving language development and change.²

In general, various factors influence students’ speaking ability. At

¹ Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, Kurikulum 2004, Standar Kompetensi Bahasa Inggris, Sekolah Menengah Atas dan Madrasah Aliyah, Jakarta: 2003, p. 14.

² Norbert Schmitt and Michael McCarthy, *Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition and Pedagogy*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 38.

SMP Negeri 2 Mancak the researcher observed several speaking activities during the teaching and learning process, including discussions, monologues, dialogues, and descriptive tasks. In addition, interviews were conducted with subject teachers. During the speaking activities, some students frequently asked about the meaning of English words, and many tended to translate certain terms into Indonesian due to limited vocabulary knowledge. Although the students generally understood the content well, their lack of vocabulary hindered their ability to express ideas effectively in spoken English.

Another challenge encountered is that students often feel unsure and reluctant to speak in English. This difficulty becomes more apparent when students are asked to deliver speeches in English. Speech requires not only correct grammar and pronunciation but also a wide range of vocabulary to clearly communicate ideas to an audience. Many students struggle with speech tasks because they cannot find the right words to express their arguments or messages. As a result, their speeches often lack clarity, coherence, and fluency.

At SMP Negeri 2 Mancak, this issue is quite evident. Many students have limited vocabulary knowledge, which directly influences their ability to speak English effectively, especially in formal speaking tasks such as speech. Furthermore, some teachers do not employ a variety of instructional

strategies, such as the use of visual aids, to support language development. Teachers are expected to create an environment that encourages students to speak English fluently. This situation leads the researcher to conclude that students' speaking difficulties are primarily due to their insufficient vocabulary, which falls short of the required level for effective verbal communication.

For language learners, acquiring vocabulary is often a deliberate and challenging process. Even at higher proficiency levels, learners tend to recognize the limitations in their vocabulary knowledge of the second language (L2). They frequently encounter lexical gaps—situations where they cannot understand certain words in reading or struggle to express ideas as precisely as they can in their first language (L1). As a result, many learners perceive second language acquisition as primarily focused on vocabulary mastery, leading them to spend significant time memorizing L2 word lists and depending heavily on bilingual dictionaries as essential tools for communication.³

According to Roger, vocabulary holds greater significance than grammar for communicative purposes, especially in the initial stages of language learning. At this stage, students are generally driven to acquire

³ John Read, *Assessing Vocabulary*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 1.

essential words that enable them to function effectively in the target language.⁴

Scott Thornbury emphasized that while grammar contributes to the structure of communication, it is vocabulary that carries the core meaning.⁵ He stated that without grammar, only limited meaning can be expressed; however, without vocabulary, communication becomes impossible. This highlights the indispensable role of vocabulary in conveying ideas effectively.

Spoken interaction relies heavily on vocabulary, particularly in fulfilling relational and interactional purposes.⁶ This highlights the significant role vocabulary plays in shaping students' speaking competence and contributing to their overall oral proficiency. Recognizing the pivotal function of vocabulary in effective verbal communication, the present study seeks to investigate the relation between students' vocabulary mastery and their speaking performance. The research is titled: "The Correlation Between Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Their Speaking Ability in Performing English Speech (A Study at the Eighth Grade of SMP Negeri 2

⁴ Roger Gower, Diana Philips & Steve Walters, *Teaching Practice Handbook*, Thailand: Macmillan, 1995, p. 142.

⁵ Scott Thornbury, ed Jeremy Harmer, *How to Teach Vocabulary*, Edinburgh Gate: Person Education Limited, 2002, p. 13.

⁶ Michael McCarthy, *Spoken Language and Applied Linguistics*, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 109.

Mancak).”

B. The Identification of Problem

Based on the background of the study, the researcher identified several challenges experienced by the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Mancak in mastering vocabulary and developing speaking ability:

1. Some students show a lack of interest in learning English as a subject.
2. Many students lack vocabulary, which makes it difficult for them to speak in English.
3. Their limited vocabulary knowledge is largely attributed to their low motivation toward learning English.

C. Limitation of the Study

This study employs a correlational research design, aiming to examine the relationship between students' vocabulary mastery and their speaking ability in delivering English speeches. The population of the research consists of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Mancak, totaling 87 learners. A simple random sampling method was applied to select a representative sample of 20 students drawn from three different classes within the population.

D. The Formulation of The Study

The research problem is formulated as follows: **"Is there any**

significant correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their speaking ability at SMPN 2 Mancak?"

E. The Objective of The Study

This study aims to explore the degree of correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their speaking performance in delivering English speeches among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Mancak.

F. The Significance of The Research

Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of speaking skills by emphasizing the importance of vocabulary mastery, particularly among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Mancak.

Practically, the findings of this study aim to assist students in overcoming their speaking difficulties and to provide empirical evidence regarding the correlation between vocabulary mastery and speaking ability among the eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Mancak.

G. Previous Study

1. Supriadi (2011) found that students responded positively to the use of wordlists in boarding schools, considering them effective and supportive in the English learning process. The wordlists helped

students discover new English vocabulary, address their language difficulties, and enhance their speaking skills.⁷

2. Yunita Puspita Sari (2012) discovered that increased practice in speaking leads to greater vocabulary acquisition. Her study indicated a positive correlation between vocabulary mastery and speaking skills.⁸
3. Afif Fauzi (2007) concluded that an increase in students' vocabulary is accompanied by an improvement in their speaking ability. Conversely, a decrease in vocabulary knowledge tends to result in weaker speaking performance.⁹

H. The Organization of Writing

The frame of discussion of the study are as follows:

Chapter I

This introductory chapter presents a comprehensive overview of the study. It includes the background of the research, identification and limitation of the problems, formulation of the research questions, objectives of the study,

⁷ Supriadi, *The Use of Wordlist in Improving Students' Speaking Ability at Pondok Pesantren Modern Al- Istiqomah*, Biromaru, 2011.

⁸ Yunita Puspita Sari, *The Correlation Between Students' Anxiety, Vocabulary Mastery, and Speaking Skill of the Eleventh Grade Students of SMA Negeri 1 Kartasura in the Academic Year of 2011/2012*, Surakarta: Universitas Sebelas Maret, 2012.

⁹ Afif Fauzi, *The Correlation Between Students' Vocabulary Achievement and Speaking Ability at First grade Of SMAN 1 Ciputat*, Jakarta: Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, 2007.

and the significance of the research. Furthermore, this chapter also outlines relevant previous studies and provides a systematic organization of the thesis structure.

Chapter II

This chapter presents theoretical concepts and frameworks derived from various scholars and experts in the field.

Chapter III

This chapter includes the method is used by the researcher.

Chapter IV

This chapter presents the research findings and discussion, which include the presentation of data, the results of data analysis, and an in-depth discussion of the findings.

Chapter V

The closing chapter presents both the conclusion and the suggestions derived from the findings of the study.

