

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research background, research questions, research objectives, research hypotheses, research significance, and definitions of key terms.

A. Research Background

Vocabulary is the foundation of language mastery, which includes comprehension capacity in reading, fluency in writing, and effective communication. Students with a large vocabulary usually find it easier to understand difficult material, communicate their thoughts clearly, and participate in in-depth debates. On the other hand, a lack of vocabulary can hinder a person's ability to understand and express themselves.

One of the best ways to increase a student's vocabulary in English is to read. Reading requires a dynamic exchange between the reader and the writer through text and is a fundamental language learning skill (Akhter et al., 2024). Interactive methods for reading place a strong emphasis on the reader's contribution in the form of personal perceptions, experiences, and background information. Everyone has a point of view shaped by their education, experience, and culture. Based on past information and in-text clues, the reader actively predicts what will happen next while reading. These predictions are then verified, refuted, or changed as the reading progresses. This shows that reading is a dynamic and active activity that requires deep interpretation and critical thinking.

Regular exposure to new words is essential for vocabulary development. In his work on extensive reading, Krashen (2004) claims that regular exposure to words in meaningful contexts creates the best conditions for vocabulary acquisition because it allows learners to encounter these words frequently in a variety of contexts. Vocabulary mastery is significantly correlated with reading habits, which is defined as the frequency of reading activities. According to Syafitri (2019), students' understanding of English reading skills increases when they regularly participate in reading activities. This shows that continuous interaction with the text is essential for the acquisition and comprehension of vocabulary. Astutik and Setyowati (2022) revealed that children who read actively had superior vocabulary mastery, supporting these findings and showing a good correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading habits.

However, the low interest in reading among the Indonesian people is a serious problem. Based on the National Library poll, only 35% of respondents consider reading as a recreational activity, while the majority (65%) prefer other activities in their free time. In addition to reading, the most popular activities are playing video games, watching television, and utilizing digital gadgets for social media. With an average completion of 0-126 pages per week, respondents who read typically only do so two to four times a week for less than two hours each day, indicating low reading intensity (Kepala Pusat Penelitian Kebijakan Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2019)

Lack of interest in reading is a significant problem that must be addressed. Efendi et al. (2023) found several contributing factors, including inequality of

educational facilities and lack of early reading habits, which resulted in limited access to high-quality reading resources. Students' reading interest is influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors include reading ability, age, gender, and intelligence. External factors include social media, less interesting reading materials, and the social environment.

Although students understand the importance of reading, Akbar (2020) research also shows an interesting phenomenon: they have not developed strong reading habits. The fact that only 3% of students read in their free time and the majority view reading as a demanding activity shows that there is a gap between students' awareness and behavior about reading culture.

Academic vocabulary demands special attention when learning a language and is an important component of academic texts. According to Wood et al. (2021), by ignoring the 2,000 most common words in English, academic words from the Coxhead list make up nearly 10% of all words in academic texts. Because these terms are used in a variety of fields, including science, arts, economics, and law, it is important to understand academic content thoroughly. Acquire academic vocabulary is importance for students from different socioeconomic backgrounds and language learning characteristics (Wood et al. 2021).

Vocabulary mastery is essential for English learners because it allows them to understand more challenging literary and academic works. Muliawanti et al. (2022) highlight that vocabulary mastery, which is the basis for students to understand more complex learning materials, is closely related to strong reading and comprehension proficiency. Rahyuningsih (2020) revealed that

students' reading comprehension is greatly influenced by their vocabulary and reading habits. Because reading habits have a direct impact on vocabulary growth and academic success in general, this study supports the importance of encouraging healthy reading habits among English majors. Thus, promoting regular reading among students can be a useful tactic to improve their language proficiency.

According to Nation (2001), vocabulary knowledge consists of many components, including form, meaning, and usage, all of which are developed through repeated exposure in various circumstances. This complex process of vocabulary acquisition emphasizes how important it is to read periodically to find terms in their original context, which encourages deeper understanding and vocabulary retention.

While strong reading comprehension also facilitates the learning of new academic vocabulary through context, students who have a strong vocabulary will find it easier to understand the material. This mutual relationship highlights how important it is to support the growth of vocabulary and reading habits as a process of acquiring complementary languages.

Students majoring in English Education at IAIN Kediri specifically study English in an academic context, including the development of reading skills and mastery of academic vocabulary which is the main focus of this research. In addition, English Education students generally have high motivation to improve their English skills, especially in order to prepare themselves as prospective English teachers. Thus, students of this department are the right subjects to examine the correlation between reading habits and academic

vocabulary mastery, so that the results of the research can provide a relevant and applicable picture in the context of English education at IAIN Kediri.

Based on this, the purpose of this study is to reveal the correlation between reading habits and academic vocabulary mastery among English Language Education department students at IAIN Kediri. Although previous studies have explored the relationship between reading habits and vocabulary mastery, most of these studies have focused on high school students and have examined general vocabulary mastery. There is still a significant gap in the literature regarding how these variables interact in the context of higher education, especially among students of the Department of English Education at IAIN Kediri. In addition, although previous studies have mainly addressed general vocabulary, there have been few studies investigating the correlation between reading habits and mastery of academic vocabulary, which is crucial for success in high-level English education. The findings of this study are expected to shed further light on how reading habits affect academic vocabulary mastery and aid in the creation of more efficient teaching strategies to improve vocabulary mastery among English learners, ultimately leading to improved overall English language proficiency.

B. Research Question

Based on the background of research, the research question that directs this research is "Is there any correlation between reading habits and academic vocabulary mastery among English Language Education department students at IAIN Kediri?"

C. Research Objective

The objective of this research is "To reveal the correlation between reading habits and academic vocabulary mastery among English Language Education department students at IAIN Kediri," as stated in the research question above.

D. Research Hypothesis

A hypothesis is an estimate or prediction based on our observations. A hypothesis is a temporary statement that implies the existence of a relationship between two or more variables. The following is the hypothesis in this study:

1. Null Hypothesis (H_0): Among English Language Education department students at IAIN Kediri, there is no significant correlation between reading habits and academic vocabulary mastery.
2. Alternative Hypothesis (H_a): Among English Language Education department students at IAIN Kediri, there is a significant correlation between reading habits and academic vocabulary mastery.

E. Research Significances

The findings of this study have several benefits for various reading rights holders involved in English language education.

1. For educators, this research can provide valuable insights into designing effective strategies to improve reading habits and improve academic vocabulary mastery among students. This may involve incorporating an extensive reading program, recommending appropriate reading materials, and encouraging student engagement with reading activities.
2. For students, understanding the relationship between reading habits and mastery of academic vocabulary can be a stimulus for students to cultivate

reading habits regularly, which in turn can improve students' English language skills, especially for students majoring in English language education.

3. For future research, this study may contribute to existing knowledge about the correlation between reading habits and mastery of academic vocabulary in an academic setting.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Reading Habits

Reading habits are not just about how often a person reads, but someone is said to have a reading habit if seen from a person's attitude towards reading, the number of books read, academic and non-academic reading, how often they read, and motivation to read regularly which are indicators of reading habits.

2. Academic Vocabulary

A group of terms and expressions commonly used in the fields of education and science is referred to as academic vocabulary. The terms used in ordinary social interactions are very different from this academic vocabulary.

3. Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery is the ability to understand and utilize a wide variety of words in a language.