CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the writer discusses background of the research, statement of the research problems, the objectives of the research, the significances of the research, scope and limitation, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Research

As a foreign language, English is challenging for some students. Although students have learnt English from elementary school, they still get many difficulties in learning this language. A classroom will be the only place for many students to practice their English. They believe English is a difficult subject because of some reasons. One of the reasons is that it is difficult to master vocabulary. It happens because they must adopt the new pronunciation and meaning of the word. Regrettably, conquering vocabulary is not easy for students, especially for students in Indonesia where English is learned as a foreign language because English is used only when they are in class. Thus, English has now been implemented in most aspects of life and it is a foreign language taught in many schools in Indonesia.

Vocabulary is one of most essential skills to be mastered of English learning. Being able to understand a book and what other people said are very important in learning a language. The importance of learning vocabulary have been stated by Richards and Renandya (2002: 255), that vocabulary is a basic aspect of mastering language and specifying how well students speak language well. Learning
vocabulary is essential for everyone because vocabulary is the foundation of learning a language and it is used to increase students’ knowledge in learning language. This idea is supported by the fact that vocabulary is important in daily communication.

The importance of learning vocabulary is also stated by Schmitt that lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language (2000: p.55). Learning vocabulary is really an important thing in learning foreign language, especially for student whose English is not his mother tongue.

Difficulties in learning vocabulary are also faced by students in junior high school, especially in teaching English vocabulary to students with other language backgrounds. Pronunciation is the most basic difficulty for students in learning vocabulary, because students still cannot spell English alphabet correctly, yet to read a word correctly is still confusing. Over the way to spell English words are different from Indonesia language. A limited knowledge of vocabulary can be a serious problem that students have in learning a language. It means they cannot express what they want to say because of less vocabulary they know.

There are several reasons that make learning vocabulary is difficult. One of the basic reasons is students will forget the words soon after they learn it. There are many words that students in 8 grade need to learn. The difficulties also come from vocabulary teaching which commonly does not recognize the problems, and teachers are not aware that developing vocabulary is an advantage for communication (Thornbury, 2002). Based on simplification above, it can be bring to the end that learning process in junior
high school did not underline on the importance of learning vocabulary, it direct point only on grammar learning. As the result, students have problems in pursue understanding of vocabulary, which also cause students difficulty in examining grammar straight to shortage of vocabulary. When a student wants to master English students need to master vocabulary first. It will help them in speaking, reading, listening and writing skills. All of those skills will be in students’ hand when they can master vocabulary.

Another research on vocabulary learning at tertiary level was conducted by Rohmatillah (2014). The result of the research showed that (1) students have difficulty in pronouncing words, (2) to write and spell, (3) in choosing the appropriate meaning of the words, and also still confused in using the word based on the context.

Based on the elucidation above, about the difficulties in learning vocabulary faced by 8 class students. Researcher sight to conduct research. This research aims to scrutinize student difficulties and how teachers help students to solve their difficulties in learning vocabulary.

1.2 The Statement of Research Problems

Based on background of research above, the problems are defined as follows:

1. What are the difficulties in learning vocabulary faced by students on eight grade at SMP N 2 Nglegok?

2. What are the possible causes of the difficulties in English vocabulary faced by the eight grade students of SMP N 1 Nglegok?
1.3 **The Objectives of Research**

According to the statement of the problems above, the purposes of the research are:

1. To measure difficulties in learning vocabulary faced by eighth grade students of SMP N 2 Nglegok.
2. To describe the possible causes that interfere students in learning vocabulary.

1.4 **The Significances of Research**

The results of this research are expected to be useful and beneficial for the education community, public, and society, whether it is theoretically and practically. In more detail is described as follows:

Theoretically, the estimation of this research is desirable to give contributions to the education field as a reference for teachers to help students in learning vocabulary, as a reference for next research, so it is expected to improve the quality of education evaluation instrument that can be used in school.

Practically, this research is desirable to somebody else have description or reference for the research about analysis students’ difficulty in learning vocabulary. Besides of the research, it is expected used for developing process item analysis those on other subjects.

1.5 **Scope and limitation**

The scope of this research is the difficulties and resolve those difficulties in learning vocabulary in terms of spelling, pronunciation, length and complexity and parts of speech. This research is limited to the difficulties faced by eighth grade at SMP N 2 Nglegok.
1.6 Definition of Key Terms

The current research have three key terms that are described below:

1. Difficulty is the state or quality of being hard to do or to understand (Hornby, 2000: 349).

2. Learning is defined functionally as a change in behavior that result from experience or mechanistically as changes in the organism that result from experience (Houwer, 2013: p.1).

3. Vocabulary is the collection of words that an individual knows (Linse, 2005: 121).