CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the background of the study, the problem of the study, the purpose of the study, the scope of the study, and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is a fundamental means of communication that plays a significant role in our daily lives. Across the world, various languages are used by different communities to interact. Pustika (2021) emphasizes that English serves as a crucial medium in several important fields, including education, technological innovation, the tourism industry, public health, and economic affairs, demonstrating its far-reaching integration into modern social systems. Without language, communication and coordination in these domains would be impossible. In line with this, Kurniawan et al. (2022) highlight the vital role of English, particularly in the tourism industry, where it functions as the primary medium of communication.

Achieving proficiency in English involves several critical components, with vocabulary being one of the most vital. It serves as the foundation of language learning and provides a starting point for learners working toward fluency. According to Khosravani and Bagheri (2017), vocabulary plays a crucial role in language acquisition because it helps learners articulate their thoughts clearly. A well-developed vocabulary enhances one's ability to perform the four main language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The main goal of vocabulary learning is to support meaningful communication. Many second-language learners acknowledge that choosing the right words is among the most challenging aspects of mastering a new language.

Developing new words is a lifelong process that begins in early education and continues into higher education and beyond. The more vocabulary a person masters, the more effective their communication becomes. Unfortunately, many EFL students still face challenges in vocabulary building, which can limit their

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ability to understand others and express their own ideas clearly. Limited vocabulary not only affects reading comprehension and writing fluency, but also creates difficulties in listening and speaking. Alizadeh and Vaezi (2021) show that vocabulary serves as the foundation of all language skills and must be prioritized in language learning. Students who lack vocabulary knowledge are more likely to feel discouraged and disengaged from the learning process. Traditional vocabulary teaching methods, which often rely on rote memorization, are no longer effective in keeping students motivated.

Learning language now is not as hard as it used to be because there are many digital tools and platforms that help the learning process. One of the most useful innovations is social media, which many students use to build their English skills. As stated by Muftah (2024) social media can help students become more engaged and improve their overall English skills when used as a learning resource.

Social media has developed quickly and become an essential part of people's daily lives, largely due to advancements in modern technology. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram have become popular among learners as spaces to communicate, share ideas, and build new skills. At the heart of social media are the technologies and applications that make it possible for people to stay connected, even when they can't meet face-to-face because of busy schedules. These platforms are also designed to support language learning, allowing users to create and exchange content, ideas, and information. It means that students can take advantage of social media not only as a source of information, but also as a space to practice and build their language skills.

Instagram has emerged as one of the most prominent social media platforms and continues to attract the interest of educational researchers. It provides various interactive features that allow users to share images and videos, engage with others through comments, and communicate via direct messages. Given that Indonesian teenagers are highly active on social media, Instagram is especially relevant for student users. Its popularity suggests strong potential to enhance independent learning, particularly in English language acquisition. As noted by Serang and Sahib (2023), Instagram can be a valuable tool in language learning due to its engaging

presentation of content, which encourages vocabulary development within meaningful contexts and sustains learners' motivation. Popular English learning accounts such as @kampunginggrislc, @gurukumrd, @bbclearningenglish, and @englishwithnab offer accessible materials through short visual posts that support students in practicing English daily.

The use of Instagram as a means to enhance English vocabulary acquisition has become an increasingly prominent focus in recent research. Alfu et al. (2021) conducted a study involving 35 third-semester students from the English Tadris Study Program at IAIN Palu. Through a quantitative method and questionnaires distributed via Google Forms, the study revealed a strong influence of Instagram on students' vocabulary learning, as shown by a mean score of 62.48%, highlighting its valuable role in language acquisition.

In another academic setting, Gómez-Ortiz et al. (2023) investigated how Instagram could be utilized to enhance technical vocabulary among 75 sports science undergraduates at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. Using a project-based learning approach, the students were tasked with developing Instagram accounts focused on fitness content and subsequently completed questionnaires reflecting on their learning experiences. The results of the study indicated that Instagram served as an effective tool for teaching specialized vocabulary within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses.

Rosdiani et al. (2022) carried out a quasi-experimental design among 44 eighth-grade students of SMPN Tanantovea Donggala to measure the impact of Instagram captions on vocabulary ability. The implementation of pre-test and post-test tests suggested that vocabulary knowledge of the students grew in a statistically significant way. The t-value calculated (9.53) was greater than the critical value (1.683), which suggested the positive influence of Instagram captions towards vocabulary improvement.

Moreover, Wulandari (2022) explored how Instagram-based English learning accounts contributed to vocabulary development among ten sixth-semester students at Tidar University. The study found that students viewed Instagram as a

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useful learning resource, thanks to the appealing and easy-to-access content shared by educational accounts.

Although previous research has shed light on the use of Instagram in learning vocabulary, its focus has largely been limited to college students or particular subject areas. There is a noticeable gap in research concerning vocational high school students, particularly those in the tenth grade. Moreover, most studies have employed qualitative or mixed-method approaches.

To address this gap, the present study aims to investigate the perceptions of tenth-grade students at SMK Bhakti 1 Jakarta regarding the use of Instagram for English vocabulary building. Employing a descriptive quantitative method with closed-ended questionnaires, this study seeks to provide empirical data on how vocational students perceive Instagram as a vocabulary building tool. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on a specific and underrepresented group—vocational high school students—and its exclusive emphasis on vocabulary building through Instagram, a foundational aspect of English language acquisition.

Due to the differing viewpoints among students, the researcher intends to investigate and analyze their perceptions. Gaining insight into how students perceive the media they use is important, as perception, which stems from psychological factors, can influence results in various ways. Saeed and Zyngier (2019) stated that what students achieve in their learning is influenced not just by factors around them, but also by internal aspects like how they perceive things, their mindset, and how they believe in themselves. Referring to the explanation above, this research is carried out under the title "Students' Perception of Using Instagram in Vocabulary Building at SMK Bhakti 1 Jakarta."

1.2 The Problem of the Study

Based on the study's background, the research problem is expressed through the following question: "What is the perception of students toward the use of Instagram in enhancing vocabulary at SMK Bhakti 1 Jakarta?"

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

Considering the background and research problem, this study aims to examine students' perceptions regarding the use of Instagram as a tool for vocabulary development at SMK Bhakti 1 Jakarta.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The present research focuses solely on exploring students' perceptions regarding the use of Instagram content in learning English vocabulary. The participants are drawn exclusively from class X students at SMK Bhakti 1 Jakarta in the 2024/2025 academic year. Data will be gathered through a structured questionnaire.

1.5 Significant of the Study

The researcher anticipates that her study's findings will be beneficial for:

1. Teachers

The researcher hopes this study can provide English teacher with a better understanding of how students feel using Instagram in vocabulary learning. This can help them develop teaching methods that are more in line students' interests and habits.

2. Students

The researcher hopes this study can help students to realize that Instagram is not only a platform for social interaction but can also be used to improve their English vocabulary. By reflecting on their own views, students may be more encouraged to use Instagram to use Instagram as a learning support.

3. Future Researchers

The researcher hopes this study can be used as a reference for future studies that focus on using social media in language learning, particularly in the vocational school setting. It may also open the door to studies on other language skills or digital tools.

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