

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

English is a global language spoken by millions of people around the world. It is the most widely used language in international communication, business, and education. Learning English can provide numerous advantages such as better job opportunities, access to higher education, and enhanced communication skills. In learning English there are four basic skills that should be mastered: speaking, writing, reading, and listening. These four skills are linked with the three key components of the English language namely grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Among these three components, vocabulary is considered the most important component in learning English.

Vocabulary refers to a collection of words with meanings that are used to express ideas for communication (Alqahtani 2015). It is a fundamental aspect of learning English, both in spoken and written forms (Novitasari & Candraloka 2022). Vocabulary is considered to be one of the most important components of learning English. According to Richard and Renandya cited in Rohmatillah (2014) “Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how learners speak, listen, read and write. Asyiah (2017) also emphasizes that a rich vocabulary is essential for mastering the English language and its four major skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, mastering vocabulary is crucial for developing proficiency in the four basic skills and becoming fluent in English.

However, learning and mastering vocabulary, especially for EFL learners

can be very challenging. This problem arises due to the difference in language systems between the native language and English (Fedriyanto et al., 2022). Therefore, students often face difficulties in selecting the right meaning of words, indicating that they still struggle with identifying the correct context of a word. Rohmatilla (2014) in her study about the difficulties in learning vocabulary found that in learning vocabulary almost all of the students face difficulties in pronunciation, spelling, and grammatical patterns. One of the causes of this is the different grammatical forms of words, also known as morphological inflections. Furthermore, to address this problem one of the strategies that can be used is by understanding how words are formed through morphology.

Morphology is a branch of linguistics that studies the structure of words. According to Aronoff and Fudeman (2022), morphology is the discipline of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure, and how they are formed. In morphology, the internal structure of a word is made up of various components such as morphemes, roots, and affixes. Gallert et al. (2020) stated that the majority of English words are made up of more than one morpheme. They added that having knowledge of morphology can help in figuring out the meaning of unfamiliar English words. Also, Alsaeedi (2017) emphasized that knowledge of morphology can be beneficial for building students' vocabulary and increasing their understanding of words. When students have the knowledge of morphology, they will be aware of all the components attached to a word they encounter. This is called morphological awareness.

According to Chang et al. (2005), "Morphological awareness is awareness of access to the meaning and structure of morphemes in relation to words".

Morphological awareness is basically understanding how words can be broken down into smaller units. It involves recognizing root words, prefixes, and suffixes, and how they work together to create meanings. By having morphological awareness students are able to recognize new words or develop their vocabulary. According to Adam (2018:25) “without having to look up the new word in a dictionary, a morphological generalization can be one of the ways to recognize and even form a new word”. He added that “The more the students are aware of these aspects, the better their improvement in their vocabulary mastery”. Therefore, using their morphological awareness they can learn, increase, and master the English vocabulary.

Previous research has shown a general correlation between morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery across different educational levels Arviyolla, et., al (2022). However, there is a lack of studies focusing on students at a specific stage in their academic journey where they transition from learning morphological theory to applying it practically. This study addresses this gap by investigating the correlation between morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery among fourth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Artha Wacana Christian University. These students, having just completed their morphology course, provide a unique opportunity to assess the immediate impact of morphological instruction on vocabulary acquisition.

Based on the background above the researcher is interested in conducting a study on the correlation between morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery. The researcher conducted the research on fourth-semester students of the English Educational Study Program at Artha Wacana Christian University. The

fourth- semester students are chosen in this research because they have completed a Morphological course in the previous semester. So, the researcher assumed that they had enough basic knowledge of morphology, and the researcher wanted to know how far their morphological awareness relates to their vocabulary mastery. Thus, the researcher conducted a study entitled **The Correlation between Morphological Awareness and English Vocabulary Mastery of Fourth Semester Students of English Educational Study Program at Artha Wacana Christian University.**

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Is there any correlation between morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery of fourth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Artha Wacana Christian University?

## **1.3 Aim of Study**

To find out whether there is a correlation between morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery of fourth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Artha Wacana Christian University.

## **1.4 Significance of Study**

### **1.4.1 Implication**

The result of this study is expected to support and enrich the theory about the relationship between morphological awareness and vocabulary mastery by Arviyolla, et., al (2022).

### **1.4.2 Application**

1. For students: This research might inspire students to enhance their vocabulary through understanding word structure.
2. For teachers: This research can serve as a helpful tool for educators in choosing effective strategies for teaching vocabulary such as morphological instruction.
3. For other researchers: This research can provide valuable insights and knowledge regarding techniques for enhancing vocabulary mastery through the acquisition of morphological awareness within an educational setting.