

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Perceiving the text and getting the meaning in it is called reading activity. Reading is one of the language skills that must be mastered in learning English beside listening, speaking, and writing. Reading comprehension is an important language skill in learning because it is one of the bases in education and one of the factors that can make the students succeed in their study depending on their greatest part of reading comprehension. Reading is crucial because, through reading, the students can get more benefits and have a big impact in the future because they can learn new things to enrich their knowledge and open their minds. Reading is a way to get information and help interact and respond to others.

By reading, students can also gain some information and learn something new. According to Blachowicz and Ogle (2008:15), reading comprehension is essential. It is the process by which people gain information and ideas from books, newspapers, manuals, letters, contracts, advertisements, and other materials. Reading is not only for students; it is for everyone who needs information in their daily lives. They can access information other than in books; it can be found in other written texts. Reading comprehension can be started in the early stages of elementary school. It can be initially introduced in advance for junior high school students with various kinds of texts. Then the student applies their knowledge to comprehend the text being read.

In addition, Pang et al. (2003:6) state that reading is about understanding written texts. It is a complex activity that involves both perceptions and thought. Reading consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension.

Word recognition refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one's spoken language. Comprehension is making sense of words, sentences, and connected texts. Readers typically use background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text, and other strategies to help them understand written text. A good comprehension in reading will make the students easier to get the text meaning that has been read and based on the information they have learned and understood from reading.

When reading a text, the students need to understand it, but they should also comprehend it. According to Boardman (2007:8), reading comprehension involves much more than readers' responses to the text. Reading comprehension is a multi-component, highly complex process involving many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text (previous knowledge, strategy use) and variables related to the text itself (interest in text, understanding of text types). The students should comprehend the text they read by thinking and getting at the meaning behind it. The more reading students do, the more knowledge they can understand and get from the text which has been read.

The readers also begin to have a greater understanding of a particular topic. Since reading leads the readers to understand reading passages, it can be said that reading is a receptive skill in language learning. According to Harmer (2007:99), reading is crucial because of two main reasons. First, it is beneficial to the students' personal life. Reading English texts may have a positive impact on students' further studies and carriers or it may simply play the role of joyful reading. Second, it is beneficial to their language acquisition for spelling and vocabulary knowledge. Through reading, students develop knowledge, information, concepts, and attitudes. Moreover, students get many vocabularies

which are need in other skills if they read a lot. Students also need to comprehend the text during the reading process so that they can get the meaning.

To make successful comprehension in reading text is necessary for the students to have a reading skill. Therefore, to make the students have a good comprehension in reading text, the mastery of vocabulary is needed. Vocabulary is crucial because it is one of the language components. Vocabulary is the key aspect of language learning which consists of words that students use for speaking, listening, reading, and writing. According to Tankersley (2003:52), vocabulary is the meaning and pronunciation of words that are used in communication. It is simply the number of words that the students understand or can actively use to listen, speak, read, or write. Vocabulary is all about words or the words in a language or a special set of words that should be learned.

Additionally, in the previous research was conducted by Nurazizah (2012) entitled “Correlation Between Students’ Vocabulary Ability and Reading Comprehension of The Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 13 Malang”. The objective of her research was intended to find out whether there was significant correlation between the students’ vocabulary ability and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 13 Malang. Vocabulary is a part of reading comprehension which by recognizing words can comprehend the reading material. Those statement made the researcher highly motivated wants to know about the correlation between students’ vocabulary ability and reading comprehension. Moreover, based on her research background the researcher really interested to conduct the research dealing with these variables.

Furthermore, in this research. The researcher has similar objective with empirical research that was intended to find out whether there was significant

correlation between the vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022. The researcher found the result that was a very strong significant correlation between the vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. In this research, the instruments were matching cloze procedure test for vocabulary mastery test and short answer test for reading comprehension test. Based on the hypothesis in this research, the researcher found the result that there was a high positive significant correlation between the vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022.

To sum up, mastering vocabulary is the key to successful reading comprehension because from that way the students can easily get the meaning or information that they have read, they can also express new ideas and enrich their knowledge by learning so much something new that brings positive effect to their life now and forever. Without mastering vocabulary, the students will be confused in understanding the content of the text that they have read. Considering of the fact above, the researcher is curious to figure out the significant correlation between the research variables by conducting a piece of research entitled “The Correlation between Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension of the Eighth-grade Students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in Academic Year 2021/2022”.

1.2 Research Problem

As what has been previously stated, reading is not only to read a paragraph, but also to understand the meaning of the paragraph. In the present research, the researcher conducted a study on the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1

Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022. Moreover, the researcher was obviously interested in finding out the significant correlation between two research variables: vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the students in junior high school. Therefore, the research problem in the present study was formulated in the form of the question as follows: is there any significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The researcher should do research to find a solution to a problem in an organized investigation. A particular analysis is expected to provide a scientific explanation to the research problem. The present study was related to a scientific investigation to get the right answer precisely. To get the right solution a precisely, defined objectives are fundamental. Therefore, in accordance with the research problem that has been previously stated, the undertaking of the present study was intended to figure out whether there is any significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

The limitation of the study is essential to discuss the problem more specific. The researcher is limited on investigating the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022. The researcher determined the present research on the content words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs because those content words that the teacher has been taught to the

students. Reading comprehension is focused only on descriptive texts. Reading comprehension was assessed as the ability to identify four aspects of reading: general information, specific information, textual reference, and textual meaning. Those were the aspects that the researcher wanted to score in the present study.

1.5 Significance of the Study

One of the things that should be considered in conducting this research was focusing on what was being researched. This study was focused on finding out whether there was a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022. The results of this study are expected and recommended to provide significant research findings related to vocabulary mastery and their correlation with reading comprehension. In conclusion, the research findings are expected to provide theoretical and practical significance in regard to the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

Theoretically, the present study results are also contributing more theory of the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension to strengthen the theory. Moreover, additional empirical evidence is expected to be used in future studies. It can be used to give more empirical evidence to the existing findings related to the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension in choosing the correct word classes (nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives) provided in the box and then complete the missing word with the correct word choice. Besides, the present research findings can also disclose further research areas that other researchers could use in the same area. Thus, they could yield worth research findings.

Practically, the present study results are expected to benefit English teachers, students, and other researchers. For the English teachers, the researcher hopes that the teachers could help students master vocabulary and reading comprehension. For the students, the researcher hopes this study could positively influence the students and give motivation in learning English. The students can improve their vocabulary mastery better than before so that they will not face difficulties in learning a foreign language. The last is for the other researchers. The other researchers hope that this study can be useful for other researchers as a reference for those who could research the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension in the future.

1.6 Definition of the Key Term

In the present research, key terms are very important to make research clearer and can be understood by the readers in reading this research. To avoid misunderstanding and confusion on the parts of the readers concerning the key terms used, the researcher needs to define the key terms operationally. Accordingly, the definition of the key terms used in this study is vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022. There are two key terms that are needed to be explained to avoid misunderstanding. They are as the following.

1. Vocabulary Mastery

In the present study, vocabulary mastery refers to the number of words in a language that is mastered by the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022, and it involves four content words: nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs.

2. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension in this study is operationally defined as the ability of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022 in identifying general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference of descriptive texts.



CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

Theoretical review is a review of some theories related to the study. Scientific study is designed to provide practical significance and should be conducted on the basis of some important theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence. This is used to support and build the present study to be firmer based on the fact. Several sources from several kinds of literature are related and support the present research. There are some important points to be explained and discussed based on the relevant theoretical reviews that the researcher takes. The present study was based on discussing the following theoretical frameworks: vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Some of the theoretical frameworks that underlie this research are as follows.

2.1.1 Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary is a list or series of words used to express ideas, or in other words, it is used for communication. Vocabulary is the total number of words in a language; all the words known to a person or used in a particular book, subject, etc.; a list of words with their meaning. Blachowicz and Ogle (2008:178) reveal that vocabulary reflects the knowledge and experience and of social interactions. As life becomes more complex, people borrow new words to describe someone's activities. No one knows the exact number of words in the English vocabulary today. From the interpretation above, it can be concluded that vocabulary is the core component of language proficiency that consists of a set of lexemes, including single words, compound words, idioms; it provides much of the basis

for how well learners speak, read, listen, and write. This theoretical foundation will be important in conducting and strengthening the present research.

Vocabulary can be defined to be the words that should be understood to communicate effectively. Pollard (2008:13) defines vocabulary as an essential point of language learning. The students need to know the meaning of the words, how they are spelled, and how they are pronounced. Vocabulary is important to understand and convey the message. Building up a useful vocabulary is the basis of learning a foreign language at the primary level. The students who have a lot of vocabulary in English or other foreign languages can learn the language easily. A good mastery of the vocabulary will help the students to understand the language. They have to learn vocabulary to understand the message and convey their ideas.

Vocabulary is one of the language components. Vocabulary is the key aspect of language learning which consists of words that students use for speaking, listening, reading, and writing. According to Duffy (2009:14), when the readers do not know the meaning of the word, it can be said the readers do not have the fundamental knowledge or have not had experience in that area. Mastering vocabulary helps the students' chance to speak, listen, read, and write—the more words the students learn, the more ideas the students should have. Therefore, the students can communicate the concepts more effectively. For the students who learn English in school, vocabulary is a language component that is crucial because, without mastering vocabulary, they will have difficulty in the understanding language during the teaching and learning process.

Vocabulary is a fundamental component of second language proficiency, and one of the primary goals of language learning is to know its meaning. Cameron (2001:72) states that improving a useful vocabulary is a basic point to

learning a foreign language early. Learning vocabulary is important because it enriches students' knowledge of words. It implies that the success of the learner in learning a language. Mastering vocabulary will help the learners learn the English language well as they need to know words, meaning, how they are spelled, and how they are pronounced. Vocabulary can make students comprehend the words received while listening and reading during the teaching and learning process.

According to Kamil and Hiebert (2005:3), Generically, vocabulary is the knowledge of meanings of words. What complicates this definition is the fact that words come in at least two forms: oral and print. Knowledge of words also comes in at least two forms, receptive and productive. Oral vocabulary is a set of words for which we know the meanings when we speak or read orally. Print vocabulary consists of those words for which the meaning is known when we write or read silently. A productive vocabulary is used when writing or speaking, and receptive that can be understood or recognized. Mastery vocabulary was very crucial for the students who learned English as a foreign language. The mastery of vocabulary can support the students especially in reading comprehension and understanding the meaning of words when they are learning English.

Vocabulary is an essential component to support the students in communicating and expressing their ideas. It can be said is that vocabulary is the key to mastering language skills. Vocabulary plays a vital role in supporting the students' English. As a foreign language, vocabulary is one of the language components they learned first. If the students have mastered vocabulary, they will communicate with the other without any problems. According to Linse (2005:121), points that out that vocabulary is a collection of words that an individual knows. It means the students have to learn about vocabulary repeatedly

until they know a lot of vocabulary variations. The students will comprehend what they read if they have already mastered vocabulary.

From the previous arguments about vocabulary mastery, the authors have a similar discussion with Kamil and Hiebert (2005:3), who state that vocabulary is the knowledge of word meanings. It means that mastering vocabulary will help the students understand the reading, and the reading comprehension qualities depend on the quality and quantity of vocabulary the students have. It can be concluded that vocabulary is knowledge of word and word meaning, which plays an important role in learning a foreign language. In this study, the researcher only investigates four types of vocabulary: noun, adjective, verb, and adverb because it has been taught in class by the teacher. In the education field, a good vocabulary knowledge will help students understand the language. Knowing the meaning of the words can make the students understand the reading texts.

2.1.2 Reading Comprehension

Reading is important in the teaching and learning process and various activities. Reading plays an important role in human life in various activities. Reading can help people get the solution to the problem and as a source of information. In education, reading is very important, especially for students who want to improve their knowledge and learn something new. Reading is also someone's ability to understand the meaning of the symbols contained in the written text. According to Harmer (2001:99), reading positively affects students' vocabulary knowledge, spelling, and writing. To comprehend a text, the readers have to focus on what they read to comprehend the text systematically so that reading comprehension needs readers to get focus during reading.

Comprehension is the essential goal of reading and reading instruction. According to Brassell and Rasinski (2008:15), to most reading specialists, making meaning is the one essential element involved in reading. In other words, turning those written squiggles on a page into meaningful thoughts, not just those expressed by the author, but also those triggered in the reader as they read. These thoughts may even go beyond the content expressed in the text itself. Reading is the creation of meaning from the printed page to reach further understanding on the reading texts. Although it may involve the sounding out of words, accessing the meaning of words, reading the text with appropriate fluency, and providing expression, all side-shows to the main event—making meaning.

According to National Reading Panel in Chard (2008:1), comprehension is a highly complex cognitive process involving the intentional interaction between the reader and the text to create meaning. In other words, comprehension doesn't just happen; it requires effort. Readers must intentionally and purposefully work to create meaning from what they read. Good readers become so fluent and automatic at strategic comprehension processing that you rarely "see" the work they are doing. Strategic processing, a necessity for efficient and effective comprehension, involves using strategies to understand text, knowing when to use the various strategies, actively thinking about and monitoring what is read, understanding text structure, and engaging in meaningful discussions about a text.

In addition, Woolley (2011:15) states that reading comprehension is the process of making meaning from text to get a thorough understanding of what is explained in the text and to get the meaning of words or sentences that have been read. Students develop this reading or representation of the text meaning during the reading process. It means that the readers must understand the meaning of a

paragraph from reading and what the readers read. It makes the ability to understand reading important for students in learning English. To understand the meaning of the reading passages, the readers need to understand some words. Without adequate vocabulary, it will be challenging for the students to comprehensively understand the reading materials or the other written sources.

According to Duffy (2009:14), comprehension is the essence of reading because the goal of written language is the communication of messages. Reading comprehension is important because it will influence the students' knowledge of the written textbook or the other written source. Beside gaining knowledge, the students can also improve their vocabulary to master English well by reading. Reading comprehension is related to the understanding of the vocabulary. If the students can master vocabulary, they will understand and comprehend the text. The comprehension occurs when new information interacts with the old one already stored in students' memory. Thus, good comprehension of an English text can be gained when the readers relate the text with their prior knowledge.

According to Pang et al. (2003:19), reading comprehension relates prior knowledge to new knowledge contained in written paragraphs. Prior knowledge depends on the students' lived experience of new knowledge gained in reading content. Reading comprehension is explained as understanding new information of what is already known. Prior knowledge is expressed with words. When the meaning of a word is unknown, the readers do not have background knowledge. Without background knowledge or the vocabulary that comes with various experiences in learning, the students will not comprehend the content of the reading material which students are reading. This is really important in comprehending a reading text that enrich their knowledge.

Snow (2002:11) also states that reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing the meaning itself through interaction and involvement with written language. It will involve identifying and recognizing printed or written symbols that serve as exciting for recalling meaning built up through the readers' manipulation of relevant concepts already in their possession. It means that their prior knowledge is critical to their understanding of what they have read. The readers' background will bring personal meaning to the printed page; on the other hand, not all the readers comprehend and understand the material exactly and in the same way. The important thing that should be considered in reading activity is the readers' background to comprehend a reading text.

2.2 Empirical Review

The empirical review is a review of previous research that is relevant to the present study. Empirical review deals with original research, such as scientific experiments, surveys, and studies based on experience and observation rather than systematic logic. Empirical evidence can help the researcher avoid unintentional replication of the previous study results and clarify and define the concept of the study. In the empirical review, the researcher inserted two relevant previous research. Those two theses used ex post facto research design, which they elaborated about reading comprehension. The two related pieces of research, which are used as empirical reviews, are described as follows:

The first research of the present study was carried out by Astini (2020) entitled "The Correlation Between Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension of the Eighth-Grade Students of SMPN 1 Ubud in Academic

Year 2019/2020”. The objective of this study was to find out the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Ubud in academic year 2019/2020. The researcher involved 70 samples of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Ubud. In addition, the research instruments were used to collect the required data on reading comprehension and vocabulary mastery. According to research findings, it could be found that there was a strong correlation between the research variables.

Furthermore, the researcher found a significant positive correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. The researcher conducted the research well, and also the theories used in supporting her research were strong and appropriate. However, there were unclear instructions in the research instrument, namely the absence of clear instructions regarding the division of time allotment given to the students when answering questions. Thus, it was less efficient in working on the questions. Therefore, in this study, the researcher provided clear instructions about the time allotment to make it easier for students to answer questions easily and efficiently. In the present research, the researcher gave 45 minutes to answer the matching cloze procedure test, which had 40 questions, and 45 minutes to answer 30 questions of short answer test.

The second research was conducted by Meirawati (2020) entitled “The Correlation Between Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension of Eighth-grade Students of SMPN 2 Sukawati in Academic Year 2019/2020”. The objective of the study was to figure out the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Sukawati. The research engaged 50 students of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Sukawati. The research instruments used to collect the required data

focused on the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. These research findings clearly defined a strong positive correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

Additionally, the strength of the previous study was in its research findings. The previous research findings showed a correlation between the two variables: vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Additionally, the theoretical review explained no specific aspect related to the rubric elements that made the readers unable to know what was assessed and confused them. Thus, the researcher tested the students' vocabulary mastery in the present study by giving some words of these four aspects in vocabulary: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Besides, short answer tasks tested more on the four aspects of reading comprehension, such as identifying general information, specific information, textual reference, and textual meaning. This was expected to make the students know about the reading aspects they want to assess to emphasize the aspects.

2.3 Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a precise, testable statement of what the researcher predict will be the outcome of the study. It is a specific, testable prediction about what expectation of a study. The hypothesis is what the researcher predicts the correlation between two or more variables. In the present study, the researcher uses a hypothesis to predict the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022. Based on the theoretical and empirical review, a hypothesis is proposed in this study. The hypothesis that is constructed dealing with the research problem can be stated in the following statement.

1. Alternative Hypothesis (H_a): There is a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022.
2. Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022.

