

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

One of the four skills that must be mastered in learning English is reading, students can increase their knowledge of their English vocabulary, gain a lot of knowledge, and learn many things while they read. Reading skill allows students to access ideas that are communicated by people in the form of written or printed material from different countries, so it will give them the opportunity to broaden their horizon and increase their knowledge. While reading, students construct various representations of the text that are important for understanding. Reading is a basic component of students being able to have an understanding or something more knowledge, because with reading, one will become richer in knowledge. Reading is an activity carried out by students to obtain information or previous knowledge known to the students.

According to Teixeira (2012:1), reading is a key language skill that has a significant place in teaching and learning foreign languages. In addition to this statement, by reading the students can learn so many things. Reading skill allows students to access ideas that are communicated by people in the form of written or printed material from different countries, so it will give them the opportunity to broaden their horizon and increase their knowledge. Furthermore, there are so many benefits that the students get from reading in learning a language.

In education, students are required to master reading to make it easier to get the information they need. Reading is an activity where the students understand the reading text and then relates it to the knowledge that the students have. Through reading, students can get much knowledge, ideas and students can get new

vocabulary or they can practice to apply the vocabulary which they got. It means that vocabulary knowledge is a major component in the language learning. Reading is also something crucial and necessary for the students in learning English because the success of their study depends on their ability to read and find the information in their reading material. The students gain some information by reading, and the information may be affected by a fair reading performance. Through reading, the readers also begin to have a greater understanding of a particular topic. Since reading leads the readers to understand a reading passage, it can be said that reading is a receptive skill in language learning. According to Pollard (2008:45), reading involves students' interaction with visual input of language they need to process and understand in language learning.

Vocabulary is an important element, especially in learning English. Students must be able to master vocabulary to have good English. Wainwright (2006:33) states that vocabulary is an important factor in reading. The more a person memorizes vocabulary, the better her/his language will be. Besides, vocabulary is the main aspect of reading. Without a well-developed vocabulary, understanding reading materials will be hampered. It will be increasingly difficult to understand the information that is stated in a reading text or written sources. From the explanations above, we know how important vocabulary in the reading activity. It shows that they have close relationships because to comprehend the text, the students need a lot of vocabulary. Besides, they must have good interaction with the text and need more attention from the readers to get the exact or close meaning.

In fact, there are some of students difficult to comprehend their reading. Some students do not understand what they read, it means that the students have difficulties in reading comprehension. It showed that students actually still have

reading interest and reading comprehension problems. Some of them often failed in English comprehension or reading test in school because they read English content materials relatively little. And the level of pronunciation of students' vocabulary is very weak, therefore without a well-developed vocabulary, the level of students' understanding of the reading material will be hampered. It will make it more difficult for students to understand the information stated in reading texts or written sources.

A research was conducted by Andriyani (2018) entitled "The Correlation Study between Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension of First-year Students at SMPN 1 Umbulsari Jember". The results of her research showed that vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension were correlated. Moreover, the researcher used sentence constructions and multiple-choice as an instrument to measure vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. In addition, the results of her research also provided an answer key to make the researcher easily in scoring students' work. Based on these research findings, this research has scientifically proven that vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the first-year students of SMPN 1 Umbulsari Jember had a significant correlation.

It is in line with Sedita in Furqon (2005) who states that vocabulary knowledge is crucial in reading comprehension and determining how well students are in comprehending the texts. In the regard to this matter, this study attempts to find out the ability of students' reading comprehension, students' vocabulary mastery and the correlation between students' reading comprehension and their vocabulary mastery. Besides, according to Langan (2002:341), if students have a poor vocabulary, they will have a slow reading speed and limit their comprehension. Furthermore, Cameron (2001:72) states that improving a useful vocabulary is a

basic point to learning a foreign language at an early level. Learning vocabulary is important as it enriches the knowledge of words. Thus, the researcher would like to figure out 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**

A scientific investigation begins with a problem. Moreover, formulating a research problem in doing investigation is important and useful for the researcher before doing the research. Based on what has been described in the background of the study above, the researcher held research on the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh. Moreover, the researcher is interest in finding out the significant correlation of vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the students in vocational junior high school. Therefore, the research problem in this present study can be formulated in the form of 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**

Every research has its own objective. Research objectives describe concisely what the research is trying to achieve. A particular investigation is expected to provide a scientific solution to the research problem. Moreover, the objective of the study should be in line with the background and the research problem that has already been formulated for the study. Furthermore, the aims of any activities which are relate to the scientific investigation are always intended to

find out a scientific solution about the research problem that has been previously formulated and determined. Concerning the problem above, the objectives of this research is to find out whether 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.

#### **1.4 Limitation of the Study**

The limitation of the study is important to make the discussion about the research problem more specific and avoid a broad discussion. In this study the researcher focused on the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth- grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh. The researcher simply limited this research only to vocabulary mastery in the content words, including nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives because that is what been taught in class is descriptive paragraph, especially in describing animal, which consists of an identification, descriptions, and conclusion. They have to choose one of the words provided in the box, and they then complete the missing word with the correct word choice. Moreover, the reading comprehension assessed is the ability to identify four aspects of reading: general information, specific information, textual reference and textual meaning.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

One of the things to consider in conducting this research is the importance of the expected research findings. In this study, it 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 the 2021/2022



school year. This study's results are highly expected and recommended to provide significant research findings related to vocabulary mastery and their correlation with reading comprehension. In conclusion, the findings of the present research are expected to provide both theoretical and practical significance regarding the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

. These research activities are significantly carried out for the following needs. This research is able to benefit a novice researcher, especially in learning how to conduct a research. These research findings are expected to be useful and valuable, especially for students and teachers of English at the eighth-grade of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh for their future learning process. Besides, these research findings are also expected to be positive and valuable information, especially for those who are concerned in the world of teaching and learning English as a foreign or second language. Finally, these research findings are also expected to be the practical and theoretical information to development of theories on language teaching.

The results of this present study are expected to be beneficial for English teachers, students, and other researchers. For the English teachers, the researcher hopes that after knowing the result of the vocabulary test by the students, the teachers will improve their quality of teaching foreign languages and can help students master the vocabulary. Teacher also provides interesting activity to improve students' vocabulary, so the students can easily learn English language. For the students, the researcher hopes that this study will give positive influence for the students, and give them motivation in learning English. The students can improve their vocabulary mastery better than before, so they will not face

difficulties in learning foreign language. The last is for the other researcher. The researcher hopes that this study can be useful for other researchers as a reference for those who would research the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

### **1.6 Definition of the Key Term**

Key terms are important to be defined to avoid misunderstanding and confusion among the readers in comprehending this research. The researcher provides a clear operational definition in comprehending this study and clarifies the terms used in the present study. These operational definitions can be used as reference in confining the complexity of the present study related to the key terms. Accordingly, the definition of the key terms used by the researcher in this study was vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh. Furthermore, the definition of key terms which are used in the present study could be briefly and concisely defined as the following discussion:

#### **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 the theories that are related to the conducted study. Therefore, it is used to support and build the present study. In this study, the researcher describes the prominent points which include theoretical reviews which are related literatures to this study. It is used as references and frameworks to solve the problem in the present study. Scientific research should be conducted on the basis of some relevant theoretical constructs and hope to give practical significance and empirical evidence. In this study, there are some frameworks used as a foundation to support the analysis of this study. These theoretical reviews are very important to support the present research. They are elaborated as follows: vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

##### **2.1.1 Vocabulary Mastery**

Vocabulary is one of the most important elements in a language. Many of the vocabulary in English text books have to be learned. Without it, no one can speak or understand the language. 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. The vocabulary of language always changes and grows. Blachowicz and Ogle (2008:178) reveal that vocabulary is a reflection of our knowledge and experience and of our social interactions. As life becomes more complex, people borrow new words to describe someone's activities.

No one knows exact numbers 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 lexeme, including single words, compound words, idioms; provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, read, listen, and write.

Vocabulary is the knowledge of a word. Vocabulary can be defined as a knowledge about word and word meaning. Lehr et al. (2004:5) state that knowledge of word and word meaning are defined as a vocabulary, Vocabulary is used as the first step to recognize the language deeper. Someone who has good vocabulary mastery can understand more in communication. In contrast, someone who is still weak in vocabulary mastery will get difficulty in communicating. Vocabulary is a central part in learning language. It means that the vocabulary has the important role in understanding the language for the learner especially the students who learn English in school. Students will be easier in learning language because the role of vocabulary.

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 can definite to the words we must understand to communicate effectively. Pollard (2008:13) defines that vocabulary is an essential point of language learning. The students need to know the meaning of the words, how the words are spelt and how they are pronounced. Vocabulary is important to understand and convey the message. Building up a useful vocabulary is the basic of learning a foreign language at primary level. The students who have a lot of vocabulary in English or other foreign languages, they can learn language easily. A good mastery in vocabulary will help the students to understand the language. When the students learn a foreign language especially English, they have to learn the vocabulary in order to understand the message and can convey their idea.

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 an important in teaching and learning process and in variety activities. Reading can help to get the solution of problems and also as a source of information. In education, reading is very important especially for students who want to improve their knowledge. Reading has a positive effect on students' vocabulary knowledge, on their spelling and on their writing (Harmer, 2001: 99). Furthermore, according to Harmer (2007:99), reading comprehension is useful for language acquisition. To comprehend a text, the readers have to focus on what they read because reading is not only reading but also how to comprehend the text systematically. Through reading, the readers can learn to comprehend the reading texts to answer the questions, expand grammar knowledge, vocabulary, and so on.

Blachowicz and Ogle (2008:15) state that reading is essential. It is the process by which people gain information and ideas from books, newspapers, manuals, letters, contracts, advertisements and a host of other materials. Reading is not only done by the students but all people who need information in their life. They can search for information through books or other written texts. Reading comprehension can be started in the early stages of elementary school. Well, without proper comprehension skills, students lack the ability to understand what

they read. Having excellent reading comprehension skills is crucial. It increases the enjoyment and effectiveness of reading and helps not only academically, but professionally, and in a person's personal life. For junior high school students, it can be initially introduced in advance with various kinds of texts. Then the students apply their knowledge to comprehend the text. It is very important to support learning so the students could develop their language skills.

According to Broadman (2007:8), reading comprehension involves much more than readers' responses to text. Reading comprehension is multicomponent, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text (previous knowledge, strategy use) as well as variables relates to the text itself (interest in text, understanding of text type). They should connect the reading materials with their basic knowledge to have an understanding from the text through the strategy applied by being interested at the reading materials first; it is most important in doing reading activity to achieve a goals of reading activity especially in comprehending text.

According to Pang et al. (2003:19), reading comprehension is about relating prior knowledge to new knowledge contained in written texts. Prior knowledge basically deepens on the students lived experience related to new knowledge that will be 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, it means the reader does not have background knowledge or has not experiences in that area. Without background knowledge or without the vocabulary that comes with various

experiences in learning, the students will not comprehend the content of the reading material which is being read.

Duffy (2009:14) reveals that comprehension is the root of reading because the target of written language is the communication of message. Reading comprehension depends on prior knowledge. Prior knowledge is expressed with words. When the meaning of the word is unknown, it means that the readers do not have background knowledge. Reading is of course the ability to make sense of written or printed symbol. Therefore, when the readers want to comprehend the meaning of the printed symbol, they have to identify, recognize, and interpret them well. Real readers do something with what they read. Thus, students think reading is important when they use reading for achieve an important goal to them, to achieve a purpose of theirs, or to answer questions that they want to answer.

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.

From the previous arguments of reading comprehension, the authors have similar argument with Duffy (2009:14). The argument is where comprehension is



the root of reading skill. Reading comprehension is important because it will influence the students' knowledge in gaining information from the written textbook or the other written sources. Beside to gain the knowledge, by reading the students can also improve their vocabulary and language skill to master English well. Reading comprehension is related with the understanding of the vocabulary. Students will reach all of this aim if they understand and comprehend the text that they have read. The comprehension occurs when new information interacts with the old one that has already been stored in students' memory. Thus, good comprehension of an English text can be gained when the readers relate the information in the text with their prior knowledge.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

An empirical review is a review of relevant research conducted in which it reviews the previous research relevant to the present research. Empirical review deals with original research such as scientific experiments, surveys, and research studies based on experience and observation, rather than on 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 pieces of 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 in chronological order 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 there was 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 are strong and appropriate. However, there are unclear instructions in the research instrument, namely the absence of clear instructions regarding the division of time allotment given to each student when answering questions. Thus, it is 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 would provide clear instructions. The researcher would give 40 minutes to answer the matching cloze procedure test, which had 40 gaps and 30 minutes to answer 30 items of short-answer tasks from 6 descriptive texts that have been provided.

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; they were vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Additionally, there was no specific aspect explained in the theoretical review related to the rubric elements that made the students 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, so they can emphasize what aspects they have to master to get a good reading comprehension score.

### **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 (Ha): 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 (Ho): 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.

