

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Writing is one of the language skills that requires great attention because writing is very difficult for students to learn and master. Writing not only puts out a few words without thinking first, but also needs to understand what they want to write. It means that in writing, students need to dig deeper into their minds to have good writing. Patel and Jain (2008:125) state that writing is essential features of learning a language because it provides a very good means of fixing the vocabulary, spelling, and sentences pattern. It becomes an important part of students' expression at higher levels. Whereas, Harmer (2004:31) states that English writing activities enable students to produce language and express ideas, feelings, and opinions using sequences of written words.

To apply, students must know various kinds of vocabulary when they want to write good academic writing. According to Thornbury (2002:13) without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. It means, when students have lower vocabulary, it make it difficult for them to speak English; they cannot convey their ideas. Meanwhile, Nunan (2001:118) states that a rich vocabulary is an important element in the acquisition of a second or foreign language to develop writing skills. It is important for students to collect and retrieve vocabulary to develop writing skills. Students need a mental process to translate new English words into their mother tongue. Therefore, good pronunciation of these words can affect speaking skills and good understanding of spelling and choice of word in the context of discourse can contribute to their writing skills.

In constructing a paragraph, students express ideas, share information, and convey feelings as the goal with sequences of correct and sensible sentences on a media. Text that is learned by the students are limited into five such as descriptive, narrative, recount, procedure and report text. According to Oshima and Hogue (2007:61) Descriptive writing is a genre of writing that appeals to the senses. It tells how something looks, feels, smells, tastes, and or sound. In other hand Zemach and Islam (2005:21) also have the same opinion who states that when a place is described, the writer can develop the paragraph by adding descriptive details that told how a place looks, smells, sound or feels.

In writing a descriptive paragraph, the knowledge of words, phrases, or expressions should be a big requirement to convey a meaning. In addition, they need sentence pattern or syntax skills to make different types of sentences as well as an understanding of grammar and how to write paragraphs. This means that students have to focus on their word choice, spelling, vocabulary and grammar so that they were understand in writing paragraphs. Writing English by students in foreign language seems to be a complex cognitive process. Therefore, they have to apply their writing practice in real daily life.

Besides, Azizah (2016) conducted similar research. The objective of her study was to determine the score of students' vocabulary mastery and their writing ability in descriptive text. The research was conducted on seventh-grade student of SMP Islam Sudirman 1 Bancak Semarang District. In this study, it was found that there was a positive and significant correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their writing ability in descriptive text. Regarding with the findings of this study which explains that between vocabulary mastery and the ability to write descriptive paragraphs are related each other, so that in this study the researcher

became curious to find out the correlation between vocabulary mastery and descriptive paragraphs writing ability of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 5 Sukawati.

In addition, writing is one of the English skills that students learn in school, while vocabulary is a supporting component. Therefore, the writer tries to connect the two, especially in terms of writing descriptive text. The writer also wants to know the level of students' ability in learning vocabulary and writing. Then the writer looks for the relationship between the two. Based on the description above, the writer is interested in conducting research on the correlation between vocabulary mastery and descriptive paragraph writing ability of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 5 Sukawati in academic year 2021/2022.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

The most important aspect in conducting research is formulating research problems. As mentioned in the background of the research, vocabulary mastery and descriptive paragraph writing ability need to be paid more attention to in learning English. The researcher must decide on the specific and correct questions to answer. In accordance with the research background, theoretically mastery of vocabulary affects the ability to write in paragraphs. As a result, the researcher intends to find out a significant relationship between vocabulary mastery and the ability to write descriptive paragraphs. Therefore, the research problem can be formulated as follows: is there a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and descriptive paragraph writing ability of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 5 Sukawati in academic year 2021/2022.

### 1.3 Objective of the Study

Every research has its own objective. The research objective briefly describes what the researcher wants to achieve. Certain investigations are expected to provide scientific solutions to research problems. Moreover, the research objective should be in line with the background and the research problem that has already been formulated for the study. Without a research objective, this research cannot work well. In addition, the mastery of vocabulary that the researcher wants to investigate is the students' writing ability, especially in descriptive paragraphs. As explained in the background of the study and research problems, the purpose of this study was to find out whether there was a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and descriptive paragraph writing ability of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 5 Sukawati in academic year 2021/2022.

### 1.4 Limitation of the Study

The limitation of the study is really important to make sure that the research problem leads to a more specific discussion. So, the researcher presents the study deeper and more specific. Therefore, in this study the topic is to discuss the correlation between vocabulary mastery and descriptive paragraph writing ability of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 5 Sukawati in academic year 2021/2022. Besides, in this study, the researcher limited the problem of the discussion on the vocabulary of the students about verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Meanwhile, in writing a descriptive paragraph, the researcher limited it to describing a person according to the pictures provided that related to a famous person.

### 1.5 Significance of the Study

The researcher is interested in investigating the correlation between vocabulary mastery and descriptive paragraph writing ability of the eighth-grade student of SMPN 5 Sukawati in academic year 2021/2022. One of the principles and practical reflections which is taken into account in undertaking the present investigation is the significance of the expected research findings. This research is expected to have significant, theoretical and practical significance. The findings of this study extend to theoretical and practical significance for teaching and learning English. It means that it is not only to be used as reference or source but can also be applied in a real situation or context.

Theoretically, the result of this study is expected to enrich the theory and become a reference for further research related to the correlation between vocabulary mastery and descriptive paragraph writing ability. Furthermore, the procedure for carrying out this research can be a good guideline to use in conducting related research. Moreover, this research is expected to be used as evidence that there is a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and descriptive paragraph writing ability of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 5 Sukawati in academic years 2021/2022. In addition, the findings of this study can disclose further areas of research so that they could be used by other researchers as bases undertaking a similar study.

Practically, the findings in this study are useful for English teachers, students, and other researchers. For English teachers, the result of this study can provide information about the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and descriptive paragraph writing ability. So that the teacher can motivate students to improve their vocabulary which is related to their writing ability. Besides for



students, they can learn and know how important vocabulary mastery is to improve writing ability especially in descriptive paragraphs. In addition, for other researchers, the result of this study can be used to increase knowledge in English and hopefully can be used as a reference for conducting research in the same field.

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

The title of this research is The Correlation between Vocabulary Mastery and Descriptive Paragraph Writing Ability of Eighth-grade Students of SMPN 5 Sukawati academic year 2021/2022. To reduce misunderstanding, the researcher will explain some key terms based on the title. Key terms are important to provide a clear understanding of the topic, so that the readers clearly can understand the study. The researcher then clarifies the key term in this research. There are Vocabulary Mastery and Descriptive Paragraphs Writing Ability. The key terms that are use present study which are being defined is follow:

1. **Vocabulary Mastery**

Vocabulary mastery is operationally defined as the knowledge of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 5 Sukawati in academic year 2021/2022 about English, especially about verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs using cloze task.

2. **Descriptive Paragraph Writing Ability**

Writing ability is operationally defined as the ability of the eighth-grade students in SMPN Sukawati academic year 2021/2022 to express their idea in writing, especially in writing descriptive paragraphs about famous persons with the complete generic structure; identification, description and conclusion.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

#### 2.1 Theoretical Review

Theoretical review is a review of theories that are related to the research conducted. Furthermore, it is used to support and build this research. In this chapter, the researcher discusses a theoretical overview of related issues focused on the topic. This study discusses the correlation between vocabulary mastery and descriptive paragraph writing ability. The present study was conducted based on the following theoretical frameworks that were taken from the expert. There are several important points to be explained and discussed based on the relevant theoretical review taken by the researcher. The theoretical review includes writing ability and vocabulary mastery.

##### 2.1.1 Vocabulary mastery

Vocabulary is the main important element to learn foreign language, especially English. According to Cameron (2001:72), vocabulary is central to the learning of a foreign language. It means that vocabulary has been learned at young ages when they learn a foreign language. So based on that statement, vocabulary is one of the most important language elements in a second language. Nunan (2001:118) states that a rich vocabulary is an important element in the acquisition of the second language. That statement can confirm that vocabulary is indeed an important element of a second language. Therefore, students who are lacking in vocabulary has problems when they practice English.

Vocabulary is a basic component to support the students in communicating and expressing their ideas. It can be said that vocabulary is the key to mastering the four-language skills. Vocabulary plays an important role in supporting the students' English. As a foreign language, vocabulary is one of the language components that they mastered first. If students have mastered vocabulary, they were able to communicate with others without any problems. According to Linse (2005:121), points out that vocabulary is a collection of words which are known by an individual. It means the students have to learn about vocabulary repeatedly until they know a lot of vocabulary variations. In their writing ability, especially in English, writing was more effective when they have more vocabulary.

To communicate, especially in written form, students must pay attention to one of the correct words or vocabulary. So that they can write well in English. It is also easier for them to put their ideas on paper and know the correct vocabulary to make their writing coherent and unified with each other. In addition, when students are able to master their own vocabulary, they can easily communicate with others, both orally and in writing. Alqhatani (2015) states that vocabulary mastery refers to the great skill in processing words of a language. This is an individual achievement and procession. It means, students must learn how to process words to make good writing because writing is an individual achievement. Students also have a responsibility to improve their knowledge of words themselves. That is, they can create different writings from others which will make their writing more interesting.

According to Cameron (2001:95) the vocabulary is fundamental to using a foreign language as discourse, because vocabulary is learned from participating in discourse and it is very important to participate in it. It means, vocabulary is a basic



part of language, vocabulary is needed to be learned so we must learn vocabulary to make it easier to use language. Through vocabulary learning, we can do good participation in the use of language, whether we use vocabulary to make sentences that are good for spoken or written. Having a good knowledge in vocabulary was help speakers to convey their ideas. In the field of education, a good vocabulary mastery was help students when they want to convey ideas or understand something in written or oral form. Therefore, students were finding it difficult to practice their English, if they lack vocabulary.

In English lesson, vocabulary is the key to mastering the four-language skill. This is because vocabulary is a basic component to support students in communicating to express their ideas. As a foreign language, vocabulary is one of the components of language that they must master. When the students have mastered the vocabulary, they can communicate easily with others. According to Pollard, (2008:13) vocabulary is an important point in language learning. Students need to know the meaning of words, how they are spelled and how they are pronounced. Students learn vocabulary to understand the message and be able to convey their ideas.

Vocabulary can be roughly interpreted as words that can help in learning foreign language. That is, vocabulary can be more than one word that can express an idea. Students are expected to master reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Vocabulary can help students or learners to gain sufficient understanding of a large number of words. There are two kinds of vocabulary namely, productive vocabulary and receptive vocabulary. Productive vocabulary is words that are familiar or easily recognizable and these are often used by individuals, especially in writing and speaking. In contrast, receptive vocabulary is words that are less

familiar to students who may not use them spontaneously because they can recognize the meaning of the words when they read and listen.

Basically, mastering the four-language skills cannot be separated from understanding vocabulary. It is because vocabulary is a basic element that supports students to interact and express their ideas. vocabulary has an important role in supporting students' English. As foreign students, vocabulary is one of the language components that they must master first. When students learn a foreign language especially in English, they must learn vocabulary to understand the message and be able to convey their ideas. Students who have good vocabulary mastery has good communication.

From the vocabulary explanation above, the researcher can conclude that vocabulary mastery is an important aspect that must be mastered by students. By mastering vocabulary students can improve their communication. It also makes it easier for students to write if they have mastered the vocabulary. Because, vocabulary is the basic or main aspect of English language skills that must be learned by students or other people. According to Harmer (2001:65), there are eight types of part of speech, namely noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, preposition, pronoun, conjunction, and determiner. In this study, the researcher only used four types of word class namely: verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs because these four types have been taught in the school.

First, Noun (noun phrase) is a word (or group of words) that is the name of a person, a place, a thing or activity or a quality or idea; nouns can be used as the subject or object of a verb. Second, pronoun is a word that is used in place of a noun or noun phrase. Third, adjective is a word that gives more information about a noun or pronoun. Fourth, verb is a word (or group of words) which is used in describing

an action, experience or state. Fifth, adverb (adverbial phrase) is a word (or group of words) that describes or adds to the meaning of a verb, adjective, another adverb or a whole sentence. Sixth, Preposition (prepositional phrase) is a word (or group of words) which is used to show the way in which other words are connected. Seventh, determiner definite article indefinite article possessive demonstratives quantifiers. Eighth, conjunction is a word that connects sentences, phrases or clauses.

### **2.1.2 Writing Ability**

Writing Is one of the productive skills that students must master in using language. According to Brown (2001:336) writing is a taking process. Writing can be planned and provided with an unlimited number of revisions prior to publication. Writing is not just about writing something on paper. In writing, there are steps that must be known by the author. The first process is looking for meaning and the second process is putting meaning into language. It means, writing is a process that presents the author's ideas or thoughts in written form. While according to Zemach and Islam (2005:5), writing is a significant type and day-to-day communication, but it is very important in school in colleges. In addition, writing is a skill that is acquired through training. To become a good writer, repeat practice can help improve writing ability.

In writing, students often have more time to think than in oral activities. They can go through what they know in their minds, and even consult dictionaries, grammar books, or references to help them. Writing can encourage students to focus more on using accurate language. In addition, writing is always used as a means to

strengthen the language that has been taught. However, developing writing skills to be learned hands-on where they can be executed with minimal effort or thought. This includes handwriting (or typing) skills, spelling, punctuation, and use of capital letters. Writing is a complex skill that requires the language learner's efforts to master every detail of the component of writing. Thus, mastering writing skills means that students are also able to convey their feelings and thoughts in correct spelling, punctuation, grammar and so on.

According to Pollard (2008:50) there are two terms that must be applied to writing skills. The first is coherence, which is the way a piece of writing is structured. It includes the logical development of ideas and careful organization within or between paragraphs. The second, is cohesion which refers to how one idea is related to another. This is usually achieved by using references and linking words. These language points are mostly, but not only applied in writing and as a guide for readers through writing, showing relationship between ideas. Writing requires several steps to produce a good writing product. There are several sub-activities that must be carried out in producing the text. More than just stringing words into sentences. The writer should undergo several steps to make sure that what has been written follows the right development of the writing process.

Oshima and Hogue (2007:15) states that writing is an instant process but requires several steps. There are four steps in writing process. The first step is called Pre-writing. Pre-writing is how you get your idea. In this step you select a topic and then select supporting ideas to develop the topic you have chosen. The second step is organizing, where writers arrange their ideas into a rough outline. The third step is writing. In this step, writers begin to write down their ideas on paper into rough

drafts using the lines as guides. The fourth step is polishing. In this step the writer revise and write what they have written. This activity was successful if the writer makes revision and information in their writing.

Meanwhile, Harmer (2004:246) states that writing and speaking as productive skills have a number of conventions that separate them from each other. Apart from differences in grammar and vocabulary, it is a matter of letters, words, and text formation, which is manifested by handwriting, spelling, layout, and punctuation. Writing is a necessary skill for speakers of first, second, and foreign languages as well as those who use their own first language. It is also worth mentioning that students are evaluated according to their written work consequently and many exams are taken in written form. Writing in English is not an easy thing for students to do, including for those who are learning English as their foreign language.

On the other hand, Hyland (2003:9), states that writing is a way of exchanging private meanings and writing courses that emphasize the ability of individuals to build their own opinions on a subject. It can be said that by writing someone can understand something better because when someone writes, they automatically read what they have written. Within the school context, this can be a reference for teachers to provide space for students to create their own meaning in a positive and cooperative learning environment. Students can also be more creative and able to express their ideas well. According to Patel and Jain (2008:125), writing is a kind of linguistic behavior. It presents the sound of the language through visual symbols. It means, writing is an important feature of language learning as it provides an excellent means of improving vocabulary, spelling, and sentence patterns.



Based on the theories that have been explained, the researcher uses the theory of Oshima and Hogue (2007:15) which explains that writing is not an easy process but requires several stages. There are four steps in writing, namely: prewriting, organizing, writing and polishing. That is, in good writing must follow these steps. By applying these steps, writers were not be confused in writing, because sometimes they are confused to start writing. The writers find it easier to write when they know these steps. With this, the researcher concludes that writing is very useful because it is used as a communication tool written by the writers to the reader to convey information and certain goals.

### **2.1.3 Descriptive paragraph**

Descriptive writing evokes the senses, telling how something looks, feels, smells, feels or sounds. A good description is a word picture. The reader can imagine objects, places, or people in his mind. Oshima and Hogue (2007:61), define descriptive writing that appeals to the senses, so that it tells how an object looks, feels, smells, tastes and sounds. When someone describes something, they have to imagine an object that can make them confused to say how the object looks with its characteristics. This is in accordance with student achievement in this study which can show students' writing ability consistently in descriptive paragraphs.

According to Savage and Shafiei (2007:34), a descriptive paragraph is a paragraph that describes a person, place, or thing so that the reader can imagine it in his mind. In addition, in descriptive paragraphs where the author uses words that create pictures that can help the reader feel what they have read. They add that paragraphs may be more concerned with function than content, they create

understanding to attract readers' attention by clarifying the topic of the topic so that readers can create an image in their mind about the topic to be explained and make smooth transitions that connect and coherent and coherent paragraph is the intent and purpose of the story writer in descriptive paragraphs.

On the other hand, Folse, et al. (2010:135), state that a descriptive paragraph is a paragraph that describes how something or someone looks or feels. In the descriptive paragraph, the writer uses words that create an image and help the reader see, touch, feel, smell, or taste the topic that her or she is describing. A similar statement comes from Savage and Mayer (2007:61), sight, smell, and taste are used in word to build an image for the can be felt by the reader clearly. A descriptive paragraph is a paragraph that describes something using a certain order to make it easier for the reader to understand what the author wants to convey to the reader.

Evans (2000:42), states the general structure of descriptive text is the introduction, main content, and closing. Recognition or identification talks about the general structure of the paragraph. The writer writes several statements by showing the objects described in the whole paragraph. The main body or description speaks of the description of the object. For example, physical appearance, hobbies, characteristics and so on and can be called a description. The last is the conclusion that concludes the paragraph. Conclusions are not absolutely necessary but normality signifies the end of the paragraph. This can be a paragraph summary or the writers' comments about the object being described.

According to Knapp, and Watkins (2005:98), the language features of descriptive paragraph are follows: (1) Using present tense when describing things

from a technical or factual point of view, (2) Using relations verbs when describing appearance/qualities and parts/functions of phenomenon, (3) Using action verbs when describing behavior, (5) Using adverb to add extra information to verbs, and (6) using adverbial phrases to add extra information about the manner, place or time. Therefore, students need to know about the language features that are useful in writing descriptive paragraphs with the aim that students are able to write descriptive paragraphs properly and correctly in accordance with the language features. The essence of descriptive text begins with identifications, where the writer introduces the object of description. The last is the conclusion, in the conclusion the writer states the opinion of the description.

In addition, descriptive paragraphs are paragraphs that explain how an object looks, feels, smells, tastes, and sounds. Consists of six to twelve sentences that must be identified at the beginning of the text, description as content that describe an object in detail and conclusions to conclude what has been explained in the identification and description. In this study, the researcher was able to measure the level of students' ability to write descriptive paragraphs used in the paragraph construction task. The researcher asked students to write descriptive paragraphs that met the criteria: format, punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, grammar, and sentence structure.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

Empirical review is the review of some relevant research that has been conducted in which it reviews the previous researches that are relevant to the present research. Empirical evidence can help the researcher to avoid unintentional

replication of the results of previous studies. In conducting this research, the researcher wanted to know the correlation between vocabulary mastery and descriptive paragraph writing ability. There were other researchers that showed the correlation between vocabulary mastery and descriptive paragraph writing ability. The researcher uses these studies as a basis for consideration to conduct this research. Empirical review was presented as follows:

The first research was conducted by Azizah (2017) with the title “The Correlation of Students’ Vocabulary Mastery with Writing Ability in Descriptive Text for the Seventh-grade Students of Sudirman Islamic Junior High School 1 Bancak Semarang”. The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not there was a correlation between students’ vocabulary mastery and students’ writing skills. In addition, based on the results of the study, it shows that there is a correlation between vocabulary mastery and students’ writing ability. The results of the study found that there was a significant positive correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing ability. Therefore, the statement explains that the two variables influence each other.

In addition, the strength of this study is that the researcher has provided good related theories from experts to support the statement. The researcher also mentions in full the steps taken in the study. In addition, the strength of this research lies in the paragraph assessment rubric used. The paragraph assessment rubric was adapted from Heaton (1988:146) which has five elements, namely: format, punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, grammar, and sentence structure. The clear paragraph assessment rubric makes it easier for researchers to assess students’ descriptive paragraph. The previous research instrument used multiple

choice tests to assess students' vocabulary mastery. The instructions used in the test are not clear enough which are stated in Indonesian, and the time allocation for doing this test is too little so that this instrument invites a high probability of guessing. So, in this study, the researcher used a closed task to assess students' vocabulary mastery which was complemented by clearly stated instructions in English, and also explained the time allocation for students to complete the test.

The second research was conducted by Devi (2019) with the title "The Correlation of Vocabulary Mastery and Descriptive Paragraph Writing Ability of Tenth-Grade Students of SMK Saraswati 1 Denpasar in the 2019/2020 Academic Year". Furthermore, the aim of this study is to obtain empirical evidence whether there is a correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their writing ability. In addition, based on the result of the study, it shows that there is correlation between vocabulary mastery and students' writing ability. In addition, students with high vocabulary mastery have good writing scores. On the other hand, students with low vocabulary mastery have low writing scores.

In addition, the strength of previous research is in terms of the paragraph assessment rubric used. The paragraph scoring rubric was adapted from Oshima and Hogue (2007:196). A clear paragraph assessment rubric makes it easier for researchers to assess descriptive paragraphs made by students. The researcher also relies on expert theory to support the statement, and the steps in carrying out the test are stated in full. However, the researcher instrument used in this study did not mention the time allocation for the test which caused students not to use their time effectively and the researcher did not mention the vocabulary test aspect. In this



research, the researcher allocates time to do the test so that students can use their time effectively and the data obtained from the research instrument is accurate.

### 2.3 Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a prediction that was found as a result of a research project and usually focuses on the correlation between two different variables studied in research. In this research, the researcher uses the directed hypothesis. To answer the research problem in this study, the research assumes that there is a correlation between the research variables. It is defined as a hypothesis that there is a relationship between the two variables being studied. It was stated that the results were not due to chance and were significant in terms of supporting the theory under investigation. The hypothesis of this research can be stated clearly as follows:

- 1 Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ ): There is no significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and descriptive paragraph writing ability of the eighth-grade students at SMPN 5 Sukawati in academic year 2021/2022.
- 2 Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and descriptive paragraph writing ability of the eighth-grade students at SMPN 5 Sukawati in academic year 2021/2022.