

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Reading is one of the four skills in English and it is considered the most important key of all sources of knowledge. Brown (2001:185) mentions that reading is a process undertaken to reduce uncertainty about meanings a text conveys, the process results from a negotiation of meaning between the text and its reader, the knowledge, expectations, and strategies a reader uses to uncover textual meaning, all roles as the way of the reader negotiates with the text's meaning. According to Nation (2009:49), people may read in order to get information or increase their knowledge and sometimes to critique a writer's idea or writing style. People also read for pleasure or enhance knowledge of the language being read. As stated in National Library Trust "reading is a source of learning and a source of enjoyment". Getting this consideration, the purposes of reading guide the reader to select better text to read. According to Texeira (2012:1), reading is a key language skill that has a significant place in the teaching and learning foreign languages. In addition to this statement, by reading the student can learn many things. Reading 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 horizons and increase their knowledge. Furthermore, there are so many benefits that the students get from reading and learning a language.

According to Harmer (2007b: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 careers, 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 needed in other skills such as speaking or writing. Students also need to comprehend the text during the reading process. They are not only expecting to read in good pronunciation, but they also have to construct and find the meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.

According to Pang et al. (2001:6), reading consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension. Word recognition refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to the spoken language. In addition, comprehension is the process of making sense of words, sentences, and connected paragraphs. Reading will expand vocabularies because the more people read something, the more words they gain exposure to. As a result, the students must master vocabulary and understand reading comprehension to make it easier to understand the reading text. Thus, those two variables of reading comprehension should be emphasized to make students understand what they have read.

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. Lubis (2017:10), states that vocabulary mastery is the competence to know word meaning. According to Langan (2002:341), poor vocabulary will slow the reading speed and limit of comprehension. From the explanations above, we know how important vocabulary is 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 addition, Wolley (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 these readings or representations of the text meaning during the reading process. It means that readers must understand the meaning of a paragraph from reading because the reading ability is not only reading aloud what is written in a paragraph but also understanding what the reader reads. This 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 understand the reading materials or other written sources comprehensively.

Dealing with the explanation of Weaver (2009:14), reading is a process very much determined by what the reader's brain and emotions and beliefs bring to the reading. From the statement, the researcher concludes that reading is a process

that brings information or knowledge to the human brain, emotion, and belief. Reading is an activity where a learner will get many kinds of information and knowledge of the reading activities. Through reading, the readers also begin to have a greater understanding of a certain topic. Furthermore, there are various benefits that the students get from reading. One of them is that the students can enrich their vocabulary that makes them more eligible in reading comprehension. This is important to improve their language learning results for their future lives.

A research was conducted by Andriyani (2008) entitled “The Correlation Study Between Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension of First-year Students at SMPN 1 Umbulsari Jember”. The result 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, her result also provided an answer key to make the researcher easier in scoring students’ work. Based on the research findings, the research has scientifically proven that vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the first-year student of SMPN 1 Umbulsari Jember had a significant correlation.

Reading comprehension and vocabulary mastery have a strong relationship. It is in line with Sedita (2005), who states that vocabulary knowledge is crucial in reading comprehension and determines how well students comprehend the paragraphs. Besides, according to 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 seventh-grade students of SMPN 5 Mengwi in academic year 2021/2022.

1.2 Research Problem

As what has been previously stated, reading comprehension does not only focus on reading the texts but also understanding the meaning. Based on the study's background, which has been stated, the crucial issue that attracts the researcher in conducting this study concerns the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Moreover, the researcher was interested in finding out the significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension in junior high school. As a result, the research problem of the present research can be clearly and concisely formulated in the form of a question: is there any significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the seventh-grade students of SMPN 5 Mengwi in academic year 2021/2022?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Every research has its own objective. Research objectives are set to find a solution and answer the research that has been explained above. A particular investigation is expected to provide a scientific solution to the research problem. Any scientific studies are done to answer the research problem which has been formulated for the study. The present study is related to scientific investigation to get the right solution precisely. The study's objective is to investigate the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension, as described above. Furthermore, the aims of many activities that were related to the scientific investigation were always intended to find out a scientific solution to the research

problem. Besides, the researcher wants to figure out whether there is a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the seventh-grade students of SMPN 5 Mengwi 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 to avoid a broad discussion. In this study, the researcher focused on the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the seventh-grade students of SMPN 5 Mengwi. The researcher simply limited this research only to vocabulary mastery in the content words, including nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives because that's only four types that students learn in the school. The researcher used descriptive paragraphs, especially in describing animal, person, thing and place which consists of an identification, descriptions, and conclusion. They had to choose one of the word choices. 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 seventh-grade students of SMPN 5 Mengwi in the 2021/2022 school year. The results of the study 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 significance regarding the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

Theoretically, the results of the present study are also contributing more theory of the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension to strengthen the theory. Moreover, the 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 (noun, verb, adverb, and adjective) provided in the box, and then complete the missing word with the correct word choice. Besides, the findings of the present study can also disclose further research areas that other researchers could use in the same area.

Practically, the results of the present study are expected to be beneficial for English teachers, students, and other researchers. For the English teachers, the researcher hopes that the teachers could improve their quality of teaching foreign languages and 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 they will not face difficulties learning a foreign language. The last is for the other researcher. The researcher hopes 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 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 seventh-grade students of SMPN 5 Mengwi. 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 this study, vocabulary mastery refers to the number of words in a language that is mastered by the seventh-grade students of SMPN 5 Mengwi, and it involves four types: verb, noun, adjective, and adverb.

2. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension in this study is operationally defined as the ability of the seventh-grade students of SMPN 5 Mengwi 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 Reading Comprehension

Reading is important in the teaching and learning process and various activities. Reading can help to get the solution to the 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, spelling, and 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 the 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. 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 can develop their language skills.

According to Brown (2004:185), reading is likewise a skill that teachers simply expect learners to acquire. Reading is an activity that thoroughly requires a lot of practice and is conducted regularly to get a skill or comprehension. Reading is not an active that can be done once or twice but must be done regularly and real. Meaning that to acquire good reading skill, students should do a lot of reading practice regularly. Reading is one of the most important skills that should be mastered in learning English. Good ability in reading will help the students to comprehend text and its meaning better. Components of language such as, vocabularies, structure, and others would help to understand the meaning of the text and support the ability of reading. Reading comprehension refers to an activity of reading and understanding written test.

According to Broadman (2007:8), reading comprehension involves much more than readers' responses to texts. Reading comprehension is a multi-component, highly complex process that involves many interactions between

readers and what they bring to the texts (previous knowledge and strategy use) and variables related to the text itself (interest in the text and understanding of the text type). They should connect the reading materials with their basic knowledge to understand the texts through the strategy applied to the reading materials. It is also the most important element in reading activity to achieve a goal of reading activity, especially in comprehending the reading texts which are being read.

According to Pang et al. (2013:19), reading comprehension is about relating prior knowledge to new knowledge contained in written paragraphs. Prior knowledge basically deepens on the students' lived experience related to 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, it means the readers do not have background knowledge. Without background knowledge are 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 communication. 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 a 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 to achieve an important goal to them, achieve a

purpose of theirs, or answer questions that they want to answer in the reading texts.

Snow (2022:11) 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 the recall of meaning build 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 skills. Reading comprehension is important because it will influence the students' knowledge in gaining information from the written paragraph book or the other written sources. Besides gaining knowledge, through reading the students can also improve their vocabulary and language skills to master English. Reading comprehension is related to the understanding of the vocabulary. Students will reach all of this aim if they understand and comprehend the paragraph that they have read. Reading comprehension occurs when new information interacts with the old one that has been previously stored in students' memory.

2.1.2 Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary is one of the most important in a language. It is also central to language teaching, and it is of paramount importance to a language learner. Many of the vocabulary in English 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 and a list of words with meaning. The vocabulary of language always changes and grows. Blachowicz and Ogle (2008:178) reveal that vocabulary reflects knowledge, experience, and social interactions. As life becomes more complex, people borrow new words to describe someone's learning activities.

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 at an early level. Learning vocabulary is important because it enriches students' knowledge of words. It implies the success of the learners in learning a language. 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.

Vocabulary can be defined the words, and students must understand to communicate effectively. Pollard (2008:13) defines that vocabulary is an essential point of language learning. 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. Moreover, students who have a lot of vocabulary in English or other foreign languages can easily learn the language. A good mastery of the vocabulary will help the students to understand the language. When the students learn a foreign language, especially English, they must learn the vocabulary to understand the message and convey their ideas in language learning.

In addition, according to Brown (1994:365), vocabulary is also the focus of drill, exercise and memorization effort. Below, there are some guidelines for the communicative treatment of the vocabulary instruction. Allocate specific class time to learn, help students learn vocabulary in context. Play down the role of bilingual dictionaries. Encourage students to develop strategies in determining the meaning of words. Based on the review above, it will be easy to improve students' vocabulary. In learning vocabulary, students can develop some strategies above, because it can enrich student's vocabulary mastery.

According to Kamil and Hiebert (2005:3), vocabulary is the knowledge of the meanings of words. This definition becomes complicated when the fact that words come in at least two forms: oral and print. Oral vocabulary is the set of words for which the students know the meanings when they speak or read orally. Print vocabulary consists of those words for which the meaning is known when they write or read silently. Knowledge of words also comes in two forms. There is a productive vocabulary used when writing or speaking, and receptive that can be understood or recognized. Building vocabulary can be started from teacher practice, students influenced by the conversation, short reading text and games.

One of the difficulties that students face when learning English is vocabulary because they are always confused when they cannot find the meaning of words.

Hatch and Brown (1995:1) reveal that vocabulary is a list or a set of words that the individual speaker might use. It can be said that that vocabulary is a list or a set of words known by the speakers and used to communicate with another speaker. Because vocabulary is used to communicate, it can be said that vocabulary plays an important role in communication. Having good knowledge of vocabulary will help the speakers to convey their ideas. Furthermore, vocabulary mastery will help learners in learning English well. In the education field, having a good mastery of vocabulary will help the students when they want to convey their ideas or comprehend something in written or spoken forms of language.

Vocabulary is a central part of learning a language. It means that vocabulary has an important role in understanding a language, especially for the students who learn English. Students will have an easier time learning language because of the role of vocabulary. 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 because it enriches someone's knowledge of words. Vocabulary will help the learners in learning English well. As students in a school, they need to know words, meanings, and how the vocabulary is spelled and pronounced. Vocabulary is a fundamental component of second language proficiency; one of the primary goals of language learning is to know its meanings.

We know that there are so many types of vocabulary. First, noun is a word of group of words that is the name of a person, a place, a thing or activity or a

quality or idea. Noun can be used as a 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 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 is a word (or group of words) which is used to show the way which other words are connected. Seventh, determiner is a word that can be used to indicate an object both physically and quantitatively. Last, conjunction is a word that connects sentences, phrase or clauses. But, in this research the researcher will only investigate four types: verb, noun, adverb and adjective because that is what been taught in class is descriptive paragraphs about describing animals.

From the previous arguments of vocabulary mastery, the authors have a similar argument with Kamil and Hiebert (2005:3), who states that vocabulary is the knowledge of word meanings. His theory tells that mastering vocabulary will help the students understand the reading, and the reading comprehension qualities depend on the quality and quantity of vocabulary that the students have. It can be concluded that vocabulary is knowledge of word and word meaning, which plays an important role and learning a foreign language. In the education field, a good vocabulary knowledge will help students in understanding the language. Knowing the meaning of the words can make the students understand the reading text.

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 review can help the researcher avoid unintentional replication of the previous study result 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 understood in chronological order as follows.

The first research of the present study was carried out 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 involved 50 students of the eighth grade at SMPN 2 Sukawati. The research instruments which were used to collect the required data focused on the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. These research findings clearly defined that there was a highly 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.

The second research was conducted 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 research 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 the research findings, it could be found that there was a strong correlation.

Furthermore, the research 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 introductions 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 45 minutes to answer the matching cloze procedure test, which had 30 gaps and 45 minutes to answer 30 items of short-answer tasks from 6 descriptive texts that have been provided.

2.3 Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a precise, testable statement of what the researcher predicts will be the study's outcome. It is focused on the relationship between two different variables studied in this research. It was a specific, testable prediction about what expectation of a study. To answer the research problem in this study, the researcher assumed that there was a correlation between the research variables. In the present study, the researcher uses a hypothesis to predict the relation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of seventh-grade students of SMPN 5 Mengwi. The hypothesis of this research that is proposed is an alternative hypothesis. As a result, the hypothesis of the present research can be clearly stated as follows: there is a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the seventh-grade students of SMPN 5 Mengwi in academic year 2021/2022.