

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Reading an important role in the teaching and learning process to help students understand what they are learning. By reading can deepen knowledge about some of the information in the text. Many basic language skills such as writing, speaking, listening, and reading are taught when teaching English as a foreign language, both formal and informal, especially in school, courses, or other institution. Furthermore, everyone has a different reading ability. Many things are the cause, one of which is vocabulary mastery. In reading comprehension, vocabulary mastery plays a big role in language. Vocabulary is important because it can be felt that their understanding can increase when they know the meaning of a word. Mastering vocabulary can improve language skills for all aspects.

The ability to read in English is very important. It is well known that success in reading is necessary because it is a basic educational. According to McNamara (2007:469), reading is about learning or remembering something about the content of the text. For this reason, the reader should monitor whether the content of the text has been understood accurately enough or as intended by the author and whether the information learned from the text can be used to achieve a predictable goal. In addition, Moats (2001:5) states that reading is a basic skill on which all formal education depends. So, if a child who does not learn the basics of reading early on may find it difficult to master other skills and knowledge. Knowing reading is one of the most important language skills and

must be developed inside or outside the classroom. Reading has several categories, such as reading ability, reading comprehension, and reading achievement. Reading comprehension is also an important aspect of reading skills. In learning English, students must be able to read what is written in reading material, but not only that, students must also be able to capture information or messages in reading materials comprehensively.

Reading comprehension is the ability to process text, understand its meaning and integrate it with what the reader already knows. The ability to understand a text is influenced by the skills of the readers and their ability to process information. Karen and Stave Graham (2007:2) states that reading comprehension is a prerequisite for reading” (Back & McKeown, 1998). Knowing how to read words ultimately has little value if students are not able to construct meaning from texts. In the end, comprehension reading is the process of building meaning by coordinating a number of complex processes that include words students are led to know and understand the meaning of the word.

Vocabulary is a collection of familiar words in a language. Vocabulary, usually developed with age, serves as a useful and fundamental tool for communication and acquiring knowledge. In addition, Thornbury (2002:13) argues that without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. That is, when someone has a low mastery of vocabulary, it will be increasingly difficult for them to understand it. Mastery of vocabulary is one of the factors for mastering English as a foreign language. Heibert and L. Kamil (2005:3) state that vocabulary is a collection of words that we know the meaning of when we speak or read orally. Printed vocabulary consists of words whose meaning is known when we write or

read silently. This is an important distinction because the strings of words that novice readers know are mostly spoken representations. When they learn to read, printed vocabulary plays a bigger role in literacy than spoken vocabulary.

Vocabulary is a language aspect that is very important for students. Vocabulary has a big role in written and oral communication because knowing a lot of vocabulary allows students to listen, speak, read, and write in English easily and effectively. According to Richards (2002:255) vocabulary is the most obvious component of language or one of the first things that linguists pay attention to. Understanding vocabulary is able to help students to have good writing and understanding. Therefore, the more vocabulary you have, the easier it will be for students to acquire the four language skills.

Mastery of vocabulary in reading can be said to be very important because when students learn and understand more vocabulary they will be able to make it easier to listen, speak, write and read. So, vocabulary mastery can help students to understand texts that contain difficult words. If the vocabulary mastery of students is low, be difficult to understand a reading in ta text. It in addition, it may also be able to affect their achievement in their study. So, vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension have a correlation relationship. Therefore, it was found that there were several previous studies that showed a relationship between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension, based on Rahmawati (2017) and Furqon (2013) in their research at the junior high school level showed that there was a significant relationship between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. They found that vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension had a positive effect on reading comprehension.

Based on explanation above, reading English books is very important. In addition, students can increase their vocabulary mastery by reading them frequently. Mastery of vocabulary plays an important role in student learning as a foreign language. According to the explanation above and previous theories about vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension, the researcher believes that vocabulary mastery can help students to improve reading comprehension and can have an impact on the learning process. In addition, based on the above background, the researcher wants to know about the significant relationship between vocabulary mastery and students reading comprehension, especially in reading descriptive text. Therefore, researchers are interested in conducting a study entitled “The Correlation between Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension of the Eighth-grade Students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in Academic Year 2021/2022”.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Conducting scientific investigations must begin with a problem. In addition, in conducting research, formulating problems is very important and useful for researchers before conducting research. Based on what has been described in the background of the research above, the researchers conducted a study on the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022. In addition, researcher is interested in knowing the significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of students in junior high school. So, the research problem in this research can be formulated 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 must have a purpose so that the research has a clear direction. The research objective is of course to answer the research question and is defined as the goal to be achieved during this research. Knowing the research objectives can help researcher to pay attention to the data collection process in this study. Research objectives must be in accordance with the background and research problems that have been formulated. Therefore, related to the background and research problem above, the purpose of this study 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 very important to make a discussion of the research problem more specific. In addition, to avoid misunderstandings, it is important to clarify the problem more specifically. The limitations of this study are formulated by considering the complexity and extent of the problems above. In this study, the researcher focused on investigating the significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022. In addition, the research was limited student vocabulary mastery to verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs. Researcher limited them because verb, nouns, adjectives, and adverb are a basic material to be studied. In addition, students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh

received this material. Furthermore, in this study the reading aspect focused on identifying general information, specific information, textual references and textual meaning in descriptive text. Those are the aspects that researchers want to score in this study.

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

In research, partial reflections must be taken into account because of the importance of the expected research finding. In addition, this research focused on finding 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. The results of this study are expected to be useful and are recommended to provide significant research findings related to vocabulary mastery and its relationship to reading comprehension. In conclusion, the findings of this study are expected to provide theoretical and practical significance to the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

Theoretically, these findings are expected to be useful for distributing and supporting the theoretical and empirical results of the existing correlation theory, especially regarding vocabulary mastery and student understanding. Furthermore, the results of this study are also to strengthen existing theories and can be used for further research related to vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Therefore, the findings can be used as empirical evidence to provide information to others. Furthermore, the findings of this study can also reveal further research areas so that they can be used by other researchers as a basis for conducting similar research.



Practically, this research is expected to provide useful feedback information for teachers, students, and for other researchers. For teachers, this research is useful to provide information about vocabulary mastery that can affect reading comprehension. For students, by developing reading comprehension, students can increase their vocabulary, such as getting lots of new vocabulary. In addition, the results of this study are also useful for further research and can be used as a reference and guide in conducting the same research to obtain enriched knowledge material in making other research on the relationship between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

### **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

Key terms are important to define to provide a clear understanding of the topic. In addition, so that this research is easy and clear, and to clarify what is meant by variables in research, the researcher provides two key terms. In addition, the key terms are also intended to clarify in understanding this research and to provide limitations on the terms of the research carried out. Thus, this study entitled *The Correlation between Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension of the eighth-grade Students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in Academic Year 2021/2022* to be defined operationally to avoid misunderstandings and provide clear insight into the following definitions of key terms:

#### **1. Vocabulary Mastery**

Vocabulary mastery is operationally defined as the ability of eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in academic year 2021/2022. Be focused on nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives. They were assessed using cloze tasks.

## 2. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is defined as the ability of eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Blahbatuh in understanding descriptive paragraphs specifically in finding general information, specific information, textual references, and textual meaning. They were assessed using short answer tasks





## **CHAPTER II**

### **THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

Theoretical review is a review of theories related to the research to be carried out. In research study, theory is used to explain several concepts and terms applied in the research concerned. Theoretical reviews are also used to support or build this research to be more assertive and based on facts. In this study, the researcher include a theoretical review which is the literature related to this research. This study discusses two main themes, namely the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. This research was conducted based on the theoretical framework of the experts. There are important points that are explained and discussed based on the relevant theoretical review taken by the research. The theoretical review includes vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

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

Vocabulary is one of the important aspects in learning a foreign language. Without a proportional amount of vocabulary, anyone will have difficulty speaking, reading, listening, and writing. The author says that mastery of vocabulary will help people to acquire, understand, and also improve the knowledge transfer process for a better life. According to (Meyer, 2000) in Willis' (2008:89) book, vocabulary is a smooth process, and more sophisticated forms of speech can be added as students develop understanding of words. (Cameron, 2001:74) also adds "Vocabulary development is a continuous process, not only adding new words but also building knowledge about words that are already

partially known." In addition, a well-developed vocabulary is essential for test success. Students who have difficulty understanding words to have difficulty in every learning activity. If they master the vocabulary, there is no difficult language element in their English learning activities.

There are many compelling reasons for students to learn vocabulary and none is more important than the contribution of vocabulary knowledge to reading comprehension. Pollard (2008:13) defines that 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. Vocabulary is important to understand and convey the message. Building a useful vocabulary is the foundation of learning English or other foreign languages easily. Good vocabulary mastery will help students to understand the language. When students learn a foreign language, especially English, they have to learn vocabulary to understand.

Vocabulary mastery is competence or complete knowledge of a collection of words that make up a language. Furthermore, vocabulary is the stock of words used by people or by certain class people. Ur (2009:60) defines vocabulary as a word that is taught in the context of a foreign language. It is hereby stated that vocabulary is very important in language learning. In addition, students can also communicate ideas more effectively. This vocabulary mastery is also important for everyone, for example, in communicating with other people. If a person does not know the meaning of the words used by other people in communication, he will not be able to respond in that communication.

Knowing a word by sight, sound and knowing dictionary definition is not the same as knowing how to use the word correctly and understand it when heard

or seen in various contexts. Longman (2007:6) states that vocabulary is an important aspect of reading ability. Students will develop strategies to expand their knowledge of vocabulary, especially words that are often used in texts. Vocabulary is also the key to mastering language skills. In addition, vocabulary is the basic part that supports speakers in communicating to express ideas when communicating. Vocabulary also plays an important role in supporting students' learning achievement in English. Students get good learning achievements when they have good vocabulary mastery.

In study vocabulary, Hiebert and Kamil (2005:3) state that there are two types of vocabulary: oral and printed. Oral vocabulary is a collection of words that we know the meaning of when we speak and read orally. While printed vocabulary is vocabulary consisting of words whose meaning is known when we write or read silently. Furthermore, Cameron (2001:72) states that increasing useful vocabulary is the basic point for learning a foreign language at an early level. Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language proficiency, one of the goals of vocabulary learning is to find out the meaning of words. Learning vocabulary is very important because it can enrich knowledge and mastery of vocabulary. Furthermore, as learners at school, students also need to know words, their meanings, how they are spelled and how they are pronounced.

One of the difficulties faced by students when learning English is vocabulary because they are always confused when they do not find the meaning of a word. They also rarely memorize and use this language. In addition, mastery of vocabulary is one of the factors for mastering English as a foreign language. According to Davis and Whipple (1925:6) in Hiebert and Kamil (2005) say that

vocabulary is seen as an integral part of understanding. This means that students have the ability to understand and use words and meanings. The more vocabulary the students master, the better they will display their language. In addition, vocabulary will help learners to learn English well and vocabulary can make students understand the words received while listening and reading.

In addition, according to Harmer (2001:64) there are types of vocabulary, namely, nouns are words that behave depending a number of grammatical and morphological variables. Pronouns are the basic types of personal pronouns, reflexive pronouns and relative pronouns. Meanwhile, an adjective is a word that provides more information about a noun or pronoun. And then, verb is a word used to describe an action, experience or situation. In addition, adverbs are words that explain or add to the meaning of verbs, adjectives, other adverbs or whole sentences. Then, prepositions are words that are used to indicate the way in which other words are related. Furthermore, determiners are articles of indefinite possession of demonstrative quantifiers. And the last, conjunctions are words that connect sentences, phrases, or clauses. In this study, researchers only focus on verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that vocabulary is very important in language learning. Learning vocabulary is the first step for students if they want to achieve their goals in learning English skills. Vocabulary is an important part of the language and is always the first thing to learn a language. It is considered basic both written and oral. In addition, when we master vocabulary, we can understand the information from the text and can express ideas. Vocabulary mastery also means when students are able to recognize, understand,

and produce stock words and their meanings. If students have mastered vocabulary, they will be able to communicate with everyone, and vocabulary also helps students to speak and listen to English clearly with native speakers.

### **2.1.2 Reading Comprehension**

Reading plays an important role in life in various activities and by reading students can increase their ability to acquire knowledge about the world. The more we read, the better our reading comprehension will be. Reading can also increase our knowledge, by reading we can find out more about information. In addition, the significance of reading is going to bring a big change for human life, especially for the learner or students. Due to reading, their knowledge will gradually increase and it will improve other language skills. Students will achieve all these goals if they understand and understand the texts they read. Furthermore, as we know, many researchers argue about the meaning of reading and the purpose of reading.

Some experts have put forward the concept of reading. They see reading from different perspectives, approaches, and goals. Most concepts reflect the idea of seeking meaning. Reading is defined as responding to written texts in a communicative context. According to McNamara (2007: 480) reading is a method that involves paying special attention to what is printed on the page by rereading and analysing certain parts of a text. Reading is an active process; learners interact with the text and bring their knowledge of the subject and language to the text. Furthermore, learners do not need to produce language in reading while they receive information to produce comprehension. Reading comprehension is defined as the level of text comprehension. Duffy (2009:14) reveals that

understanding is the root of reading because the purpose of written language is message communication. In addition, when students have understood the message in the written text, they can convey the information to the people around them. Reading is considered as the most dominant skill in learning any subject because reading ability is not only the performance to pronounce a passage but also understanding the message of a passage or text. Nunan (2003:68) states that reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to construct meaning. By getting new information and knowledge, we can also get broader insights. Reading can be a way to gain knowledge.

Reading Comprehension is the most important thing in reading written texts. To get an understanding of the reader having a broad capacity and ability, the reader can extract or construct meaning from a text and reading activity must be interrelated. According to Wolley (2011:15) reading comprehension is a flexible and continuous cognitive and constructive process. It is emphasized that there are conceptually driven (top-down) and data-driven (bottom-up) processes that contribute to the construction of the situational (mental) model of text ideas. In addition, in the study of Duffy (2009:14), he said that understanding is the essence of reading because the purpose of written language is message communication.

Reading Comprehension has a very close relationship with vocabulary knowledge. Reading Comprehension means reading to get a message or information. However, if the reader does not have good initial vocabulary knowledge, it will be difficult for the reader to understand a reading. According to Duffy (2009:15), reading comprehension depends on prior knowledge expressed



in words. Readers can know the meaning of a written message only if they have past experience related to the topic and they can use words to construct meaning. In addition, Wolley (2011:15) also said that reading comprehension is the process of making meaning from the text. Therefore, the aim is to gain a thorough understanding of what is described in the text rather than derive meaning from words or sentences.

The main purpose of reading is to understand or get the meaning of the text. In addition, efficient understanding requires the ability to relate textual material to one's own knowledge. Understanding words, sentences, and entire texts involves more than relying on linguistic knowledge. Achieving the main goal of reading comprehension also requires strategies to develop appropriate and efficient reading comprehension. According to Snow (2002:11) defines reading comprehension in a slightly different way. Snow selects and categorizes the components involved in reading comprehension into three components. These components are reader, text, and activity. Snow also includes the capacity, ability, knowledge, and experience of readers as part of the reader component. Snow describes the text as any printed or electronic text, will snow include the goals, processes, and outcomes of every attitude in reading.

According to Camille (2008:33) comprehension is a process that requires a strategic approach and readers actively construct meaning when they read, they also direct their own understanding by using basic strategies and by monitoring their own understanding. This means that in reading to achieve understanding, the right strategy is very important to motivate students in reading activities. The strategy applied in reading activities has a very important role because it is a way



for readers to more easily understand the text that can be directed by a series of reading steps involved in a strategy. A good strategy will direct the reader to achieve the goal for reading comprehension and will make it easier for the reader to relate their ideas by monitoring their accuracy based on the procedures or steps of the strategy.

In addition, Klinger (2007:102) states that reading comprehension is supported by integrating various instructional practices into teaching routine, including reading comprehension is not just the reader's response to the text. Reading comprehension is a multi-component process, very complex and involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text (prior knowledge and use of strategies) as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in the text and understanding of the text type). Based on the statement, knowledge and information from the text will be of value to students if they pay attention to it. Students will gain new knowledge as a result of understanding the reading text. This makes reading comprehension skills very important for students.

Based on the explanation above, it be concluded that reading is a way that combines information from the text with the reader's knowledge to gain an understanding of the information in the text. Reading is not only deciphering symbols, but also trying to get a message and give a response to the text. In education, reading is very important especially for students to improve their knowledge. Reading is a complex thought process and involves internal and external factors in understanding written content, as well as obtaining information. So learning to read from an early age is important for students because it can

improve reading comprehension and make it easier to find information in the future.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

The purpose of the empirical review is to find similar studies related to this study for reference and to prevent the researcher from accidentally repeating the results of previous studies. In conducting this research, the researcher took the title correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. A related study used as a reference is described as follows:

The first research was conducted by Rahmawati (2017) with the title “The Relationship between Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension in Grade II Students of SMP Salahuddin Malang.” The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between student vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. In addition, based on the results of the research, the vocabulary mastery data collection instrument uses the filling in the blank and match test, while reading comprehension data collection uses the multiple-choice test. In addition, based on the results of the study the results showed that there was a statically significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. With a good vocabulary understanding, students will have a good reading comprehension value as well.

In addition, the strength of previous research lies in its research findings. The findings of previous studies show that there is a correlation between the two variables; namely vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. However, the researcher used filling in the blank, match test and multiple-choice test as instruments for data collection in vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension

in this research. In addition, instructions and specifications used in the instrument are less clear. So, what distinguish this research is the instructions and instruments used. Previous research used research instruments, matching cloze tests and multiple-choice tests. The instructions in the previous lesson were not clear so that students had difficulty understanding the steps that must be taken when answering questions. Meanwhile, in this study, the researcher used short answer tests and cloze tasks as instruments and also be equipped with clear instructions and clear aspects of the instrument item easily when answering questions.

The second research from Furqon (2013) entitled “The Relationship of Students Vocabulary Mastery with Reading Comprehension”. The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was a relationship between student vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension. However, the researcher uses a multiple-choice test as an instrument for collecting data in vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension in this research. The results showed that after calculating the data, there was a significant correlation coefficient between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

In addition, the strength of the research lies in its research findings. The results of previous studies showed that there was a relationship between two variables, namely vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. However, the researcher used a multiple-choice test as a data collection instrument and the previous researcher used tests or questions that did not adjust the test based on the student's level. So that many students work easily and the possibility of students choosing answers at random. However, the test of this study was too low because the previous researcher did not adjust the test based on the level of students. It

made students get the highest score easily. In this study, the researcher checks the level of students to make a good instrument. In this study, researcher used other tests, namely short answer tests and cloze tasks. The difference about a test whose answers cannot be guessed and where students are more required to read questions to be able to answer the test. In addition, the researcher also provides clear instructions for each test item so that readers can easily identify each item of the instrument.

### 2.3 Hypothesis

A hypothesis was prediction about what be found as a result of a research project is usually focused between two variables. In this study, the variable is about 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 empirical above, the writer formulated the hypothesis of this research: there is a correlation between student vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension. The statistical hypothesis is formulated as follows:

1. Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ ): there is a significant correlation between student vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension.
2. Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): there is no significant correlation between student vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension.