

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In language learning, vocabulary becomes extremely fundamental information. According to Alqahtani (2015:21) vocabulary is a essential for any language course. Vocabulary is crucial because it contributes directly to the mastering of four languages: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. As a result, they should learn to rapidly and precisely comprehend the meaning of printed materials. In reading, their life revolves on mastering vocabulary because vocabulary helps them develop their language abilities, both oral and written, making it simpler to transfer and absorb information, especially reading comprehension.

According to Wainwright (2006:33) vocabulary is an important factor in reading. He also claimed that the broader the students' vocabulary, the simpler it would be for them to understand the text. It is difficult for students to receive any type of news or information mentioned in any printed material, if they have lack vocabulary. As a result, students must master vocabulary to comprehend the reading material. We can see how crucial vocabulary is in the reading activity from the explanation. It shows that there are strong links between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension because understanding the text requires a large vocabulary. Furthermore, reading is a person's behavior of reading materials through reading activities. Students must have good

interaction with the texts and require greater attention from the reader to gain an accurate or close interpretation of the texts.

In English, there are four basic skills that students must master, such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking. These skills were categorized into two: receptive skills and productive skills. Listening and reading are examples of receptive skills, because it allows students to receive and comprehend information. While, productive skills are writing and speaking, because students must express their abilities in both written and oral products. However, reading is regarded as the most crucial foreign language skill. According to Teixeira (2012:1) reading is a key language skill that has an important role in the teaching and learning foreign languages. Students learn a lot through reading. Reading skills enable students to have access to ideas expressed by people in the form of written or printed material from other nations, allowing them to broaden their horizons and expand their knowledge. Furthermore, there are several advantages of reading for students. One of them is that students may expand their vocabularies, making them more competent in reading skills.

Pang et al., (2003:6) state that reading is about understanding written texts. According to that statement, reading is not only for enjoyment, but it is also to get and add knowledge or information. In other words, students should be able to comprehend the text or printed materials as well as read it. Through reading, students can get new ideas, knowledge, and vocabulary. They can also obtain the message from written text that they have read to broaden their knowledge. Besides that, reading will help them have a better understanding of certain

concepts that will be of interest to them during the teaching and learning process.

Reading comprehension refers to how well people understand the text and extract meaning and information from it. It is essential to comprehend reading text correctly in order to obtain clear information and prevent misunderstandings. According to Snow (2002:11) Reading comprehension is described as the process of extracting and building meaning at the same time through interaction and participation with written language. It means that readers can create the meaning of a written text, and in order to do that, students must have reading methods that allow them to clearly comprehend the meaning and substance of the reading texts. There are three components to comprehension: the readers conducting the comprehension, the text to be comprehended, and the activity in which understanding is a component of reading comprehension. Reading requires students to be focused on what they read because reading requires students to recognize what they read and absorb the material properly.

Reading comprehension refers to the ability to read a text, process it, and comprehend its meaning. In order to comprehend the meaning of the text, it is reliant on the pupils' vocabulary mastery. If students lack vocabulary mastery, students will struggle to comprehend the text's content. If students desire to master other language skills, one of the bases they must acquire is vocabulary. They recognize that vocabulary appears to be a simple language part to study, but they have difficulties comprehending language learning if they do not know vocabulary.

According to Klingner et al. (2007:46) there is correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension; they also say that vocabulary is crucial to reading comprehension. Vocabulary is an important aspect of reading for comprehension. It is hard for students to understand text if they do not have a sufficient vocabulary. It means students will have difficulty studying English, if they do not grasp vocabulary mastery. It will make them be good readers, if they have a wide vocabulary. In other words, Vocabulary is one of the most important components in any language education in order to achieve success in the language teaching learning process, especially in English. Vocabulary plays an important role in reading comprehension because mastery of vocabulary is required to comprehend reading passages.

In conclusion, vocabulary and reading comprehension are connected because without vocabulary, students cannot comprehend the texts. Vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of learning English. It is critical for students to improve their vocabulary mastery in order to improve their reading comprehension. Considering the explanation, the researcher is interested to conduct a research to know the significance of the relationship between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a research entitled “The Correlation between Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension of the Eighth-Grade Students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati 1 Denpasar in the Academic Year 2022/2023.”

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Formulating a research problem is very important in carrying out a research. Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulates the research as follows: is there any significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati 1 Denpasar in the academic year 2022/2023 ?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

Every research has its own objective. Research objectives describe concisely what the research is trying to achieve. A particular investigation is expected to provide a scientific solution to the research problem. Moreover, the objective of the study should be in line with the background and the research problem that has already been formulated for the study. Furthermore, any scientific investigation activities are always intended to find out a scientific solution to the research problem that has been previously formulated and determined. Thus, in line with the background and the research problem above, the primary objective of the present study is to figure out the significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati 1 Denpasar.

## **1.4 Limitation of the Study**

The limitation of the study is fundamental to make a discussion about the research problem more specific. Moreover, it also can avoid a broad discussion. Considering the complexity and broadness of the problem mentioned above, the

study's limitation was formulated. As the topic suggests, in the present study, the researcher focused on investigating the significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eight-grade students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati 1 Denpasar in the academic year 2022/2023. Besides, vocabulary in this study is limited to the students' ability to understand the textual meaning in descriptive text. They also have to master the nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives of the descriptive texts. Furthermore, reading comprehension aspects that are focused in the present study are identifying general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference. These are the aspects that the researcher wanted to measure in the present study.

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

One of the practical reflections which is taken into account in undertaking the present investigation is the significance of the expected research findings. Therefore, the findings of this research are expected to be advantageous for both theoretical as well as practical in the context of English teaching and learning process, especially in vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

Theoretically, the result of this research is expected to give information and reference to the readers about the study between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati 1 Denpasar in the academic year 2022/2023 and also to complete the lack of previous research related to the students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension on acquiring English as foreign language.

Practically, the outcome of this research is expected to give feedback to the English teachers of the eighth-grade students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati 1 Denpasar, the writer expects that this research may inspire teachers to make better media and activities in teaching and learning process. The research findings of this study are also intended as informative feedback for the eighth grade students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati 1 Denpasar. This study hoped to motivate the students to read as much as possible and also learn vocabulary. Then, the students realize that reading and vocabulary can give them many benefits and enable them to improve their English skills. For other researchers, this research is expected to help them to get more information about this research and can be used for better research. It can help them to know the problem.

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

Key terms are several typical words used in a research. In order to avoid misunderstanding on the part of the readers concerning the key terms crucially used in the present study, the researcher needs to operationally define the following terms : reading comprehension and vocabulary mastery.

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

Vocabulary mastery in this research is operationally defined as the ability of eight-grade students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati 1 Denpasar in the academic year 2022/2023 in mastering the meaning of the content words in the form of nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives from descriptive text.

## 2. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is operationally defined as the ability of the eight-grade students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati 1 Denpasar to identify general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Theoretical Review**

The theoretical review in the present study uses some theoretical backgrounds and empirical evidence. The theoretical review is the foundation in scientific research. They are several important points that are briefly discussed related to the current study; they are namely reading comprehension and vocabulary mastery.

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

Vocabulary cannot be separated from understanding the language while learning English because the essence of language is the word. The richness of words in a specific language is referred to as vocabulary. Students must master a huge amount of vocabulary since they will face difficulty when studying English. Based on that, there are a bunch of definitions of vocabulary found by experts.

Vocabulary is a collection of words that are used to express ideas. It serves as a means of communication. The entire number of words in a language; all the words known to a person or used in a certain book, subject, etc.; a list of words with their meanings. Blachowicz and Ogle (2008:178) reveal that vocabulary reflects knowledge and experience and of social interactions. As life grows more complex, people borrow new words to describe the actions of others. Nobody knows how many words are in the

English vocabulary today. According to the interpretation above, vocabulary is the important element of language competency that consists of a set of lexemes, including single words, compound words, and idioms; it provides much of the foundation for how effectively learners speak, read, and write. This theoretical foundation will be important in conducting and strengthening the present research.

Vocabulary can refer to words that must be comprehended in order to communicate effectively. Pollard (2008:13) defines vocabulary as an essential point of language learning. Vocabulary is essential for understanding and communicating the information. The foundation of learning a foreign language at the basic level is the development of a useful vocabulary. Students with a large vocabulary in English or another foreign language can learn the language quickly. A good mastery of the vocabulary will improve students' comprehension of the language. That is why, students must learn vocabulary in order to comprehend the message and effectively communicate their views.

Vocabulary is one of the language components. Vocabulary is the most important part of language learning since it consists of words that students use for speaking, listening, reading, and writing. According to Duffy (2009:14) when the readers do not know the meaning of a word, it can be said the readers do not have the fundamental knowledge or have not had experience in that area. Learning vocabulary improves students' ability to speak, listen, read, and write. The more words the students learn, the more ideas they should have. As a result, students can explain concepts more

effectively. Vocabulary is an important language component for students learning English in school since without it, they would struggle to understand language during the teaching and learning process.

Vocabulary is an essential component of second language competency, and understanding the meaning of words is one of the main goals of language learning. Cameron (2001:72) states that improving a useful vocabulary is a basic point to learning foreign language early. Learning vocabulary is important since it improves students' vocabulary knowledge. It implies the learner's success in learning a language. Learning the English language requires students to understand words, the meaning, how they are spelled, and how they are pronounced. During the teaching and learning process, vocabulary may help students understand the words they hear and read.

### **2.1.2. Reading Comprehension**

One of the most important skills in language learning is reading and strengthen with the skills students learn in speaking, listening, and writing. On the other hand, reading it's not only simply placing a book or short text in front of students and asking them to read whether silently or aloud, it is insufficient. According to Klingner et al. (2007:8) Reading comprehension involves much more than readers' responses to text. Reading is an active process of comprehending texts, and effective readers understand that what they read should make sense. When students lose the meaning and comprehension of what they're reading, they will unconsciously use reading

comprehension to help them reconnect the text's meaning. Connecting is an important reading comprehension strategy that assists students in making sense of what they're reading. Students who make connections to the texts they are reading are better able to comprehend what they are reading, retain information more effectively, and engage more with the text itself.

Nunan et al. (2003:68) Reading is described as the capacity to read at an acceptable rate with proper understanding, as well as the process of readers connecting information from a book with students' prior knowledge to construct meaning. The act of reading is defined by the text, the reader, fluency, and strategies. It means that when readers read a text, they should make connections between the words. Grammar and vocabulary are two language components that must be acquired in order to grasp a reading text. Furthermore, students do not grasp the information given in the reading text if they do not have reading comprehension.

Reading involves thinking, comprehending, and figure out the meaning of text. (Serravallo, 2010:43). Reading requires comprehending and absorbing the concept expressed by the author in the text. Before beginning to read, students will consider what they already know about the subject. Reading is an essential educational aim for many individuals, particularly students. Students' ability to read will open up a whole new world to them. According to Willis, (2008:128) in order to understand a text, readers must be able to decode words or recognize them, use text integration techniques to create meaning, and hold onto the word content long enough for it to stimulate the related information in students' long term memory.

Reading comprehension helps readers to use their prior knowledge of the subject.

Brown (2004) states that reading is another ability that teachers simply expect students to understand. Reading is the most important ability for success in all educational contexts. The reader is aware that their actions have an impact on the reading process. Students can comprehend what they read if they can recognize the meaning of the term in the reading text or passage. Students' reading skills can be improved by comprehending the reading texts. Brindley (2005:80) states that reading is one of the basic skills that must be mastered early. This skill is in high demand in both the educational system and society. On the other hand, students interpret reading in terms of books or literature. Thus, it is related to a literary heritage and a canon of books. This raises the question of what and how children should read.

Sadoski (2004:67) states that reconstruct the author's message is the act of comprehension. The author constructs a message and encodes it in printed language. The readers decode the printed language and reconstruct the message and develop it into the chapter's steps that follows. It has been well stated that people who do not know history are bound to repeat it, which tends to be true in reading. However, the conflict over teaching reading that has characterized recent history .

Pollard (2008:44) supports reading is a receptive skill. It requires students interacting with text that they must analyze and comprehend. However, reading is an active activity in which readers interact with a text, predict what will happen next, and bring knowledge to the text.. Reading

comprehension also enables readers to communicate the message by drawing on prior knowledge of the text topic.

According to Smith (2004:2) reading is the most natural activity in the world. The term reading is properly used for all activities in which the researcher attempts to make sense of the situation; its original meaning is interpretation. Furthermore, the interpretation relates to the term's specific usage. It means that readers can reach many thoughts about a written text that students read. The readers must understand how to create meaning with written text. As a result, comprehension is the action of readers to interact with and participate in the written text in order to develop and put the meaning together.

Pang et al., (2003:19) state that reading comprehension links pre - knowledge to new knowledge about written texts. Prior knowledge is based on students' life experiences with new knowledge gained through reading content. Moreover, topics that are common and widely addressed in one society may be taboo in another. Children growing up in rural areas will have different experiences than those growing up in urbanized, developed countries. As a result, having more prior knowledge generally improves comprehension, and having more cultural knowledge affects understanding and appreciation of written content with their background knowledge.

Furthermore, Lems et al., (2009:170) show that reading comprehension is not a static skill. It varies according to the purposes of reading and the text that is involved. Some benefits can be taken from reading text; for example, reading text can give opportunities to study vocabulary,

grammar, pronunciation, and how the researcher constructs sentences, paragraphs, and texts. By reading, students will get information that can enrich their knowledge and also enhance their mind concept. Moreover, McNamara (2007:109) states that reading comprehension is the outcomes of a variety of cognitive processes and activities, including word decoding, lexical access, syntax processing, inference generation, reading strategies, and post-reading activities All of these processes should be considered in improving students' reading comprehension.

According to the statements above, reading comprehension can be described as the process of obtaining relevant meaning from information. Reading comprehension is recommended as the primary action of reading from all definitions. Students who did not yet have reading comprehension could not understand the information in the reading text. Readers are supposed to extract information through reading skills. Reading comprehension involves understanding the context and meaning of information offered in a printed text. Furthermore, in the teaching-learning process, students read the text and find general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference.

## **2.2. Empirical Review**

The empirical review is a review of relevant research that has been undertaken and evaluates previous research that is relevant to the current research. Empirical evidence can assist the researcher in avoiding unintended replication of past study results as well as clarifying and

defining the study's concept. The researcher wanted to find out the relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension in conducting this study. Other studies found a connection between students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. The researcher used previous findings as a starting point for the current study. The empirical reviews are listed below.

The first study was conducted by Aprilia (2019) in her research entitled “The Correlation Between Students’ Vocabulary Mastery and Their Reading Comprehension in Descriptive Text at State Senior High School 2 Pekanbaru in the Academic Year 2019/2020”. Furthermore, the research objective was to investigate the correlation between students’ vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Moreover, based on the research results using the instruments of vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension tests, the results showed a correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension especially about their apprehension and achievement. Additionally, students with high vocabulary mastery would have good reading comprehension scores. In contrast, students with low vocabulary mastery would have low reading comprehension scores.

The second was research conducted by Astini (2020) in her research entitled “The Correlation between Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension of the Eighth-Grade Students of SMP Negeri 1 Ubud in the 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 the academic year

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

The researcher above gained the same result in which the findings showed that there was a positive correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Furthermore, there was not only strength, but there was also weakness. There are unclear instructions in the research instruments, namely the absence of clear instructions regarding the division of time allotment given to each student when answering questions. Thus, it is less efficient in working on the questions. Therefore, in this study, the researcher provided clear instructions about the time allotment to make it easier for students to answer questions easily and efficiently. In the present study, the researcher would give 40 minutes to answer the cloze task, which had 30 gaps and 60 minutes to answer short-answer tasks from 6 descriptive texts that have been provided. Aside from that, the researcher did not explain how to score the students and specification of the previous researchers' scoring rubric. Thus, it made the students confused about how to write good answers to the test. In the present study, the researcher would provide a clear aspect and indicator in a scoring rubric based on the statement stated by Brown (2004). Therefore, it made it easy for readers to identify each item being valued and assess reading aspects to know the problem. In addition, in the future students get better results and know

criteria that have been previously determined, which was used to score their reading comprehension and vocabulary mastery. This also enables students to actively involve as they know clearly the criteria in their reading performance.

### **2.3. Hypothesis**

A hypothesis is a precise, testable statement of what the researcher predicts will be the outcome of the study. It is a specific, testable prediction about the expectation of a study. The hypothesis is what the researcher predicts the correlation between two or more variables. In the present study, the researcher uses a hypothesis to predict the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati 1 Denpasar in the academic year 2022/2023. Based on the theoretical and empirical review, a hypothesis is proposed in this study. The hypothesis that is constructed dealing with the research problem can be stated in the following statement.

- 1 Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) : there is significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth- grade students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati 1 Denpasar in the academic year 2022/2023.
- 2 Null Hypothesis ( $H_o$ ) : There is no significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the eighth- grade students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati 1 Denpasar in the academic year 2022/2023.