

The Correlation between Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension

Holifatuz Zahro

(Mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP Universitas Islam Malang)

Holizahro96@gmail.com

Abstract: This present study was aimed to know the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension. The researcher implemented quantitative approach in which correlational design was used. The total number of the sample was 33 students from the first semester students of English Department of University of Islam Malang. To obtain the data, the researcher used vocabulary test in order to know students' vocabulary mastery and used students' reading score which was obtained from the teacher in order to measure the students' ability in comprehending a text. The finding of the present study showed that the r observed of the students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension was .519 with level of significant was .002 which is higher than .001 and lower than .005. It means that there is significance correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension.

Keywords: Correlation, Vocabulary Mastery, Reading Comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Language has a crucial role in people's life. Without language people can't communicate what is in their mind. On the other side, there are many languages used by people. Even in a country, there must be millions of languages used such as in Indonesia. So, it can be said that there must be trillions of languages in the world. How can people communicate if they have many different languages? For solving this problem, English becomes an international language in order to ease people communicate each other. As stated by Faliyanti (2015) "Indonesia's students learn English from the primary school until university as it is international language." Even, English has been studied for many years around the world since it is considered as international language. In learning English, There are two components and four skills that have to be mastered. Those two components are vocabulary and grammar while the English skills are speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Which one is the most important? Those all components and skills are important to be learnt because they are to related each other. Yet in fact, there are some people face some problems in learning those. In some cases, there are some people master in learning speaking and reading, but they are weak in learning writing and listening. In some other cases, they are able to learn grammar and vocabulary quickly but they have low score in speaking, for instance.

Talking about learning a language, vocabulary is an important component since it is like a foundation of a building. Before constructing a building, it needs to strengthen the foundation

in order to have strong building. As well as vocabulary, it is so important to be learnt since it is the foundation or the basic in developing the other skills and components in order to ease the students learning English. On the other hand, Alqahtani (2015) said that learning vocabulary is a crucial thing to be learnt in a foreign language learning since a bunch of new words must be developed whether learning from a book or in a classroom.

Besides, reading is one of English skills that becomes crucial in learning English because reading is a key in learning something. By reading, students can learn other English skills or components such as writing, grammar or new vocabulary. Even, students can read a story in learning English. Reading the story of English itself in order to know the culture of a country in which English was born, for instance. Because learning English is not only studying about skills and components, but also learning the culture or the story of that language. In fact, students in Indonesia have low interest in reading, even some students say that reading is a boring activity because reading is not only reading a text but also comprehending it. Yet, many students have difficulty in comprehending a text since they do not know the meaning of certain vocabulary on the text. In this case, reading has an effect in developing students' vocabulary mastery, since the students will have difficulty in reading if they do not know the meaning of certain words in reading text.

Talking about an effect, both reading and vocabulary are correlated to each other. It is because reading has an effect on developing students' vocabulary mastery. While reading, students can find certain unknown words that can be underlined and memorized in order to increase their vocabulary. On the other hand, vocabulary has also crucial effect on reading comprehension. Even, some researchers claim that mastering vocabulary is the most important factor in reading comprehension. Therefore, the researcher has formed a research question "Is there any correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension?"

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Vocabulary Mastery

There are many different definitions of vocabulary as each researcher has different sense to explain the meaning of vocabulary. Vocabulary refers to the words that must be had by any languages in entirely world. A Mother will recognize a certain words to their born baby before recognizing another thing, as well as teachers, they will recognize a certain words to their students who learn a language before another subjects. Both mother and teacher have the same aim in order to make their students having a lot of vocabulary. Vocabulary means words that have to be known and learnt in order to ease people communicate each other or learn something new. Besides that, Alizadeh (2016) stated that most people defined vocabulary is an

understanding of word and word sense or may some people argue that vocabulary is a pile of words arranged as alphabetical continuity with its meaning.

Furqon (2013) stated that students will ease learning a language if they have a lot of vocabulary as it is all about words. So, good mastery of vocabulary will ease students in understanding a language especially English. Hence, it cannot be denied that vocabulary is the foundation of a language and it is very essential to be learnt before other skills and components. The students will have difficulties in communicating, reading, or learning grammar if they do not know any single vocabulary, for instance. “If the students wants to learn a foreign language especially English, they have to learn vocabulary first” (Bahri, 2018, p. 78).

Vocabulary is one of component that becomes a basic in learning any languages especially in learning English. The students are able to read, write, or listen a single word since they are recognized it whether only read or memorize it. When the students find a new word than they read, write, understand and memorize it, it can be called as vocabulary mastery. Besides that, Furqon (2013) explained that mastering vocabulary is not only recognizing the words and its meaning, but also understanding the words’ sound and how the words used in sentence context.

John, 1978 (as cited in Ali, 2010) stated that vocabulary is the knowledge which includes understanding the words’ meaning even knowing the vocabulary test’s purpose in order to find out whether the students are able to compare each word with a synonym, a dictionary – tape definition, or an equivalent word in their own language. “In fact, using or implementing a language without understanding the meaning of the words is impossible” Anjomshoa & Zamanian (2014). Thus, from the explanation above it can be said that vocabulary is a complex component in learning English since the students are not only knowing and memorizing a certain words but also they are able to understand the meaning and how to use it in daily life such as using vocabulary in written or spoken context. Talking about vocabulary, many researchers devide vocabulary into two types. According to Al-Qahtani (2015) “some researchers said that there are two kinds of vocabulary, those are active and passive vocabulary. But another researcher differentiates it into two types. The first type vocabulary refers to the words that have been taught and studied in order to be implemented. While another type refers to the words recognized by student in which they are able to pronounced it or not. Those types called productive and receptive vocabulary. On the other hand, receptive vocabulary is a word that can be understood when reading and listening while speaking and writing well can be assumed as productive vocabulary (Maskor & Baharudin, 2015, p. 3-4). If students can understand the meaning of

vocabulary when they are reading and listening a text but they cannot speak and write correctly, it can be called as receptive vocabulary. Otherwise, if they can pronounce and write correctly yet they are not used to read and listen a word, it can be said as productive vocabulary, for instance.

Besides receptive and productive vocabulary, some researchers argued that vocabulary is divided into two types as what have been said above. Those types are active and passive vocabulary. As well as Hernawati (2015) said that “commonly, vocabulary is typed into active and passive vocabulary. The words that are commonly used in speaking or writing since they can be understood when reading, it is called active vocabulary. While the words that are not used to use or pronounce, but can be understood while reading or listening, it can be said as passive vocabulary. Hence, from the explanation above, it can be said that vocabulary has several types. Some researchers said that types of vocabulary is receptive and productive vocabulary, while another one argued that active and passive are the kinds of vocabulary. Even though among one researcher to another researcher have different sense, those types have almost similar meaning.

2. Reading Comprehension

Reading is one of English skills that must be learnt by all English students whether second or foreign language students. While reading, the students can improve their English language. That's why reading is an essential skill to be learnt. There are a bunch definitions of reading. Many researcher give meaning on reading based on their sense or experience. Generally, reading is an active activity that the readers use to get new words and information from a text. Varita (2017) claimed that reading is an activity where the readers has relation with a text. It means, an activity where there is interaction between the readers and the text. Thus, reading skill is important to be learnt since junior high school until university level. While another researcher said that reading skill is a cognitive potency or competence to interact with a written text (Bojovic, 2010, p. 1).

Reading comprehension is defined as readers' activity to read a text, but they do not only read a text but also understand the authors' sense by using several strategies. Whereas Sabouri (2016) argued that prioritize understanding the content of the text than acquiring the meaning of words is the meaning of reading comprehension. And having outcome to combine what has been gained from the text and previous knowledge which is still related with the text is the aim of reading comprehension. Another study said that reading comprehension is about utilizing the readers' previous

knowledge in order to predict what will be explained in the next passage and about how many unknown information gained which are still relevant with information which have already known (Bojovic, 2010, p. 1). Meanwhile, reading comprehension is the core of reading activity Since when reading, the readers do not only need new unfamiliar words for improving their English knowledge but also what information that the authors explained in the text.

On the other hand, Reading is one of English skills that must be learnt by all English students whether second or foreign language students. While reading, the students can improve their English language. That's why reading is an essential skill to be learnt. There are a bunch definitions of reading. Many researcher give meaning on reading based on their sense or experience. Generally, reading is an active activity that the readers use to get new words and information from a text. Varita (2017) claimed that reading is an activity where the readers has relation with a text. It means, an activity where there is interaction between the readers and the text. Thus, reading skill is important to be learnt since junior high Scholl until university level. While another researcher said that reading skill is a cognitive potency or competence to interact with a written text (Bojovic, 2010, p. 1).

Talking about reading, it is devided into two types. Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016) claimed that reading is categorized into two types in term of intensive and extensive reading. Then, Rashidi (2011) argued "Nowadays, there are two approaches that are commonly implemented. Those are intensive and extensive reading. Those approaches play important role in developing reading skill. The first, it helps reader to get a lot of vocabulary while another one can help readers to improve their reading comprehension skill". Intensive reading is a conventional reading approach which is aimed to help readers understand the text by analyzing and translating the words of the text while extensive reading means an approach which has purpose to make reading activities enjoyable (Park, 2017, p. 1)

3. Previous Study

Talking about the previous study, it tells about the research project that has been conducted by previous researcher. There are two previous studies that have been conducted by Ali (2010) and Faliyanti (2015). Those two previous studies are described in the following explanation.

The first previous study was conducted by Ali (2010) with his thesis title "*The Correlation between Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension*". This study

aimed to get empirical data in order to proof whether there is correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension or not. From 135 populations, he took 30 second semester students of English Department of Hidayatullah State Islamic University of Jakarta as a sample. Based on his finding, the more vocabulary the students have, the more they can comprehend a text well. It means there is close relation between students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

Another study was conducted by Faliyanti (2015) with her article title "*The Correlation between Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Their Interest in English toward Reading Comprehension in Descriptive Text*". This study purposed to find out how far the correlation between students vocabulary mastery and their interest in English toward reading comprehension in descriptive text. The research was conducted at the second semester of Muhammadiyah University Students in Academic Year 2014/2015. The population of this research was 127 students. The researcher used cluster random sampling in taking sample. And the finding showed that The hypothesis can be accepted because $t_{ratio} = 4,3$ and $t_{daf} = 2,04$. It means that $t_{ratio} > t_{daf}$ and H_a is accepted because there is positive and significant correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their interest in English toward reading comprehension in descriptive text.

RESEACH METHOD

In this present study, the researcher applied quantitative method particularly correlational research design. quantitative research is categorized as the systematic investigation of phenomena through the collection of quantifiable data and the implementation of statistical, mathematical or computational techniques. Bahri (2018) said that systematic process in analyzing data through certain computation is called quantitative research design. In addition, the researcher used correlation research design as kind of quantitative method in order to test the relationship between two variables (X and Y). In this case, those two variables are students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

In this study, the first semester students of English Department at UNISMA are being the populations in investigating this research. There are five different classes in this semester including class A to E which every class contains 33 students. So the total of all populations are 165 students. In this case, the researcher only took one of five classes to be the sample. So the total of the sample is 33 students.

Talking about the instrument, the researcher used the students' reading score and vocabulary test. The researcher asked the students' reading score to their teacher and used a vocabulary test that is adopted to Richard (1991) in order to measure the students' vocabulary

mastery. The test consists of reading passage about a short story followed by vocabulary items. The students must read the reading passage first than they have to answer the vocabulary test which is related to the reading passage. The vocabulary test consists of 17 items. The vocabulary test is designed as a multiple-choice test with five choices per item. Those five choices are 1 key, 3 distractors, and 1 choice “I don’t know.” In addition, those different choices have different measurement. If the students choose the correct answer, it scores 6; if the students choose the wrong answer, it decreases 1, and they gets 0 score if they choose “I don’t know.” The last, the final score must be decreased 2.

In collecting the data, the researcher gave the vocabulary test to the students. The test distributed on the first 35 minutes before teaching and learning activity started. Before doing the test, the researcher explained the way to answer the test in order to avoid misunderstanding. Afterwards, the students asked to read a reading passage and they had to answer vocabulary test after reading passage carefully. The researcher limited the students’ time in reading and answering the test. The researcher only gave a half hour in reading the text and answering the test.

Next, the researcher asked the students reading score to their reading teacher. The reading score was taken from their mid-term test score. Then, the researcher combined the vocabulary test result and the students’ reading score. After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) 20.0. The level of significant value set on .05 for the statistical analysis. To identify the students’ vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension, the researcher used Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The Pearson Correlation was estimated in order to identify the correlation between students’ vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on what have mentioned above, the purpose of this study is to know the correlation between students’ vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension of the first semester students of English Department of UNISMA. After getting the students’ vocabulary test’s result and their reading score, the researcher analyzed the data by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation of IBM Statistical for Social Science (SPSS) 20. The result of this present study is presented on the table on the following part.

In this part of study, the researcher presents the result of the descriptive statistics computation of the students’ vocabulary test result and their reading score. To get better understanding, the researcher presents the result of the data computation as follows.

Descriptive Statistics					
N		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Vocabulary Mastery	33	38	86	66.42	12.787
Reading Comprehension	33	40	100	73.42	14.556
Valid N (listwise)	33				

Correlations			
	Confidence		Performance
Confidence	Pearson Correlation	1	.519
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	33	33
Performance	Pearson Correlation	.519	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	33	33

The data on the first table shows the descriptive statistic computation result of the students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. It shows that the number of participants in conducting this study are 33 students (N=33); the table describes that the minimum score of vocabulary is 38 and the maximum score is 86. While the minimum score of reading comprehension is 40 and the maximum score is 100. On the other hand, the data also reveals that the mean score of vocabulary mastery is 66.42 by standard deviation is 12.787 and 73.42 is the mean score of vocabulary by standard deviation is 14.556.

Second table shows that Pearson Correlation (r) which represents the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension performance is .519. Afterwards, the level of significance is at .002 which means p-value is higher than .001 and lower than .005. To sum up, the result indicates that students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension correlate significantly. It can be said that there is close relation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension.

This present study is designed in order to find out and proof the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension. In learning a language, both vocabulary and reading are important to be learnt. Vocabulary is one of English component that becomes compulsory lesson in learning English. Vocabulary is group of words with their meanings. It is in line with Alizadeh (2016) said that vocabulary is a list of words ordered with their meanings in alphabetical order. In other words, Vocabulary refers to the words that have to be mastered in order to ease people communicate each other or learn something new. Thus, mastering vocabulary can help students in learning the other skills and components. On the

other hand, some researchers argued that vocabulary is divided into two types such as productive and receptive vocabulary. The words that are taught and studied in order to be implemented in spoken or written context is defined as productive vocabulary while the receptive vocabulary refers to the words that are studied in order to pronounce it or no. Those two types of vocabulary are also known as active and passive vocabulary.

Besides vocabulary, reading is also one of English skill that becomes compulsory lesson in learning it. It is because reading means an active activity to read a text in order to ease the students in learning English. Reading is one of important skill to be learnt since the students' can get more new information while reading. On the other hand, reading becomes one of English skill which must be implemented for the first time the students start learn English. Besides that, reading is an activity where the students do not only read a text but also understand the author sense by using several techniques or strategies (Satori, 2016). Thus, reading is one of English skill that is able to help students in learning English easier. Talking about reading, there are two types of reading. The first type of reading is called intensive reading. This type of reading has a purpose to help the readers obtaining a lot of vocabulary. While the second type of reading has a purpose to help readers improving their reading comprehension skill which is called as extensive reading.

Vocabulary and reading are inseparable parts. Both of them have impact on one another. The students can enrich their vocabulary by reading a lot and they can improve their reading comprehension skills by mastering a lot of vocabulary. Thus, in this present study the researcher wants to find out and proof the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension. The researcher used vocabulary test which was distributed to the participant (Class D) in order to get empirical data about students' vocabulary mastery. On the other hand, the researcher used the students' reading score given by the teacher in order to measure their ability in comprehending text.

Based on the research problem, the finding shows that there is significance correlation between student's vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension (sig. 2-tailed 0.02). Thus, it can be said that vocabulary mastery is one of aspects that can influence the student's ability in comprehending text. It is in line with Bahri (2018) statement that vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension have strong correlation. The interactions and reading techniques of the students can help the students to easily understand text, but vocabulary mastery can improve their ability in comprehending text more. In other words, the more vocabulary had, the better comprehending text.

After computing the data, the result of this present study is equal from the previous studies that have been discussed in the previous chapter. Those two previous studies stated that

student's vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension have positive significance correlation. So, it can be concluded that, if the students want to comprehend a text easily, one of the ways that can help them is mastering much vocabulary.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Vocabulary is one of English components that becomes the basic in learning a language especially English. So, it is possible to learn and memorize much vocabulary before learning the other skills and components in order to study English easily. On the other hand, reading is one of English skills that also can help students to get more unfamiliar vocabulary. Therefore, this current study examines the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

In this present study, the data result was got from the vocabulary test and the students' reading score. Then, the researcher analyzed the data by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation of SPSS version 20. Based on the data explained above, the result indicates that there is positive correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension which can be seen from p-value was higher than .001 and lower than .005 (.002)

Henceforth, the result in Chapter IV could answer the research question of the current study in which the score of vocabulary test and reading correlate significantly. The means score of vocabulary mastery was 66.42 and the standard deviation was 12.787, while the means score of reading comprehension was 73.42 and the standard deviation was 14.556.

By 33 students as the total of participant, the researcher found that the students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension performance was .519 and the significance value was .002 which is higher than .001 and lower that .005. So, it can be said that the students' vocabulary mastery can predict the students' reading comprehension ability. In consequence, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H_o) is rejected.

All in all, The researcher proposes some suggestions based on the finding and discussion about the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension.

First of all, the researcher proposes a suggestion for the next researcher. The researcher understands that vocabulary mastery has big effect on the students reading ability and reading also has big effect to increase student's vocabulary mastery. Those component and skill cannot be separated since they are related each other. The researcher proposes the future researchers can dig more deeply the correlation of both component and skill and also use another instrument for developing this study. Then, the next researcher can use more participants in conducting this kind of studying order to get better result.

Secondly, this study also proposes to English teacher or lecturer. They should be creative in teaching vocabulary and reading. They can use various techniques and media, for instance. Those things are needed to be implemented in order to make students enjoy in learning those and create enjoyable atmosphere while teaching and learning process.

The last, the researcher proposes the students to study and memorize more vocabulary in order to study the other skills and components. In addition, the students also need to read many English book in order to get learn more unfamiliar vocabulary.

REFERENCES

- Furqon, F. 2013. Correlation between Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Their Reading Comprehension. *Journal of English and Education* 2013. 1(1), 68-80. Retrived from <https://onesearch.id/Record/IOS1167.article-329/TOC>
- Bahri, D. S, 2018. The Correlation Between Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Their Reading Comprehension at The Seventh Grade Students' of Mts Daarul Ihsan. *Proffesional Journal of English Education*. 1(2). 77-84. Retrieved from <https://journal.ikipsiliwangi.ac.id/index.php/project/article/view/455/61>
- Alqahtani, M. 2015. The importance of vocabulary in language learning and how to be taught. *International Journal of Teaching and Education*, 3(3). 21-34. doi: 10.20472/TE.2015.3.3.002
- Bojovic, M. 2010, September. *Reading Skills and Reading Comprehension in English for Specific Purposes*. The international language conference on the importance of learning professional foreign languages for communication between cultures, Slovenia.
- Park, A.Y. 2017. A Comparison of the Impact of Extensive and Intensive Reading Approahes on the Korean Learners Reading Rate and Reading Comprehension Development. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*. 6(3). 131-142. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v6n.3p.131>
- Rashidi, N. 2011. The Effect of Extensive and Intensive Reading on Iranian EFL Learners' Vocabulary Size and Depth. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*. 2(2). 471-482. doi:10.4304/jltr.2.2.471-482
- Maskor, Z.M., & Baharudin, H. 2016. Receptive Vocabulary Knowledge or Productive Vocabulary Knowledge in Writing Skill, Which One Important?. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*. 6(11). 261-271. doi: 10.6007/IJARBSS/v6-i11/2395
- Anjomshoa, L & Zamanian, M. 2014. The Effect of Vocabulary Knowledge on Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL Learners in Kerman Azad University. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*. 2(5). 90-95. Retrieved from www.arcjournals.org

- Faliyanti, E. 2015. The Correlation between Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Their Interest in English toward Reading Comprehension in Descriptive Text. *Premise Journal*. 4(2). 68-76. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319938318>.
- Alizadeh, I. 2016. Vocabulary Teaching Techniques: A Review of Common Practices. *International Journal of Research in English Education*. 1(1). 22-30. Retrieved from www.ijreeonline.com
- Ngabut, M.N. 2015. Reading Theories and Reading Comprehension. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*. 5(1). 25-36. doi:10.6654/jiels.2.2.544-600
- Varita, D. 2017. Improving Reading Comprehension through Literature Circles. *English Education Journal (EEJ)*. 8(2). 234-244. doi:10.6774/edsrj.2.2.47
- Gilakjani, A.P., & Sabouri, N.B. 2016. How Can Students Improve Their Reading Comprehension Skill?. *Journal of Studies in Education*. 6(2). 229-240. doi:10.5296/jse.v6i2.9201
- Day, R.R., Omura, C., & Hiramatsu, M. 1991. Incidental EFL Vocabulary and Reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 7(2). 541-551. doi:10.5296/ksl.v6i2.5604

Approved

Advisor I,

Drs. Ali Ashari, M.Pd

NPP. 1910200011