

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Study Background

Language is a media used to communicate, express feelings, and ideas towards other people. According to Wardhaugh (2002, p. 2) language is a knowledge of rules and principles and of the ways of saying and doing things with sounds, words, and sentences rather than just knowledge of specific sounds, words, and sentences. As a foreign language, English become one of the hardest subjects to be learned by Indonesian learners.

English is one of the most used languages in the world. According to Eberhard, D.M. (2019, p. 2), English is at the first place as the most used language in the world with 1.132 billion speakers, the second place is Mandarin. This is one of the reasons that makes English plays an important role in some countries. Having the skills to speak or read in English will allow people to develop their skill in many possible ways. Nowadays, everything can be accessed from the internet, for examples, things such as technology, politics, education, news and cultures. Most of the information on the internet is posted in English. Therefore, to be able to understand the information, people need to understand English.

As one of the main four skills in learning English, reading skill is viewed as the tools of communication in written language through many written forms such as magazines, newspapers and so on. Reading skill is important to those who mostly learn English through written texts. Patel and Jain (2008, p. 113) states that

reading is an important activity in life with which one can update his/her knowledge. Reading skill is an important tool for academic success. The majority of the students may never speak much in English but most of them will have to read English in order to complete their studies. People read to get information. The more they read, the more information they will get. By reading, someone increases higher knowledge, gets new information, because reading force the brain cells to works which will keep the reader smarter and more creative. Even though some information can be obtained without reading, for example, by listening to teachers, seminars, radios etc, but by reading someone may get wider information than listening. Someone who reads newspapers will get more information than someone who only watches news on television. A text can be reread again to get detailed information. Students who study English are usually introduced to the vocabulary first. In order to master English, they will have to master the vocabulary.

Vocabulary is the basic language aspect that must be mastered in order to master English skills. According to Hornby (2006, p. 1645) vocabulary is all the words that a person knows or uses in a particular language. From this statement, when a person has a good mastery of vocabulary, they will be able to communicate both orally and in written well. Vocabulary, which consists of the knowledge of meaning as the main component of a language, is integrated in reading text and structure. So, vocabulary should be part of reading course because one needs to have good mastery of vocabulary to comprehend the reading passages.

There have been many discussions about the correlation between reading comprehension and vocabulary mastery. Hirsch (2003, p. 10) claims that by knowing at least 90 percents of words of the text will enable readers to get the main ideas from reading and guess correctly what the unfamiliar words mean, which makes them learn more new words. The ability in understanding vocabulary's meaning influences reading comprehension. A good comprehension on vocabulary will help students to understand what they read.

However having good vocabulary mastery does not always correlate with students having good reading comprehension. At the same time, having a good reading comprehension is not always connected to students having good vocabulary mastery.

Based on the problems above, the researcher was interested in conducting a study on students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension on a thesis entitled "The Correlation Between Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Their Reading Comprehension".

## **1.2 Problems of Study**

The problems of the study were formulated as follows:

1. The researcher wanted to see whether or not there was any significant correlation between the students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension.
2. The researcher wanted to see whether or not there were any factors that could improve students' reading comprehension.

### **1.3 Objectives of Study**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To find out whether or not there was a correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension.
2. To find out whether or not there were any factors that could improve students' comprehension.

### **1.4 The hypotheses of this study are:**

H<sub>0</sub> : There was no correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension.

H<sub>a</sub> : There was a significant correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension.

### **1.5 The significances of the study**

It is expected that the findings of the study would contribute theoretically and practically to the readers, especially to the students of English Literature Study Program of Universitas Bina Darma. Theoretically, this study expectedly would contribute to the development of students' vocabulary and their reading comprehension. Practically, this study can be a reference for the next researchers who are interested in doing further study on the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. For the researcher himself, hopefully this study would broaden his understanding on the relationship between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.