**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE AND ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT**

**By :**

**Yulia Rizki Ramadhani**

*Dosen FKIP UGN Padamgsidimpuan*

**Abstract**

***The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between students’ reading comprehension skills and vocabulary size. The subjects of this research consisted of eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 6 Padangsidimpuan. A correlational analysis was employed to ascertain the relationship between scores in reading comprehension and Vocabulary mastery. Based on Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, there was a sufficient correlation (r=0.47) between scores in the students’ vocabulary knowledge and its correlation to their reading comprehension to the eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 6 Padangsidimpuan.***

***The findings also indicate that the students’ mastery in the vocabulary knowledge can be categorized into the capable category. It can be seen from the value of the mean score got by the students (MX), that is 79.01. The students’ reading comprehension is also categorized into a capable category. It can be seen from the value of mean score got by the students (MY), that is 79.34***

***The findings provide useful insights that vocabulary knowledge contributes to comprehension reading. This research has the implication that students should increase their vocabulary. The teacher should develop an English language learning process that can improve the vocabulary of the students. Hopefully, the reading comprehension process will be more successful by developing effective learning to improve vocabulary mastery.***

**Chapter I INTRODUCTION**

English is one of the foreign languages taught by the government and private elementary schools up to universities in Indonesia. English was intended to assist students in learning the language and recognizing their culture and others ' culture. It also allows the students to communicate and engage in thoughts and emotions. Most of the students did not actually master English, even in the simplest structure.

There are four skills that need to be mastered to be able to acquire it. Among the four skills that students are able to master can be regarded as the most challenging, because most students today are poor readers (Bean 1996). To understand the English test, students need to have adequate vocabulary size as reported by Nation (2001) vocabulary awareness is one of the best predictors of learner's ability to understand reading.

As Chall once said, "When a vocabulary measure is included in a formula for prediction, the structure of the sentence does not add much to the prediction." Many studies have also empirically demonstrated the crucial role of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension. For instance, take Wu and Hu's analysis. Vocabulary awareness has found significant and positive correlations with reading ability and plays a key role in understanding reading among many variables investigated in their research. Therefore, adequate vocabulary knowledge seems to be one of the prerequisites for good reading.

Likewise the significance of adequate knowledge of English to comprehend reading has been recognized over the years in Padangsidimpuan, where English is a foreign language (EFL). Before conducting the study, researchers observed class XI IPS in SMA Negeri 6 Padangsidimpuan. The majority of students find synonyms, antonyms and meaning difficult to find in a text and still lack a grammar, derivation and collocation of words. In fact, these are the indicators for mastery of vocabulary. On the basis of this problem, the vocabulary knowledge of the students is still suspected to be low.

The lack of students’ vocabulary can impact students ' ability to comprehend reading. Most students don't understand the meaning of words in a text. The main idea of the paragraph in a text was still difficult for students to find. Additionally, the content of the text is also difficult for students to make conclusions. On the basis of these facts the vocabulary can be concluded as one of the factors affecting students ' reading skills and comprehension.

In response to the declining reading performance of the learners in large-scale worldwide proficiency tests and the empirically proven inadequacy of their vocabulary knowledge, the present study was called upon in an attempt to take a close look at the relationship between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge in SMA Negeri 6 Padangsidimpuan students.Since vocabulary knowledge was perceived as a multidimensional construct, the current study specifically aims to find out the overall and relative contribution of the various subcomponents of vocabulary knowledge to explain the variance of the reading comprehension performance of high school students. The results of this study were hoped to be able to direct English language teachers and advise material designers towards pedagogically sound practices with respect to vocabulary teaching and reading comprehension.

**Chapter II LITERATURE REVIEW**

**1. Reading Comprehension Defined**

Reading comprehension can be defined as the ability to understanding what has been read. It is an active thinking process that depends not only on comprehension skills but also on the students’ experience and prior knowledge. And a scheme of comprehension process is presented to describe the relationship among the elements of the reading skills. They are : language competence, reading techniques, reading skills, and good comprehension. Increasing students ' understanding by engaging students actively through interactions and debates will improve students ' level of understanding (McLaughlin, 2012). Effective readers use a variety of strategies to help them make a meaning of the text.



( DrsSukirahKustario, 1985:5 )

**Diagram 1. The Comprehension Process**

When a person has a language competence and uses the suitable reading technique makes as reading skills to him. As the result of these abilities become a good comprehension.

There is a relationship between development of vocabulary and comprehension reading. Word knowledge supports understanding reading. Limited knowledge of vocabulary or limiting the ability to use vocabulary strategies effectively leads to poor understanding because children can not understand what they have read. One of the best predictors of reading comprehension is vocabulary knowledge (Quinn, Wagner, Petscher, & Lopez, 2015).

**2. Vocabulary Defined**

Vocabulary is one of the variables or the terminologies used in the topic of this research, so that it needs clarification. Vocabulary is one of the language aspects that should be mastered by the students. The students are expected to master the vocabulary in orderto be able to use the language for communication, both in speaking and writing. The students’ abilities in vocabulary can influence their abilities in mastering other language skills, as : listening, speaking, grammar, writing and composition.Vocabulary is the total number of words that make up a language.

As A.S Hornby (1989) stated that vocabulary means the total number of words that make up a language. From the above quotation it can be stated that the word vocabulary in the topic of this research means the words that make up a language. Every language has vocabulary or words that make up a language.

As we know that words are essential to communication. The learners are expected to master the structure of English as well as its vocabulary in order to be able to use the language for communication, especially in written English.

Regardless of the specific target language and the conditions of instruction, vocabulary is an important factor in all language teaching. Students must continually be learning words as they learn structure and as they practice the sound system.

Concrete words are the easier to learn either younger or older students have trouble in learning numbers, days of the week, colors, name of objects, and the like. Their difficulties arise with using these words in sentences. For this reason, words are generally taught in context not in isolation.

Vocabulary should always be presented in context, simple sentence in familiar structure(Yusrizal Saleh, 1988). In teaching vocabulary the teachers should teach the shape and the meaning of words in context not from list of unrelated words. For they realize that the meaning of many words can change according to their use in particular sentences and particular context, and they are primarily interested in presenting words to their learners as vehicles for relaying information and ideas. In other words, for communicating in the new language. But recognizing and following this approach, a teacher will often find that some words will not ‘stick’ in the minds of the learners without extra effort on the part of the teacher to help them along. The techniques suggested here are for selective. And appropriate use when such situations a rise not for teaching list of words.

When we teach vocabulary, we must teach three things, they are : 1) We must teach the shape, of form, of the word; 2) We must teach the meaning of the word and; 3)We must teach that the form and the meaning of the word go together.

So, if we teach the word ‘ come ’ we must teach the students to recognize or produce the word come. We must teach them what come, and we must teach it that the form or shape of come and the meaning go together.Let us look at the techniques for teaching each of three aspects of a word. After that, we will consider techniques for adding interest to the teaching. Then, hopefully, by combining ideas from these various parts in ways suitable to your own situation, you can develop some new and interesting techniques for teaching vocabulary.

**3. Fostering vocabulary is an effective strategy for increasing comprehension in readers.**

Nagy (1998) said that vocabulary knowledge is fundamental to the understanding of text. Without knowing the meaning, students find content-related vocabulary, their ability to comprehend the contents can be compromised. Nagy and Scott (2000), based upon that principle of vocabulary and comprehension, said that children must be able to understand in a passage the meaning of 90-95 percent of words to be comprehensive.

Consideration of a variety of methods for evaluating student improvement of vocabulary understanding and knowledge is critical, as standardized measures provide only a snapshot of student abilities. Pope Pearson, Hiebert & Kamil (2007) presented a possible explanation for the limited impact of vocabulary training on standardized measures, stating that: (a) vocabulary is not causally related to and comprehended; (b) vocabulary training is not focused outside target words and texts where words are learned; and (c)existing standardized measures due to language instructions, are not sensitive enough to detect change in understanding.

 Teachers have to try to recognize the individual reasons why students struggle to achieve literacy. Whether students struggle to create something out of the word in isolation or context, they would be able to comprehend the text, resulting to the students falling behind their peers.

The knowledge and experience that students bring to the school is shaped by many factors. Race ethnicity, culture and socioeconomic status are just a few factors that shape the literacy of a student. In order to make sure that the meaning of each word is available instantly when reading text through direct or explicit instruction, dependent on content and the needs of the student. Providing students with a variety of strategies is important for teachers to be able to acquire vocabulary related to content.The selection of strategy may differ according to the purpose of the course, to the evaluation tool for monitoring learning, the level of student development, vocabulary objective and the time available. It is also important to teach strategies so that students can use the strategies themselves, from a teacher directed at the students. Through integrating metacognitive approaches students are encouraged to control themselves and to improve understanding.

**Chapter III METHOD**

The investigator conducted a correlation study in order to answer the research problem. Correlation signifies a relation between two variables. It is are linked by a cause at least.

The subjects of this research consisted of eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 6 Padangsidimpuan. Since this research belongs to correlational study, the researcher applies the measurement technique. The data was collected using vocabulary test and reading test. It is intended to know the students’ achievement in vocabulary designed to find out which variables are related by means of correlations in research. It gives readers an understanding that two or more things and reading comprehension. The test of vocabulary achievement is intended to collect the data about students’ vocabulary achievement. The test is an objective test in the form of multiple choice. There are 30 items of questions. For the vocabulary test, the students were given 90 minutes in one meeting to answer the test. This test examined the students about the meaning on context, collocation, synonym, antonym, word grammar, derivation.From this test, the researcher wastake all questions that have significant correlation with the words in the reading test.

The test of reading comprehension was intended to collect the data about the students’ reading comprehension. The test consists of 30 items. The researcher used a type of objective test, which is multiple choice type. There are five passages and from each passage the writer makes a question on reading comprehension including the identifying the main idea, finding explicit information, finding implicit information, identifying word meaning, and identifying reference. The statistical formulation which is used is the formulation of Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation (rXY) as follows

$$rxy=\frac{N\sum\_{}^{}XY-(\sum\_{}^{}X)(\sum\_{}^{}Y)}{\sqrt{\left\{N\sum\_{}^{}X^{2}-\left(\sum\_{}^{}X\right)^{2}\right\}\{N\sum\_{}^{}Y^{2}-\left(\sum\_{}^{}Y\right)^{2}\}}}$$

Inwhich :

rxy = symbolizes the students’ connectives mastery and its correlation to their skills in writing the descriptive texts

X = symbolizes the students’ scores in connectives

Y = symbolizes the students’ scores in writing the descriptive texts

$\sum\_{}^{}X$ = symbolizes the sum of the students’ scores in connectives

$\sum\_{}^{}Y$= symbolizes the sum of students’ scores in writing the descriptive texts

N = symbolizes the number of sample

After getting the value of rxy, the next step which is done by the writer is consulting the value of rxy to the table of interpretation. The table showed us about how far the students’ vocabulary knowledge and its correlation to their skills in reading comprehension to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 6 Padangsidimpuan, and it is also used for testing the hypothesis that has been formulated before. The writer was consulted the value of correlation ( rxy ) to the table of interpretation of correlation given by Anas Sudijono (1987) below :

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The Value Of Correlation ( rxy )** | **Interpretation** |
| Between 0.0 – 0.2 Between 0.2 – 0.4 Between 0.4 – 0.7Between 0.7 – 0.9Between 0.9 – 1.0 | No correlation Low correlation Sufficient correlationHigh correlationVery high correlation |

**Table 1. The Table Of Interpretation Of rXY**

**Chapter IV DISCUSSION**

Mastering vocabulary is very important because connecting in four language skills is the basic aspect, which is listening, speaking, reading and writing. "Vocabulary is a language component, which measures up all information about meaning and uses words in one language" (Harimurti, 1993). So, the students can't communicate well without learning the language, of course, and they will find it hard to express their ideas, what they think, and the information they learn. As explained before, we will know the meaning of vocabulary in the context by having and mastering vocabulary. It may also help avoid mistakes in comprehension.Vocabulary is very important to understand reading. Readers cannot comprehend what they read without knowing the meaning. The research investigated the connection between learners' comprehension of the language and understanding reading.

This study has two variables of research: the vocabulary knowledge of students as a variable X and the understanding of students as variable Y. The researcher tested the students by taking the data from their vocabulary and reading comprehension. These are measures of vocabulary and reading comprehension. After treating the analysis of collected data it has been got that the value of the students’ vocabulary knowledge and its correlation to their reading comprehension (rXY) is 0.47. By consulting the value to the table of interpretation of correlation it is known that it is categorized into the sufficient correlation category. It means that the students’ vocabulary knowledge and its correlation to their reading comprehension to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 6 Padangsidimpuan in 2019-2020 academic year is sufficient.

And through the collected data it can be seen that the students’ scores in vocabulary knowledge vary from 60 upto 90. It means that lowest score got by the student in their vocabulary knowledge is 60 and highest score is 90, whereas the students’ mastery in vocabulary knowledge can be categorized into the capable category. It can be seen from the value of mean score got by the students (MX), that is 79.01.By using the collected data the writer can calculate the percentages of the students’ scores. The histogram of percentages can be seen below :

**Graphic 1. The Histogram Of The Students’ Mastery In The Vocabulary Knowledge**

 From the above histogram the writer can conclude that the percentage of the students who have succeeded in vocabulary knowledge the value of the Minimum Completeness Criteria ( KKM) is 86.9 % and the percentage of the students who haven’t achieved the Minimum Completeness Criteria ( KKM ) is only 13.1 %. It is said so, because the value of Minimum Completeness Criteria ( KKM ) in this school is 75.

And the scores of the student in reading comprehension showed that the students’ scores vary from 55 upto 85. It means that the lowest score got by the students is 55, and highest score is 85. The mean score of the students in reading comprehension is 79.34. It means that the students’ reading comprehension can be categorized in to the capable category. By using the collected data the writer can calculate the percentages of the students’ scores in reading comprehension as the following histogram :

**Graphic 2. The Histogram the students’ reading comprehension**

From the above histogram the writer can conclude that the percentage of the students who have succeeded in achieving the value of the Minimum Completeness Criteria ( KKM ) in reading comprehension is93.4 % and the percentage of the students who haven’t achieved the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) is 6.6 %. It is said so, because the value of Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) in this school is 75.

And from the value of mean scores of the students’ vocabulary knowledge and the students’ reading comprehension, it can be stated that in general the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 6 Padangsidimpuan are able to use the vocabulary knowledge and they are also able to comprehend the texts. The students who haven’t achieved the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) are relatively small. According to the writer, it is caused by some factors, such as : their abilities in grammar are relatively low, they lack of motivation and interest in learning and other external factors. Therefore, it is expected that the students who want to comprehend the text well, should learn grammar well, especially the vocabulary. It is said so, because vocabulary are the words that make up the texts. And the hypothesis of this research that has been formulated before is accepted. It is said so, because the collected data support the formulated hypothesis.

**Chapter V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

The study that the researcher conducted obtains several conclusions as follows: 1) The students’ vocabulary knowledge and its correlation to their reading comprehension to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 6 Padangsidimpuan is sufficient. It can be seen from the value of correlation between the two variables (rXY), that is 0.47; 2) The students’ mastery in the vocabulary knowledge can be categorized into the capable category. It can be seen from the value of mean score got by the students (MX), that is 79.01; 3) The students’ reading comprehension is also categorized into the capable category. It can be seen from the value of mean score got by the students (MY), that is 79.34. The hypothesis of this research is accepted.

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that vocabulary knowledge contributes to comprehension reading. This research has the implication that students should increase their vocabulary. The teacher should develop an English language learning process that can improve the vocabulary of the students. Hopefully reading comprehension process will be more successful by developing effective learning to improve vocabulary mastery. Hence, the reading comprehension of students will be increased.

 The writer proposes some suggestions in relation to the above implication The first one is for the teacher. To enhance students understanding and learning vocabulary, a teacher should encourage their students to increase their learning activities through concrete activities, like: explaining the importance of reading activity so that students are aware of the importance of reading activity and are encouraged to read regularly and continuously. Improved reading is also the fundamental way to enhance the vocabulary of students. Therefore, by encouraging and activating the task of reading, the students not only enhance their comprehension of reading, but also improve their mastery of vocabulary.

For the prospective teacher. It is also expected that this research would motivate prospective teachers to find new innovations in teaching English, especially in improving the vocabulary of students, so that students can enrich their ability to understand reading. Such as conducting the effective teaching method, e.g. with games, using comics or songs to enable the students to enjoy the learning in which the students actively participate in using words to enrich the vocabulary of the students and in reading activity to develop the understanding of the students ' reading. To other scientists. The researcher suggested using more samples for the next researcher doing a study in the same area.

**REFERENCES**

Anas Sudijono. 2010. PengantarStatistik Pendidikan. Jakarta: Rajawali Press

Bean, J.C. 1996. Engaging ideas: The professor's guide to integrating writing, critical thinking, and active learning in the classroom. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Harimurti, K. 1993. Kamus Linguistic EdisiKetiga. Jakarta: PT. GramediaPustaka Utama.

Hornby, A. S. 1989. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English. Fourth Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

J. S. Chall. 1958. Readability—An Appraisal of Research and Application, Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, USA.

Kustaryo, Sukirah. 1998. Reading Technique for Collage Student. Jakarta.

McLaughlin, M. 2010. Guided Comprehension in the primary grades (2nd ed.). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Nagy, W. E. & Scott, J. A. 2000. “Vocabulary processes,” in M. L. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, and R. Barr (eds.), Handbook of reading research, Vol. 3, Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Nagy, W. E. 1998. Teaching vocabulary to improve reading comprehension. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Nation, I.S.P. 2001. Learning Vocabulary in Another Language. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Pearson, P. D., Hiebert, E. H., & Kamil, M.,2007. Vocabulary assessment: What we know and what we need to learn. Reading Research Quarterly, 42, 282–296.

Quinn, J. M., Wagner, R. K., Petscher, Y., & Lopez, D. 2015. Developmental relations between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension: a latent change score modeling study. Child Development. Retrieved from <http://purl.flvc.org/fsu/fd/FSU_pmch_25201552>

Saleh, Yusrizal. 1988. Method of Teaching English as a Foreign Language: Fundamental of Language Teaching for Teacher of English. Palembang: Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Sriwijaya.