CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the problems of the study, the objectives of the study, the scopes and limitation of the study, and the significances of the study.

1.1 The Background of the Study

Knowing words, which serve as the foundation of language, is one of the three main elements of language, along with knowledge of sounds, grammar, and vocabulary. In reality, it would be impossible to create or perceive language without understanding the meaning of the words. Despite the fact that kids may decode words and read fluently, understanding the meanings of the words in a text is essential for reading comprehension. In first language (L1) studies, the importance of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension has been well established. It also seems to hold true in second language (L2) contexts.

According to Andersonn & Freebody (1981), the reader's general language knowledge is the best indicator of how well they will understand the content. According to Nagy (1988), learning vocabulary should be a core component of language education because it is essential to understanding a variety of texts. While opinions on how to teach vocabulary and how much of it should be taught vary, there is general agreement that vocabulary is important for reading proficiency.

How much vocabulary children should be taught and what vocabulary they should learn in order to improve their reading comprehension is another topic that

needs to be discussed in more detail in relation to vocabulary knowledge and reading. According to Zhang & Anual (2008), reading was connected with learning 2000–3000 words in a foreign language. According to Nation (2006), emphasizes the importance of languange learners to have sufficient vocabulary size in order to perform a second or foreign language. He estimates that in order to perform the language effectively without using any comprehension tools, we need to have 6,000 to 7,000 word-family vocabulary for spoken texts and around 8,000 to 9,000 word-family vocabulary for written texrs. On the other hand, based on Adolphs & Schmitt (2003), estimate the need of having the most frequent 2,000 to 3,000 word families in order to participate in basic everyday oral communication. While estimates vary, most vocabulary scholars agree that students need 3,000 to 5,000 thousand words in order to be able to read un-simplified texts with sufficient comprehension (Renandya, 2018).

Understanding for short-answer questions. Similar findings were made by Laufer (1992), who proposed that the best number of words to predict a student's reading performance was 3000. According to Saragi et al. (1978), a learner of English needs to know at least 3600 words in order to comprehend texts that are not simplified, but they also caution that the actual number of meanings that learners need to be familiar with must be far greater. This statement demonstrates that the depth to which learners must understand word meanings is just as important as how many words they know. According to Hu & Nation (2000), a reader must be familiar with at least 98% of the words in a text in order to grasp it on their own.

Some studies in Indonesia have been conducted to assess the amount of vocabulary possessed by Indonesian students, specifically students majoring in English education. The first study was conducted by Kweldju (1997), he measured the vocabulary size of English department students from 15 teachers" colleges. The data showed that the participants only had 4,664-word forms or 2,800-word families. The second study was conducted by Kurniawan (2017). He assessed the vocabulary size possessed by students majoring in English education department. The result of the study showed that on average the students had 1400 words. In the latest study, Sudarman & Chinokul (2018) assessed the vocabulary size of pre-service teachers at a private university and reported that the students only knew about 1,273 word families. The result was even lower than in previous studies, and it was still well below the standard defined by scholars. These findings indicate that vocabulary knowledge is still the main problem in English language learning in Indonesia.

In reading, students often face several problems. According to Haynes & Baker (1993), the most significant problem for L2 readers is not the absence of reading strategies but insufficient vocabulary in English. Supporting the theory, Laufer (1997) stated that reading comprehension (both in L1 and L2) is affected by the vocabulary knowledge in a text, textually relevant background knowledge and the application of reading strategies, such as predicting the content of the text, guessing unknown in context, making inferences, recognizing the type of text and text structure, and identify the main idea of the paragraph. Vocabulary is a crucial component in reading. Vocabulary will help and guide the students to understand

and grasp the idea of what written in the text. Students with great number of vocabularies will have a better reading comprehension. However, vocabulary knowledge is believed as the most important thing in reading.

Several studies related to vocabulary depth between reading comprehension have been conducted previously. First, Hasan & Shabdin (2017) in their thesis entitled Engineering EFL learners' Vocabulary Depth Knowledge and Its Relationship and Prediction to Academic Reading Comprehension. Results showed that not only syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, which represented depth of vocabulary knowledge test had the most significant positive association with academic reading comprehension but also more importantly, vocabulary depth was found to be the strongest unique predictor of academic reading performance. Last, Davoud Abedi (2017) in his thesis entitled The Relationship between Depth of Vocabulary Knowledge and Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL Learners. The results of this study showed that there was a strong positive relationship between depth of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension skill. The implications of this study can be that teachers and learners should take into account the role of vocabulary knowledge depth in their teaching, and learning, respectively.

Previous studies discussed the relationship and impact of vocabulary depth on reading comprehension among EFL Learners, whether it is part of reading comprehension in academic contexts. However, no one of the study focused on reading comprehension in academic texts at the university level. Thus, it serves as inspiration for reserachers to conduct research in that field.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher conducted a study to find out whether there was a correlation between vocabulary depth and their reading comprehension in academic texts. Therefore, the researcher hereby conducted a study entitled "THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' VOCABULARY DEPTH AND THEIR READING COMPREHENSION IN ACADEMIC TEXTS".

1.2 The Problems of the Study

The problems of this research are based on the previous backgrounds, this study directed to figure out answers of the following research question:

"Is there any correlation between students' vocabulary depth and their reading comprehension in academic texts?"

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research in accordance with the problems of the study above to identify if there is a correlation between students' vocabulary depth and their reading comprehension in academic texts.

1.4 The Scopes and Limitation of the Study

Based on the problems above, the researcher limited and focused on the correlation between vocabulary depth and reading comprehension in academic texts. The subjects of this study are students majoring in English Education Program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur in Academic Year 2022/2023.

1.5 The Significances of the Study

1. Theoretical Significance

The results of this study are expected to serve as one of the references for educators and other researchers who want to do similar research about

correlation between students' vocabulary depth and their reading comprehension in academic texts.

2. Practical Significance

This research is also hope to provide useful information for educators, students' and future researchers. They can also learn from this research how to measure students' vocabulary knowledge, especially vocabulary depth. The results of which may help their vocabulary development programs or other skill learning.

The researcher expected this study can solve the student's problems in reading comprehension. The result of this study can give contribution to support the theories about vocabulary depth and reading comprehension. Hopefully they will have a better improvement in reading by vocabulary depth. For educators who might use this research result as an input for English teaching learning, after knowing the correlation between vocabulary depth and reading comprehension.

This study would also be beneficial for future researchers who plan to conduct similar studies. They could learn the methodology that is utilized in this study and adopt it on their future research. They also conduct further research under this topic.