CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains about the background of study, the statement of problem, the purpose of study, the hypothesis, the significance of study, the scope and limitation and the definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of Study

Human beings start to learn language since they were born. The use of language to share thoughts, ideas, and feelings is a uniquely human characteristic. Learning a language means learning to use the language to communicate both in oral form (listening and speaking) and written form (reading and writing). Both of them can be found in our daily life such as in television or magazines.

There are many languages used in international communication. English is one of them and it is the world’s most important language used by people. This language is used world-wide in sciences, knowledge and technology as well as education, business, transaction, and other activities in the world. Without knowing English, people will find difficulties to access information. In Indonesia, English is the first foreign language to be taught as a compulsory subject in secondary school.

The objective of teaching and learning English is developing four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Beside the language skills, English has some language components which can be taught to the students. Those components are vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and so on. In order to learn English well, both the language skills and language components are interrelated each
other. In learning processes, English language skills and language components cannot be separated. Language components can complete the language skills.

There are no languages that exist without word. In learning English, vocabulary plays an important role. It is one element that links the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing all together. Learning vocabulary is not only learning the meaning but also the form (spoken and written form) and the use (grammatical, function, collocation). In order to communicate well in English, students should acquire an adequate number of words and should know how to use them accurately. A good vocabulary and ability to use words correctly and effectively can help the students make school work easier and also do well on English test.

Realizing the importance of vocabulary in learning English, students have to devote much of their time to learn the vocabulary items. So, ideally vocabulary is a part of reading, we cannot comprehend a reading passage without having vocabulary ability. People said that the more words you know the meanings of, the higher the comprehension you have.

Nowadays, the ability to comprehend English written text is necessary for people. We read in order to understand or to get something from the writing. The reading skill is viewed as a tool of communication in written language through the form of magazines, newspapers, textbooks and others. Therefore, the ability to read English text in any form will give a great deal of advantages in our life. Reading comprehension is a process of making sense of written ideas through meaningful interpretation and interaction with language (Heilman et al., 1981:242). In addition,
reading can enrich our life. Through the reading we acquire new ideas, obtain needed information and broaden our interest.

Most students in Indonesia have problems and get some difficulties in learning English especially in reading material. The result of research with the title Students’ Difficulties in Comprehending Reading Text at Eight Year of MTS Muhammadiyah 1 Malang was conducted by Permata (2009) showed that many students face difficulties in comprehending text: included word or vocabulary, sentence, paragraph and whole selection. In solving the problem, students must increase their vocabularies. They also can use some strategies in learning vocabulary.

Moreover, to increase the skill in reading comprehension, students should have ability in the language components such as vocabulary, phonology, grammar and pronunciation. Proficient reading depends on the ability to recognize words quickly and effortlessly. If word recognition is difficult, students use too much of their processing capacity to read individual words, which interferes with their ability to comprehend what is read. In fact, junior high school students still poor in vocabulary and reading comprehension.

In line with the background of the study, the writer is interested in knowing how well the vocabulary ability and reading comprehension at the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 13 Malang. In conjunction with this study, the writer would like to know whether or not the correlation between the students’ vocabulary ability and reading comprehension is significant.
1.2 Statement of Problem

The basic problem the writer wants to discuss in this study is:

- Is there any significant correlation between students’ vocabulary ability and reading comprehension of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 13 Malang?

1.3 Purpose of Study

- To find out whether there is any significant correlation between the students’ vocabulary ability and reading comprehension of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 13 Malang.

1.4 Hypothesis

Based on the problem above, the hypothesis of study can be stated as follows:

- $H_A$ (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant correlation between students’ vocabulary ability and reading comprehension of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 13 Malang.

- $H_0$ (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant correlation between students’ vocabulary ability and reading comprehension of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 13 Malang.

1.5 Significance of Study

The writer expects this study will be useful both theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretical Benefit

   a. The result of this study is expected to be useful to contribute some valuable information for teaching and learning in vocabulary and reading comprehension as a feedback to the teachers and students.
b. The finding of this study can be used by future researchers as reference to conduct similar studies or other studies related to this study.

2. Practical Benefit

a. Both for the writer and the readers, this study is expected to be useful in providing more knowledge about vocabulary ability and reading comprehension.

b. Increase the students’ ability especially in vocabulary and reading comprehension.

c. Give clear explanation about the correlation between students’ vocabulary ability and reading comprehension.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

In this study, the writer focuses on investigation in correlation between students’ vocabulary ability and reading comprehension. However, it is limited on the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 13 Malang in vocabulary ability test and comprehension material texts as reading test. Both of the tests are multiple-choice form.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

- Correlation is a technique for determining the covariation between sets of scores; paired score may vary directly (increase or decrease together) or vary inversely (as one increases, the other decreases) (Ary, 2006:631). In this study, correlation refers to describe the relationship between two variables: the vocabulary ability and reading comprehension.
- Vocabulary ability is one of several factors that contribute to test-taker performance in vocabulary testing that have strong lexical focus (Schmitt et al., 1997: 320). In this study vocabulary ability means vocabulary knowledge that can be measured by an objective test (multiple-choice test).

- Reading comprehension is a process of making sense of written ideas through meaningful interpretation and interaction with language (Heilman et al., 1981: 242). In this study reading comprehension means the students who are studying at junior high school in understanding the reading materials as a test.