CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides reviews of literature in regard to the present research. What will be explained here are the teaching and learning of English, theoretical framework of reading comprehension and vocabulary, kinds of reading comprehension test, types of vocabulary, types of vocabulary test, Vocabulary Size Test, and the correlation between vocabulary size and reading comprehension abilities.

2.1 The Teaching and Learning of English

It is already a common knowledge that English is a lingua franca. Though, the frequency of usage from one country to another differs. Kachru (1985) proposed a model named “The Three Circles of English” and differentiated users of English into the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle comprises countries that use English as their primary language, namely United States, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. The Outer Circle countries are, according to Kachru et al (2009), countries that are once colonialized by nations in the Inner Circle; Nigeria, India, Singapore and Malaysia, for instance. The Outer Circle countries treat English as one of languages they use on a daily basis instead of a sole primary means of communication. The Expanding Circle comprises countries like Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, etc. Unlike the ones in Inner and Outer circles, countries in the
Expanding Circle treat English as a foreign language (EFL). Because the language is seen as a foreign language, the teaching and learning of it also differs.

According to Murray & Christison (2010), English usually becomes a required subject for some years of compulsory education in countries of Expanding Circle. This includes Indonesia, where English is indeed taught during learners’ school years. It is also still taught at university level and even has majors specified for deeper learning of this language, for example the major of English language education where the students are prepared as English teachers. Just like in ELED UMM, the teaching and learning of English bears the purpose of creating skilled graduates that have the qualities of a professional capable of teaching this language to others. The students are taught skills like speaking, reading, listening and writing bilingually using Bahasa Indonesia and English. Besides those skills, they are also taught other subjects that will all be essential for teaching others later, such as English literature, sociolinguistics, language assessments, etc.

2.2 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension, or also popularly called as reading, according to the definition in The Simple View of Reading (proposed by Gough et al, 1996) as a skill comprised of two main components, namely decoding and language comprehension. Decoding or word reading is the ability to recognize or read effortlessly each word that is displayed, regardless its context. Language comprehension, on the other hand, is the ability to understand and make sense of the text at word, sentence, and passage level with the help of background
knowledge the reader already has (Gough et al. in Cornoldi & Oakhill, 2013; Pollatsek & Treiman, 2015). These two components work hand in hand and are inseparable. For reading comprehension to successfully happen, a reader needs to be able to decode the words in a text, comprehend the meaning of the words, sentences, and passages, to finally inquire the whole text. Reading cannot just be either decoding or language comprehension, as someone who only decodes is incapable of understanding the content of the text and one who is only capable of language comprehension cannot read what is written in the text. Those two conditions are not categorized as reading (Pollatsek & Treiman, 2015; Tennent, 2014).

2.2.1 Reading Comprehension Test

One way to know students’ ability is by administering a test. According to Heaton (1988), receptive skills like listening and reading comprehension ideally requires a test designed to make students show their ability in extracting only the essential information. Reading comprehension, for instance, has test questions that are “set to test the students’ ability to understand the gist of a text and to extract key information on specific points in the text” (Heaton, 1998: 8). Test of reading comprehension has various forms of question item, such as matching test, true/false, multiple choice, completion items, rearrangement items, cloze procedure, open-ended and miscellaneous items, and cursory reading.
2.2.1.1 Matching Test

With this type of item, we usually expect students to match a picture with the correct definition, a word with its definition or vice versa; depending on which design we want to use. For example:

The following dictionary definitions are for words used in the passage *Settlements*. Write the words from the passage next to the appropriate definition.

having or involving more than one part as an individual ............... 
serving as representative ............... 
becoming greater in size ............... 

enough to meet a need or purpose ............... 

(Heaton, 1988: 112)

2.2.1.2 True/False

True/False test is very commonly used in testing reading comprehension ability. It can be constructed quickly and easily, scored quickly, and the score is reliable given the test is well-constructed and there are enough of it. The example is as follows:

Put a circle round the letter T if the statement is true. If it is not true, put a circle round the letter F.

1  The sun rises in the west.    T   F
2  Fish can’t fly, but birds can.    T   F
3  England is as large as Australia.    T   F
4  When ice melts, it turns into water.    T   F

(Heaton, 1988: 114)

2.2.1.3 Multiple Choice

The multiple choice item is also very common in reading comprehension test. Though some may say it leans more into testing vocabulary or grammatical...
knowledge, it is also correct to deem this type of test item capable of testing reading comprehension because comprehension partly comes from test takers’ knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. The example is as follows:

1. John is not as tall as Sally, but he’s a little taller than Rick.
   A. Sally is taller than John and Rick.
   B. John is not as tall as Rick.
   C. Sally is taller than John but not as tall as Rick.
   D. Rick is taller than John and Sally.

(Heaton, 1988: 116)

2.2.1.4 Completion Items

Questions in the form of completion items require test takers to fill in the blanks with a word or short phrase, for example:

When we slide something along the floor, it will cause (1) ........ If something is very (2) ........, there will be a lot of friction between it and the ground. However, friction is (3) ........ when something rolls instead of (4) ........

(Heaton, 1988: 127)

2.2.1.5 Rearrangement Items

This type of test item requires the test takers to arrange jumbled sentences or paragraphs into the correct order. The example below requires test takers to write the correct arrangement in the provided boxes.

Rearrange these sentences into the correct order.
A. The dogs were separated from their human masters and were put into large fields.
B. For instance, they wagged their tails, they barked and growled, and they fawned on animals which possessed food.
C. Psychologists observing them found that they reacted towards each other in much the same way as they used to respond to people.
D. Recently an experiment was conducted with a group of dogs to find out how much their behavior was, in fact, simply a result of human environment.
E. Puppies born from these dogs and kept out of contact with people showed the same behavior patterns: they were extremely wild and afraid of human beings.
2.2.1.6 Cloze Procedure

Cloze test resembles completion test in a way that test takers are required to fill in the blanks. What makes it different is that cloze test is more mechanical in omitting the words to create the blank parts; usually the deletion is between every fifth and every tenth words. For example:

Fill the blanks with the appropriate word.

After the old man ………, his three lazy sons ……… out into the fields ……… began to dig. ‘I’ll ……… the first to find ……… place where the treasure ……… buried,’ cried the eldest ………

(Heaton, 1988: 132)

2.2.1.7 Open-ended and Miscellaneous Items

Open-ended questions are those “which elicit a completely subjective response on the part of the testees” (Heaton, 1988: 133). The kinds of answers we would like to elicit vary from just one word or a few sentences. Below are the examples:

Give the name of the town where the writer had a bad accident. (One-word answer)

You have a friend who is keen on cross-country running. Which event can he enter at the end of the month? (Few words answer)

According to the article, why do you think so few foreign cars have been imported into Singapore recently? (Sentence answer)

(Heaton, 1988: 133)

2.2.1.8 Cursory Reading

The term cursory reading test refers to tests of skimming and scanning ability. In skimming test, test takers are instructed to glance through the text for
the gist of contents (e.g. “What is the above passage about?”). Meanwhile, in scanning test, they are instructed to look for some specific information for the answer (e.g. “What does the community expect from holding the charity event?”) (Heaton, 1988: 134).

The kind of test item used in the research instrument for measuring reading comprehension in this research is multiple choice; it is taken from reading section in TOEFL test. Some previous similar researches used the same TOEFL reading test format to obtain the data of research subjects’ reading comprehension ability in the form of test scores (Anjomshoa, 2014; Kezhen, 2015; Rahim, 2015) as the test itself is deemed reliable and valid at least for 2 years. The multiple choice test is also practical in its distribution and scoring. Therefore, the researcher uses it for the current research.

2.3 Vocabulary

In its simplest meaning, vocabulary is defined as the knowledge of words’ meanings (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005). According to Neuman & Dwyer (2009, p. 385), “vocabulary refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively: words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)”. Those two definitions share the same conclusion that a person is said to have vocabulary knowledge if they know words and their meanings (as a word may have one form but holds different meanings) in a language, and is capable of using the words acquired in their communications. In learning vocabulary, there are literacy skills like “word identification (phonemic awareness plus decoding), morphological analysis (applying knowledge of suffixes and
prefixes to extend word knowledge), and simple dictionary skill” that, once acquired, could be used throughout life (Biemiller, 2003, p. 330). Once somebody is fluent in those three skills, improving their vocabulary knowledge means more of increasing their mental storage of words.

Vocabulary is essential for language use. This is proven by the high correlation between vocabulary (usually the measure of vocabulary breadth or size) and other measures of language proficiency, such as reading. For example, Laufer & Goldstein (2004) found that vocabulary knowledge contributed as much as 42.6% of the total variance in their research participants’ class grades, which included the participants’ performance the four language skills, grammatical accuracy, sociolinguistic appropriateness, and language fluency. This finding gives the implication that vocabulary plays a relatively significant role in the success of language learning.

2.3.1 Types of Vocabulary

According to Hiebert & Kamil (2005), there are two types of vocabulary, namely productive vocabulary and receptive vocabulary.

1. Productive vocabulary is the type of vocabulary that everyone uses in speaking and writing. This type of vocabulary develops since the moment somebody starts to learn words in their childhood, before the receptive vocabulary. Words in productive vocabulary are often frequently used and most tend to be less sophisticated. Productive, specifically oral, vocabularies are usually used for reading instructions that are designed for beginning
readers because it is easier for them to reach comprehension when the printed words presented are the written version of oral ones they already know.

2. Receptive vocabulary is the type of vocabulary that people can recognize and identify the meaning (even though just partially) when they are reading or listening, though they cannot use the vocabularies spontaneously. People’s storage of receptive vocabularies is bigger than the productive one; so when it comes to finding out a group of students’ vocabulary breadth, the one being measured is often their receptive vocabulary because it is deemed more representative of their vocabulary knowledge.

2.3.2 Types of Vocabulary Test

“A test of vocabulary measures students’ knowledge of the meaning of certain words as well as the patterns and collocations in which they occur“ (Heaton, 1988). The test item varies from multiple-choice item, sets (associated words), matching items, completion items, to more objective items.

2.3.2.1 Multiple Choice

This type of item commonly provides a picture or a word for test takers to choose the best synonym, antonym or definition among the selection of answers. Below is the example of item where test taker is required to select a synonym of italicized word in a sentence:

It’s rained *continuously* for two whole days.
A. without stopping
B. heavily
C. regularly
D. at odd moments

(Heaton, 1988)
2.3.2.2 Sets (Associated Words)

This type of item tests students’ familiarity with a range of associations, such as collocation, synonym and antonym. For instance:

Read the following list of four words. One word does not belong in the list. Put a circle round the odd word.
Son
Father
Boy
Brother

(Heaton: 1988)

2.3.2.3 Matching

In this type of test item, there are a bunch of words provided for students to match with each blank in a passage. For example:

Put the correct words into each blank space.
came about ran into pulled through got away
1 ‘I hear the prisoner ……. yesterday and the police are still looking for him.’
2 ‘We were all relieved that Mr. Benson ……. after the operation.’

(Heaton, 1988)

2.3.2.4 Completion

Completion type of item requires test takers to complete words in a passage which letters are already partially omitted, as in the following example:

Write each completed word on your answer sheet at the side of the appropriate number. (Each blank represents one letter.)
Snakes are one of the (1) d_m_n_ _t groups of (2) r_pt_ _ _ : there are at least 2000 different (3) Sp_c_ _s of snakes (4) sc_t_ _ _ _d over a wide area of the earth.

(Heaton, 1988)

2.3.2.5 More Objective Items

This type of item ranges from writing words in blank spaces with the correct form to questions of word definition. For instance:
Use the correct form of word on the left to fill the blank space.
CARE Be ……. when you cross the road.

Explain the meaning of the underlined word in the following phrase:
an archaic word

(Heaton, 1988)

Among the aforementioned test item types, the one that is used in one of the research instruments, Nation’s Vocabulary Size Test, is multiple choice format. The test items consist of a word, a short sentence containing the word, and four choices of answer; one correct answer and three distractors. A test taker needs to select the correct definition of the word among the four choices. Despite multiple choice item’s tendency to lack validity, the one used in the research instrument holds high validity because the overall items measure what the test is supposed to measure (written receptive vocabulary). It is also practical in a way that the test is easy to administer, not time-consuming, and easy to score and interpret the scores. Not only that, this multiple-choice test is also reliable (Beglar (2010) in Nation & Nguyen, 2011).

2.3.3 Vocabulary Size Test

Vocabulary Size Test, like its name, is a test that is designed to find out the participants’ or test takers’ written receptive vocabulary size (Nation & Nguyen, 2011). According to Milton (2009), there are two widely used designs of the receptive vocabulary size test. The first is vocabulary size test in a checklist form. It comes with advantages and disadvantages. This kind of test is advantageous in a way that it is efficient (easy and not time-consuming in the test construction process). The result is also said to be more reliable because the word sample size is large and the test is brief enough that participants would not be bored or lose
their concentration. The disadvantage, though, is the degree to test takers’ possibility of guessing the answers. The latter is a test design where test takers match the words with the available choices of translation or definition. It is a bit trickier than the first form because not only test takers are expected to know the meaning of the words in question, they also need to have already acquired all or at least most of the words in the provided choice of definitions to be able to give correct answers. The receptive vocabulary size test that will be the instrument for this research comes with the second test design. It is Nation’s (2011) Vocabulary Size Test, in which the test takers are to choose a correct definition of words among several available options.

Nation’s Vocabulary Size Test items consist of a word, a short sentence containing the word (the cue word is usually bolded), and four options of the word’s definition. The test taker has to select the correct definition among those four options. For example:

**DRAWER:** The **drawer** was empty.
- a. sliding box
- b. place where cars are kept
- c. cupboard to keep things cold
- d. animal house

According to Nation (2012), the test is available in 20,000 word frequency level and 14,000 word frequency level. The difference lies in the number of frequency levels, the number of test items and the scoring. The 20,000 version tests the test takers’ knowledge of vocabularies within 20 levels of word frequency. This version has 100 multiple choice test items; every 5 items represent each level of frequency. The maximum score which is also the diagnostic of the test takers’ vocabulary size is 20,000. The score is obtained by
multiplying the total number of correct answer with 200. Meanwhile, the 14.000 version consists of 140 multiple choice items; every 10 items represent each level of word frequency. The maximum score for this version of test is 14.000. Unlike the other version, the score is derived from multiplying the total number of correct answer with 100.

2.4 The Correlation between Vocabulary Size and Reading Comprehension Abilities

According to Gyllstad (2013), the variation of test takers’ reading comprehension scores can be explained from their scores of vocabulary size test. It implies that a person’s vocabulary size reflects onto how well their ability in reading comprehension is.

A test to measure vocabulary size and a test to measure reading comprehension ability were administered to EFL undergraduate students to find the correlation between the two language skills (Golkar & Yamini, 2007; Mehrpour et al, 2011; Anjomshoa, 2014; Kezhen, 2015). Upon data analysis by Pearson Product Moment, it is found that the students’ vocabulary size and reading comprehension ability correlated positively and significantly. The correlation thus indicates that a student’s reading comprehension ability is affected by their vocabulary size. Generally, this means that if the students have larger vocabulary size, their reading comprehension scores will be higher as well because they are capable of decoding and comprehending more words in a text. On the contrary, students with smaller vocabulary size will have more difficulty in decoding words, hence their lower reading comprehension test scores.