

## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING MOTIVATION TOWARD THE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AT TADIKA PURI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EAST JAKARTA**

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### ***Abstract***

*The objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and learning motivation toward the students' reading comprehension. The instruments include one questionnaire and two tests distributed to analyze the data quantitatively. In conclusion, this research found to both vocabulary knowledge ( $X_1$ ) and learning motivation ( $X_2$ ) contributed the reading comprehension ( $Y$ ). In other words, the more vocabulary the students have and the more their motivation in learning, the greater they comprehend the text would be. As a consequence, it suggests that the teachers teach the appropriate vocabulary to the students where these vocabulary will help them in comprehending the reading text.*

*Key words: Vocabulary knowledge, learning motivation, students' reading comprehension*

### **Hubungan antara Penguasaan Kosakata dan Motivasi Belajar Terhadap Pemahaman Teks Bacaan Siswa pada Sd Tadika Puri Jakarta Timur**

#### **Abstrak**

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui hubungan antara penguasaan kosa kata siswa dan motivasi belajar mereka terhadap kemampuan memahami bacaan. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah sebuah angket dan dua buah test yang dibagikan kepada responden sebagai bagian dari penelitian kuantitatif. Sebagai kesimpulan akhir, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa baik penguasaan kosakata maupun motivasi belajar secara bersama-sama mempengaruhi kemampuan siswa dalam memahami teks bacaan. Dengan kata lain, semakin banyak siswa menguasai kosakata dan semakin kuat juga motivasi belajarnya, maka akan semakin baiklah pemahaman mereka akan teks bacaan.

Kata Kunci: Penguasaan kosa kata, motivasi belajar, pemahaman teks bacaan siswa

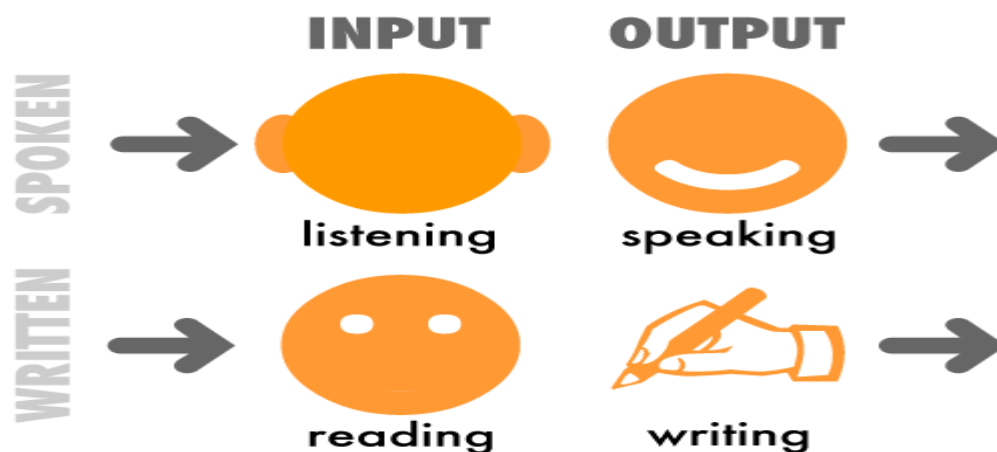
## A. INTRODUCTION

The teaching of English as a foreign language is now one of the most important subjects in most Indonesian elementary schools. The implementation of English has brought along the need to establish clear objectives that are different from the ones traditionally assigned to junior high school. In junior high school, the teaching based in the formal aspects of the language is still found, i.e. grammar. Elementary school teachers need to adopt different approaches as the age of the young learners make the teaching of formal aspects not advisable. As a result of this view, the government, the ministry of national education has decided to establish, as the main purpose of the English Foreign Language teaching, the development of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, the implementation of this approach has not been trouble-free where as many teachers insist on asking their students to understand every single word they listen to or read, or expect their students to write or speak without making the mistakes normally found in the process of a language acquisition.

When one thinks of English skills, the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing readily come to his mind. Of course other skills such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and spelling play a role in effective English communication. The amount of attention the teacher gives to each skill area will depend both the level of the students as well as their situational needs. Generally beginners, especially those who are non literate, benefit most from listening and speaking instruction with relatively little work on reading and writing.

As fluency increases, the amount of reading and writing in the lessons may also increase. With advanced learners, up to half of the lesson time can be spent on written skills, although the students may wish to keep their focus toward oral communication if it is a greatly needed.

The following is a picture of the four skills in English to describe:



Picture 1.1. The Classification of Four Skills in English

From the picture above, the four language skills are related to each other in two ways: *First*, the direction of communication (in or out), and *second*, the method of communication (spoken or written). Input is sometimes called "reception" and output is sometimes called "production". Spoken is also known as "oral". Each of the "four skills" itself composes of sub-skills. Grabe<sup>1</sup> notes six in particular in the case of reading, these are: 1) the perceptual automatic recognition skill; 2) linguistic skills; 3) knowledge and skills of discourse structure and organization; 4) knowledge of the world; 5) synthetic and critical evaluation skills; 6) meta linguistic knowledge and skills. It is arguable that these sub-skills are, to a greater or lesser extent, also sub-skills of writing, speaking and listening. This suggests that basic strategies used are similar, if not exactly the same, in each of the four skills.

By reading, especially reading comprehension, one is considered having much knowledge, know everything and free from deceit. One will be a man who does not know anything and left behind, if he or she is lack of reading. Recently, most of information and knowledge are available in newspapers, magazines, books etc. Russell states that books can contain tremendous ideas and can be numerous sources of ideas. Hence, reading is vital as a way to get

information, knowledge or ideas. Further, Ramli states that it is true that some information can be obtained through listening *e.g.* seminars, lectures, etc, but it is not as wide as through reading. Certainly, reading is essential in today's life, since those who are considered powerful are those who have much information, and to get much information reading may be the most effective way that can be used. Learning to read in a second language, especially in adulthood, may be a different process than learning to read a native language in childhood. Reading is an intensive process in which the eye quickly moves to assimilate text. It is necessary to understand visual perception and eye movement in order to understand the reading process.

The writer observed the students of Tadika Puri Elementary School at East Jakarta for last seven months during the teaching learning process of English in the classroom where he found that there are some factors influenced their reading comprehension such as vocabulary knowledge and learning motivation. The writer realized in the term of vocabulary knowledge where the students are still difficult to comprehend, determine the meaning of unfamiliar words, and answer the questions from the text because their vocabulary knowledge is little. While, in the term of learning motivation, the students are also still difficult to internalize the reading text when they do not need anything from the text that they read.

As a result, there are some factors assumed contributing to the students' achievement in reading comprehension *i.e.* students' vocabulary knowledge and learning motivation. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether there is any relationship between vocabulary knowledge, learning motivation and students' reading comprehension

## **B. DISCUSSION**

### **1. Vocabulary Knowledge**

There are some definitions of vocabulary knowledge such as Laufer and Goldstein defined it as the knowledge of discrete word items independent of context in which they appear, while Qian defined vocabulary knowledge as the instrument to assess reading comprehension, in addition, Shanker also defined it as the ability to go from the printed form of a word to its meaning.

One method of measuring the general level of a student's vocabulary is to look at the results of the vocabulary subsection of a standardized test. When a standardized exam contains a subsection that measures the student's vocabulary knowledge, the student's performance on that section of the exam is reported in norms. Those norms can be used to estimate the student's general level of vocabulary knowledge. For example, a common norm used to describe performance on standardized exams is called a grade equivalent score. This score is the grade level of the students in the norm group who performed the same on the vocabulary exam as your student performed on the vocabulary exam. This and other norms can be used to get an idea of the student's general vocabulary level. Some care needs to be taken when using the results of standardized achievement tests. The most widely used format is the multiple-choice measure in which the student selects, from among several choices, a short definition or a synonym for a target word. Such tests usually measure vocabulary knowledge at level 3, rather than the student's full continuum of word knowledge. If you use such a test, examine the students' raw scores to see if they are above a level that could have been made by chance guessing. A number of standardized reading achievement tests may allow a student who may essentially not read at all to score well into the norms and to

have a vocabulary achievement score well above her actual vocabulary ability. Some students do poorly on standardized tests of vocabulary knowledge because they lack sufficient decoding ability. If a student does much better on an individually administered oral vocabulary test, you may then assume that a lack of adequate word-attack skills is contributing to her low score on the standardized test.

Another method of testing students' general knowledge of vocabulary is to ask them the meaning of several words that appear in textbooks at their grade level. This will give you an estimate of how well the students' vocabulary knowledge matches their grade level. However, it will not allow you to compare the vocabulary achievement of your students with those in the country as a whole. If you are a teacher in a school with a large group of students from a low socioeconomic level, this method of testing vocabulary knowledge may give you "tunnel vision," because students with only a normal vocabulary may appear very good in comparison to other students in the class. When there is a need to determine if a student knows the meaning of a specific word rather than her general vocabulary level, just ask her to tell you what the word means. Unfortunately, that is difficult to do with a large group of students. Two methods that can be used to determine if a group of students knows the meanings of a specific set of words are a self-check assessment or a multiple-choice assessment. In the self-check assessment, the student simply looks at a list of words and places a check mark by the words of which she knows the meaning. In the multiple-choice assessment, a teacher provides the target word and a choice of several possible meanings or synonyms.

The writer concludes that the vocabulary knowledge is a bank of words which go together with their meaning to comprehend a reading.

## 2. Learning Motivation

There are some definitions of learning motivation such as Elly defined the learning motivation as the arguments to study, while Ruohotie defined learning motivation as an individual's desire to work towards a learning goal, in addition, Sam<sup>24</sup> also defined it as an energy within the person in performance by practicing learning.

As far as foreign language learning and teaching are concerned, the teachers know that the students have something in common and the teachers usually deal with students in groups. Yet ultimately language learning is not learned by groups, but by individuals. Therefore, individual differences affect foreign language learning a lot, such as different motivation, different aptitude and intelligence, different learning strategies and even different personality, age, sex and empathy etc. Teachers who create warm and accepting atmospheres will promote persistent effort and favorable attitudes toward learning. This strategy will be successful in children and in adults. Interesting visual aids, such as booklets, posters, or practice equipment, motivate learners by capturing their attention and curiosity. In a general learning situation, self-motivation without rewards will not succeed. Students must find satisfaction in learning based on the understanding that the goals are useful to them or, less commonly, based on the pure enjoyment of exploring new things. Some individuals such as children of certain ages and some adults have little capacity for internal motivation and must be guided and reinforced constantly. The use of incentives is based on the principle that learning occurs more effectively when the student experiences feelings of satisfaction. Caution should be exercised in using external rewards when they are not absolutely necessary. Their use may be followed by a decline in internal motivation. Sometimes the student's readiness to learn comes with time, and the teacher's role is to encourage its development. If a

desired change in behavior is urgent, the teacher may need to supervised directly to ensure that the desired behavior occurs. If a student is not ready to learn, he or she may not be reliable in following instructions and therefore must be supervised and have the instructions repeated again and again. In general, the best organized material makes the information meaningful to the individual. One method of organization includes relating new tasks to those already known. Other ways to relay meaning are to determine whether the persons being taught understand the final outcome desired and instruct them to compare and contrast ideas. The basic learning principle involved is that success is more predictably motivating than is failure. Ordinarily, students will choose activities of intermediate uncertainty rather than those that are difficult or easy for goals of high value there is less tendency to choose more difficult conditions. Having learners assist in defining goals increases the probability that they will understand them and want to reach them. However, students sometimes have unrealistic notions about what they can accomplish. Possibly they do not understand the precision with which a skill must be carried out or have the depth of knowledge to master some material. To identify realistic goals, teachers must be skilled in assessing a student's readiness or a student's progress toward goals.

The writer concludes that learning motivation as the reasons why the students learn something or a strong desire within the student that to be the reason to study something. However, motivation is so necessary for learning that strategies should be planned to organize a continuous and interactive motivational dynamic for maximum effectiveness. The general principles of motivation are interrelated. A single teaching action can use many of them simultaneously. It should be said that an enormous gap exists between knowing that learning must be motivated and identifying the specific motivational components of any particular act. The teachers



must focus on learning patterns of motivation for an individual or group, with the realization that errors will be common.

### 3. Students' Reading Comprehension

There are some definitions of reading comprehension such as Mayer defined it as techniques for improving students success in extracting useful knowledge from text, while, Partnership of Reading defined reading comprehension as understanding a text that is read, or the process of constructing meaning from a text.

Reading comprehension is understanding a text that is read, or the process of "constructing meaning" from a text. Comprehension is a "construction process" because it involves all of the elements of the reading process working together as a text is read to create a representation of the text in the reader's mind. Reading comprehension is the degree to which we understand what we read.

When we pick up the newspaper and read about the latest election results, call up a web site and read directions on installing a new light switch, or grab a novel off the shelf of the local bookstore, we are using our reading comprehension skills to gather information from text. Reading comprehension is a tricky topic, and century old debates about what it entails, how it happens, and how to best facilitate it still rage in academic circles. However, everyone agrees that reading comprehension is the ultimate end-goal of reading. If we do not read to understand, then we read for nothing. Reading comprehension is tied to listening comprehension in a basic and intuitive way. Most people perceive reading as a process of taking coded, written language and transforming it into decoded, spoken language. Although the details of this remain unresolved, and many experts question that the process involves so simple a translation, it is fair

to say that for young children up to second grade, this is precisely what happens. For primary grade students, reading really is a direct decoding of written text into spoken words, which are then processed as spoken language via the same mechanisms that make listening comprehension possible. Reading comprehension is a complex intellectual process involving a number of abilities. The two major abilities involve word meanings and reasoning with verbal concepts. It was emphasized that comprehension involves thinking, and as there are various level of thinking, so there are various levels of comprehension. Reading comprehension skills increase the pleasure and effectiveness of reading. Strong reading comprehension skills help in all the other subjects and in the personal and professional lives. The high stake tests that control advancement through elementary, middle, and high school and that determine entrance to college are in large parts, a measure of reading comprehension skills. And while there are test preparation courses which will provide a few short-cuts to improve test-taking strategies. In short, building reading comprehension skills requires a long term strategy in which all the reading skills areas (phonics, fluency, vocabulary) will contribute to success. Various methods are used to improve reading comprehension that include the training of the ability to self assess comprehension, actively test comprehension using a set of questions, and by improving metacognition. Theoretical teaching (teaching conceptual) and a better knowledge of language can also prove of immense health. Practice plays more pivotal part in development and honing the skills of reading comprehension. Self assessment with help of elaborative interrogation and summarizing helps.

Effective reading comprehension is the culmination of mastering vocabulary, phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension skills. Person having good comprehension skills is considered as active reader, with an ability to interact with the words by understanding its complete meaning

and the concept behind it. Thus skill of reading comprehension distinguishes an active reader from a passive reader who just read the text without getting its meaning.

The writer concludes the reading comprehension as a process of thinking where one selects a particular information and ideas from a text and the purpose of reading for the students is to connect the ideas on the page to what they already know. If they don't know anything about a subject, then pouring words of text into their mind is like pouring water into their hand. They don't retain much.

Similarly, if the students like sports, then reading the sports page is easy. The students have a framework in their mind for reading, understanding and storing information.

#### 4. Results

In collecting the data, the writer uses one questioner about learning motivation, one vocabulary test and one reading comprehension test. From the questioner about motivation, the writer gets the score of students' motivation in learning whether high or low. The higher of the score, the more students intend to be as high motivation and vice versa.

The second instrument was the vocabulary test which had been made by the English teacher. The numbers of the items are 20 numbers and each of items has one score. So, the total scores are 20. The higher of the score, the more students intend to be as excellent in acquiring vocabulary and vice versa.

The third instrument was the reading comprehension test which had made by the English teacher. The numbers of the items are only 20 numbers and

each of items has one score. So, the total score is 20. The higher of the score, the more students intend to be as excellent in comprehending the reading and vice versa.

In short, there were three kinds of score. They were score of vocabulary test, score of learning motivation and score of reading. Then, all the data were analyzed by statistical calculation of SPSS.

In analyzing the data, the writer used some formulas. A multiple regression was used to analyze the relationship within all variables and also to predict the dependent variable on the basis of the independent. But before the computing the multiple regression among all variables, there should be a significant test and linier regression test within variable  $X_1$  (vocabulary knowledge) and  $X_2$  (learning motivation) to variable  $Y$  (students' reading comprehension) to find the formula. The formula for linier regression is:

$$Y = a+b.X$$

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Then, after the formula within  $X$  to  $Z$  and  $Y$  to  $Z$  has already found, the multiple regression test can be run. And the formula for multiple regression is:

$$Y = a+b.X+b.X$$

Finally, the formula of multiple regression was used for computing the significant of multiple regression and multiple coefficient correlation as well. Then, the last step in analyzing data was drawing a conclusion that there is a positive or negative relationship among variables.

The writer used single linear regression analysis and multiple linear regression analysis to test all the hypotheses where the first hypotheses is

whether there is relationship between vocabulary knowledge and students' reading comprehension, the second hypotheses is whether there is relationship between learning motivation and students' reading comprehension, and the third hypotheses is whether there is relationship between vocabulary knowledge and learning motivation altogether toward students' reading comprehension.

There is a positive significant relationship between vocabulary knowledge ( $X_1$ ) and students' reading comprehension ( $Y$ ). The result is supported by the number of coefficient correlation of  $X_1$  to  $Y$  ( $r_{x_1,y}$ ) is 0.857. The number means the very strong relationship. The contribution of  $X_1$  to  $Y$  is 73.44% or significant.

There is a positive significant relationship between learning motivation ( $X_2$ ) and the students' reading comprehension ( $Y$ ). The result is supported by the number of coefficient correlation between  $X_2$  to  $Y$  ( $r_{x_2,y}$ ) is 0.828 which mean there is a positive relationship between the variables too. The contribution of  $X_2$  to  $Y$  is 68.6% or significant.

There is a positive significant relationship between vocabulary knowledge ( $X_1$ ) and learning motivation ( $X_2$ ) altogether toward the students' reading comprehension ( $Y$ ). The result is supported by the result of the multiple regression test where the multiple coefficient correlation ( $R$ ) is 0.921. In other words, because of the result is almost 1.00 so it means that there is a positive and significant between vocabulary knowledge and learning motivation altogether toward students' reading comprehension. The influence of  $X_1$  and  $X_2$  to  $Y$  is 84.9% or significant.

The partial coefficient correlation is tested to get the result about which independent variables most influence the dependent variable. As a result,

the vocabulary knowledge ( $X_1$ ) with  $R_{yx1}=0.857$  contributes more than learning motivation ( $X_2$ ) with  $R_{yx2}=0.828$ .

### C. CONCLUSION

The vocabulary knowledge and the learning motivation are important in reading comprehension. Two of factors really influenced and cannot be ignorant. However, the vocabulary knowledge takes more important place than the learning motivation to make the students comprehend the text. In other words, the learning motivation helps the students in comprehending the text if only they have a lot of vocabularies that they used in comprehending the text.

The result of this research is expected to be beneficial for all English teachers who teach in class. The result showed that between vocabulary knowledge and learning motivation are important in comprehending the text.

The implication of vocabulary knowledge ( $X_1$ ) and learning motivation ( $X_2$ ) toward the students' reading comprehension ( $Y$ ) are in the following:

1. Vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in readers' abilities to understand the reading process and to effectively apply the complex skills necessary to understand what is read. The studies that dealt with reading vocabulary (i.e., vocabulary contained in reading and related to reading comprehension) revealed a variety of specific instructional strategies that produced effective gains in readers' acquisition and understandings of word meaning where a student is to become very good at comprehending (i.e., understanding and making meaning of) what he reads when he meets two principal learning requirements: (1) know words; and (2) be able to reason with physical text. The former is referred to in related literature as vocabulary, and the latter as text comprehension. These words sound simple enough on the surface. However, as the two cornerstone requirements of an area as complex and elusive as reading

comprehension, both harbor deep and intermingled implications in terms of how the reader processes and learns information, and significant challenges in terms of how the teacher teaches for this learning. Regardless, they are the most desired objectives if the teachers seek to help students improve their reading comprehension. Children are better able to comprehend texts when they are taught to make connections between what they know and what they are reading. Good comprehension instruction helps them make these connections more effectively. Vocabulary knowledge is an important part of reading comprehension, and good vocabulary instruction involves children actively in learning word meanings, as well as relating words to contexts and other known words. Teaching about words (including morphology) improves children's comprehension.

2. Learning motivation plays an important role also to help the students in understanding the reading where this study revealed that the beginning readers had mostly positive views about reading and no differences in motivation were associated with income level, ethnicity, or gender. Learning a language is difficult task. Several contextual factors, i.e. L1 proficiency, level of similarity between L1 and L2, and attitudinal and motivational factors make L2 learning a difficult process. Motivation is an important factor in L2 achievement and attitude is more than ability. It provides the main incentive to initiate learning a foreign language and later the determination to preserve and sustain the learning process. The importance of motivation in human activity has been recognized in the field of social psychology and education for decades. As far as second foreign language learning is concerned motivation is believed to be at least as important as language aptitude in predicting second language achievement. Children's motivation was not associated with frequency of storybook reading or library visits. Frequent use of basic skills books was

negatively associated with motivation. This study showed importance of measures other than “quantitative indices of home literacy experiences” for the development of motivation for reading. Parents, who believe that reading is pleasurable, convey a perspective that is appropriated by their children. Parents may directly convey this to children through their words or only indirectly through literacy experiences. Young children who enjoy reading do it more often and they tend to become skilled at it. Poor readers, by contrast, often display low motivation to read. One possible explanation of this is that reading skill and reading motivation influence each other. This study was reviewed addressing the relationship between young children's reading and competency belief or goal orientations. Results indicate that reading skills and motivation correlate, and support the possibility of a bidirectional relationship between the two. Researchers, practitioners, and parents may need to target both reading skill and motivation to best help poor readers become proficient. There are many reasons for students lacking motivation in reading. However, a wide variety of teaching materials and teaching techniques help provide for differences in students' ability to learn. Supplementary materials like newspapers, magazines, games, films, and audio and video tapes offer additional ways for students to acquire information. Any medium which stimulates students' interests and involvement is worthy of consideration. By asking students to complete projects at the end of their reading assignments, students may see a reason for reading. For example, developing a mural, making a diorama, or constructing a model encourages students to read a text for practical purposes. This is particularly successful when students are exploring subjects that are of interest to them. Projects or oral presentations also provide a chance for students to collaborate with others. Group work may reduce the apprehension poor readers frequently experience and motivate them to use language socially and purposefully.



However, teaching the appropriate vocabularies deal with the readings and improving the students' motivation are the best strategies to help students in comprehending the text.

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