

## **THE EFFECTS OF READING INTEREST AND VOCABULARY MASTERY ON STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION**

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**Abstract:** The research aims to show that 1) there are any effects of reading interest and vocabulary mastery jointly towards students' reading comprehension, 2) there is a significant effect of reading interest towards students' reading comprehension, 3) there is a significant effect of vocabulary mastery towards students' reading comprehension. The research method is a survey with a simple random sampling for 61 students using a questionnaire used for data collection. The research results show that; 1) There are significant effects of reading interest and vocabulary mastery on students' reading comprehension. It is proved by the score of Sig 0,000 < 0,05 and  $F_0 = 63,019$ . 2) There is a significant effect of reading interest on student's reading comprehension. It is proved by the score of Sig 0,011 < 0,05 and  $t_0 = 2,614$ . 3) There is a significant effect of vocabulary mastery on student's reading comprehension. It is proven by the score of Sig 0,000 < 0,05 and  $t_0 = 6,148$ .

**Keywords:** reading interest, vocabulary mastery, reading comprehension

### **Introduction**

The industry 4.0 era becomes a very significant era for many developing countries globally, especially Asian countries, to take part in it and compete with others. It is a turning point for those countries to keep up with this era, specifically for Indonesia. This era initiates Indonesia to improve its potency for better welfare. Those countries must have various skills to fit for any professions that this 4.0 asked for. Communication skills are critical for cross-cultural understanding in today's rapidly changing world. Language evolves as a unifying mode of communication. English surpasses Mandarin as the most widely spoken language not just in Asia but also around the world. Many countries apply English as a mandatory subject at school. Wilhelm Von Humboldt (Chaer, 2002: 51) describes, "if someone in society wants to change his point of view, he needs to understand the language in the society." Thus, as a communication tool, English will always be the world standard language that students must have. As a result, students can be superior competitive figures in any university and profession. To fully understand English, one must be able to analyze sentences by mastering vocabulary. It is essential because we can deliver what we think to others and easily understand what we say.

Vocabulary mastery is the primary condition to arrange a sentence and to understand the idea of someone's talk. Students will find it is hard to understand if they have lack vocabulary mastery. The quality of communicating is based on vocabulary mastery. Without good vocabulary mastery, students find obstacles to interact. The communication skill depends on the quality and the quantity of vocabulary mastery. The more vocabulary students have, the more vocabulary mastery they get. Mastering vocabulary is vital to master a language. (Rofi'uddin, 1995: 20). The only way to improve vocabulary mastery in understanding the English text is to improve their vocabulary. They have to be encouraged and motivated to understand more vocabulary by reading many texts, articles, books, novels. David (1995: 118) says, "the enrichment of vocabulary is an important factor in the second language acquisition." Another expert, Byre (1980: 156), says that "vocabulary is the vital aspect of language." Tarigan has



described the same opinion: "language acquisition is determined by the number of vocabulary items the students have." According to these statements and opinions, it is concluded that by having vocabulary mastery and good grammar mastery, the language students will find it hard to study a language.

The improvement of students' vocabulary mastery is significant started from elementary school to senior high school. One crucial step to improving vocabulary is adding more activities about reading comprehension, analyzing text, translating words and sentences. A word those students understand can expand to be several new meaningful vocabularies. This situation can increase the number of students' vocabulary. By knowing many vocabularies, students will understand the contextual and situational meaning of the sentence (Chaer, 1989: 64).

Reading is a process of getting, observing, understanding every single meaningful concept from the writer's text. Interest is someone's desire for something they like. It also means an intensive tendency to an important object, in this case, an interesting object that attracts someone. An attractive object takes one's attention, so it creates interest. This interest is formed because of motivation and curiosity to know, get, and dig in-depth information. Reading interest is someone's desire toward text or article, so he is curious to read and know any sign or symbol he likes.

Learning to read in elementary school includes pre-learning to read and learning advanced reading or comprehension. Students learn at first grade in the early stage of learning to read, while at second grade, students learn advanced reading, and students learn from third to sixth. As part of learning to read in elementary school, reading comprehension is a skill to get the message or the information contained in the discourse text to understand the meaning conveyed by the author through the text. This is in line with Munandar's (1992) opinion, which says the ability is essentially a power to act due to nature and exercise. So, the ability of a person is not directly but through the process and practice. Of course, improving the ability should be done based on the traits possessed by that person. Lerner (in Abdurrahman, 2003; Soedarso, 1989; Rahim, 2009) said that literacy is the basis for studies master. If a child cannot read, then the child will have difficulty studying other fields of study. Therefore, the ability to read is essential for students to learn. Reading does not only perceive the text but also absorb the meaning contained in it, followed by the ability to respond or react to what is reading, which produces understanding. According to Lindgren (1976) and Abbas (2006), reading is an activity to capture the reading of information expressed or implied in literal, inferential, evaluative, and creative reading comprehension by drawing on the experience of learning to read. Several factors influence success in reading. Ebel in Harras (1999) factors that affect the level of reading comprehension depend on (1) students, (2) the family, (3) culture, and (4) the situation of the school. Students must be concerned about their learning, and the parents support their learning by giving guidance home learning that includes learning the cultures. Furthermore, the school takes a critical role in facilitating a convenient situation and tools for the students.

Based on the explanation above, it is evident that the more vocabulary students know, the more skill they get in using language, spoken, writing, and understanding contextual meaning in text or article. A vocabulary is some words in a language that students use in speaking and writing. Vocabulary in a language is changing and increasing. Therefore, based on the definition above, I conclude that vocabulary mastery is an essential part of studying the language. Students must have sufficient vocabulary to learn what they read and hear, what they want to say, and write with the right words and sentences to get the meaning.

Students often face some difficulties in learning English and in answering questions in English exams. Generally, it is hard for students to understand the English exam questions, not only in School exams and National exams. The students' main problem is the lack of vocabulary mastery. One factor is less reading activity, less initiative to find out the meaning in the dictionary. The use of a dictionary can add the number of vocabulary mastery.

According to Burns (in Farida Rahim's book, 2007: 1), reading skill is the last part to increase one's quality. Therefore, not only students but people must have a considerable interest in reading to increase their self-quality. Reading and understanding text in a foreign language, in this case, English, has a vital role in increasing knowledge. First, students' self-motivation is a must to learn vocabulary. Then, students can start reading some articles they like. It can be a beginning to create a comfortable situation for the students to read longer than before. It can also trigger their curiosity to find out various vocabularies in the text or article.

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Tarigan (1987: 7) says that reading is a process carried out by students to get a message through a media called vocabulary. According to Tarigan (2008), reading comprehension is the kind of reading that aims to understand the reading. Reading comprehension means examining the reading material more carefully to assess the situation, value, function, and affect readings. Readers need to use all its capabilities in order to digest the contents of the reading. To arrive at the stage of understanding, one must have a work of reason and the power of high abstraction. He can grasp and understand the contents of the texts that lead to their satisfaction. Therefore, reading comprehension becomes the true purpose of teaching reading. As noted by Candaces (1991), reading comprehension is the ultimate goal of the reading process.

Besides, according to Jasir Burhan (1971: 90), "reading is an action based on coordination of several skills, such as observing, understanding, and thinking." In Tampubolon's opinion (1990: 5), "reading is a part of four elements of basic language skills. Reading is also a component of written communication".

Moreover, another factor that contributes to improving students' reading comprehension is the students' vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary for students of class V is essential. The mastery of vocabulary will make it easier for students to understand various reading materials such as textbooks, newspapers, magazines, novels, and other writings. In addition, students do not only know these words from reading or hearing from others, but someday students can productively use the vocabulary that has been known in writing and oral communication.

There are two critical components to learning English: vocabulary knowledge and reading interest, as explained previously. This piques the writer's curiosity in putting together a thesis. The article's title is "The Effects of Reading Interest and Vocabulary Mastery on Reading Comprehension in Students." (A Survey at Private Junior High Islamic Schools in Bogor City). The writer chose private Junior High Islamic School in Bogor because the English subject score is under the standard school score. The sample schools are MTs Bahrul Ulum, MTs Assa'dah, and MTs Al Islamiyah.

## Method

The method of the research is the quantitative method. According to Sugiyono (2012: 7), the quantitative method emphasizes objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, and statistical data using computational techniques. The dependent variable (Y) in the research is Students' Reading Comprehension. Independent variables in the research are Reading Interest (X1) and Vocabulary Mastery (X2). The source of data is taken from the result of a test, questionnaire.

The research instrument is a measuring instrument used in collecting correct data and information. The tool used is a questionnaire. Arranging instruments is essential, but collecting data is even more critical. Reading interest is a person's desire to read because he is interested in the subject he likes. The interest leads the person to be happier to read more. Reading interest is a questionnaire value from students' response to something they like, studying, and social environment as a center of culture and learning.

Vocabulary mastery becomes an essential part of any activities related to language learning, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating text. The more vocabulary a person has, the better level of communication a person has, whether written or spoken. Vocabulary mastery consists of expressive vocabulary mastery. This expressive vocabulary mastery can be used for speaking, writing, listening, and reading activities. To get the data for vocabulary mastery, an objective test such as a multiple-choice test is done. The test is done to assess some aspects there are: (1) responding to the questions from the conversation, (2) defining the synonym and antonym, (3) defining the type of text, (4) changing the form of a sentence, (5) matching the question to the answer.

Reading comprehension is a process of interpretation. It requires the reader to interpret actively what he reads. The essential of reading comprehension is to understand the content of the text. Therefore, reading comprehension needs language skills. To know the ability of students' reading comprehension, the researcher gives an objective test. It is a multiple-choice test.

In Technique for analyzing data, it has been collected, and all the data are tabulated and analyzed to answer this research question. The tabulation and analysis are conducted using the program SPSS 20.0. This descriptive analysis will then employ the data presentation technique in frequency distribution



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tables, polygon graphs, and histograms for each variable. All variables will be tabulated and analyzed to measure the center of tendency and the position of mean, median and mode, and the range of variance, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. To get accurate results, the calculation of descriptive statistics in this research uses SPSS 20.0.

## **Results and Discussion**

The research shows that; 1) There are significant effects of reading interest and vocabulary mastery on students' reading comprehension at Private Junior High Islamic Schools in Bogor City. It is proved by the score of Sig 0,000 < 0,05 and  $F_0 = 63,019$ . 2) There is a significant effect of reading interest on student's reading comprehension in Private Junior High Islamic Schools in Bogor City. It is proved by the score of Sig 0,011 < 0,05 and  $t_0 = 2,614$ . 3) There is a significant effect of vocabulary mastery towards student's reading comprehension at Private Junior High Islamic Schools in Bogor City. It is proven by the score of Sig 0,000 < 0,05 and  $t_0 = 6,148$ .

Regression analysis results enable the calculation to reach equation of regression line  $\hat{Y} = -7,755 + 0,357 X_1 + 0,626 X_2$ . The jointly significant effects of Reading Interest and Vocabulary Mastery contribute 68,5% towards Reading comprehension. This means that an everyone-point increase in reading interest will increase students' reading comprehension by 0,357 or 35.7 %. Every one-point increase of vocabulary mastery will increase students' reading comprehension by 0,626 or 62,6 percent. In conclusion, this result reveals that both independent variables ( $X_1$  and  $X_2$ ) significantly affect the dependent variable (Y).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, reading is an important activity in any language learning. One of its importance is to extend our knowledge of the language. This knowledge consists of many aspects, including vocabulary. Therefore, cultivating reading interest can be a good method of achieving good vocabulary mastery. Students who have good vocabulary mastery may have good language skills, in this case reading. When doing the reading activity, students need the vocabulary to interpret ideas or messages. So, they need to have good vocabulary mastery. In other words, the reading habit variable and vocabulary mastery variable can highly influence recount writing skills. With a high reading interest, students can more significantly increase their vocabulary mastery because they read more.

Every individual who applies English cannot be separated from the interest in reading and mastering good vocabulary, reading as a field in honing one's ability to add knowledge in grammar, as well as in reading adding to the space of human thought to increase the amount of vocabulary that continues to grow with a large amount. According to Mudjito (1993: 86), interest in reading is encouragement or motivation to read. Encouragement can be a trigger for growth in reading motivation in a person. While there are some good ways to read, such as Moyle's theory (1973: 102) which says that: "One of the characteristics of a good reader is a person who likes to read, skilled in word recognition techniques, understanding reading and in adjusting reading techniques in reading goals." It concludes that the contribution of the reading interest variable towards reading comprehension is 18,33%.

From the research results above, it can be concluded that the effect of reading interest positively affects students' reading comprehension at Private Junior High Islamic Schools in Bogor City. This is because reading interest becomes the last term for students to be good in language. Therefore, a student is higher reading interest has the high skill of reading comprehension a student has.

Mudjito (1993: 86) *"Reading interest is a motivation to read. A reading interest motivates a person to read more. The more interest a person has, the more motivation he also has to read more and more. So, motivation and feeling affect interest. Contrary, if one does not have any motivation or likeness feeling in reading, he will be lazy. Nothing empowers the motivation to read more. This encourages someone to read."*

Guthrie & Wigfield (2000: 403): "reading interest has been linked and related to vocabulary development, comprehension, fluency as well as general intellectual development." According to them, reading interest relates to vocabulary development, comprehension, and general intellectual development. Reading interest can improve students' vocabulary skills and development. It also develops students' general intellectual. Because by reading, students can get many information and knowledge at the same time.



From the hypothesis test, it can be seen that  $sig = 0,011 < 0,05$  and  $t_o = 2,614$ . However, the contribution of reading interest towards reading comprehension can be proved below:

$$KD = \beta_{xy} \times \text{Partial Correlation} \times 100\%$$

$$KD = 0,623 \times 0,805 \times 100\% = 50,15\%$$

It concludes that the contribution of vocabulary mastery variable towards reading comprehension is 50,15%. From the research results above, it can be concluded that vocabulary mastery has a positive effect on students' reading comprehension at Private Junior High Islamic Schools in Bogor City. This also indicates that the contribution of vocabulary mastery to students' reading comprehension is more dominant than reading interest. This result proves that vocabulary mastery can help students increase their writing skills so that they are encouraged to be more productive in writing English.

From the results of existing research and theories, it can be concluded that the mastery of vocabulary is one of the main requirements in understanding English reading. Therefore, a person's vocabulary is a benchmark in skillfully receiving or conveying language, reading, and writing in an English text.

Vocabulary mastery becomes the most crucial component for students to deliver and receive information. The mastery of an increasing number of vocabularies impacts students' knowledge in understanding English text. It also stimulates students to read various books in English to gain broader and deeper knowledge about various disciplines.

Vocabulary mastery is vital in language; the more affluent the vocabulary possessed by someone, the more excellent the person's skills in language (Tarigan, 1989). Fahrudin and Jamaris (2005) suggest that master vocabulary is divided into receptive and productive vocabulary mastery. (1) Receptive mastery is the process of understanding what is said by others; receptive is defined as passive mastery. (2) Productive mastery is the process of communicating ideas, thoughts, feelings through linguistic forms.

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## Conclusions

Based on the description and analysis of the research data, the researcher arrives at the following conclusions: 1) There are any significant effects of reading interest and vocabulary mastery jointly towards student's reading comprehension at Private Junior High Islamic Schools in Bogor City. It is proved by the score of  $Sig\ 0,000 < 0,05$  and  $F_0 = 63,019$ . This result also reveals that the regression is significant. In conclusion, it can be said that the better reading interest and vocabulary mastery students have, the better their reading comprehension is. 2) There is a significant effect of reading interest on student's reading comprehension at Private Junior High Islamic Schools in Bogor City. It is proved by the score of  $Sig\ 0,011 < 0,05$  and  $t_o = 2,614$ . This result reveals a significant effect. Therefore, we can conclude that the better students' reading interest is, the better their reading comprehension will be. 3) There is a significant effect of vocabulary mastery towards student's reading comprehension at Private Junior High Islamic Schools in Bogor City. It is proved by the score of  $Sig\ 0,000 < 0,05$  and  $t_o = 6,148$ . This result reveals a significant effect. So, it can be concluded that the better vocabulary mastery students possess, the better their reading comprehension is.

Based on the result of the research, the researcher would like to offer the following suggestions: 1) Reading interest has a positive and significant effect on the students' reading comprehension. Therefore, the researcher suggests that all teachers should encourage their students to read every day. Giving great motivation to students to read will affect their language skills. The researcher also suggests to all students to start reading every day. They can read everything they like because it will give them more information or new knowledge. With a high reading interest, students will have a higher motivation to read. More often, they read that it will be easier for students to understand and grasp information from what they read because of their high reading interest. 2) Vocabulary mastery also has a positive and significant effect on student's reading comprehension. All teachers need to develop their students' vocabularies by giving them more class activities or assignments. It is also essential for the students to regularly practice their vocabularies. Good mastery of vocabulary helps the learners express their ideas



precisely. By having many stocks of words, they will comprehend reading materials, catch someone's talk, give a response, speak fluently and write some kinds of topics. 3) The variables of reading interest and vocabulary mastery have positive and significant effects on students' reading comprehension. Therefore, the role of the teacher in motivating and encouraging students to make reading their habit and practice and develop their vocabulary is crucial. Later, it is this kind of motivation that will affect the students' achievement. Not only teachers, but schools also have to provide sufficient facilities to support students' reading interests. They support it by providing many kinds of books, magazines, dictionaries. 4) As an academic suggestion, the result of the research must be further evaluated and assessed. Further or specific research should be taken into consideration. Nonetheless, this research can be a reference to other researchers for the subsequent research.

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