

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, the problems that are being studied, purpose of the study and its significance to other parties and the definitions of terms that are used in this study.

1.1 Background of the Study

English is taught as the first foreign language in schools in Indonesia. It is used internationally by a majority of people to communicate whether in written or spoken form. It is also an important language to learn as it can be used in education development and arts.

Halpern and LaMay (2000) found that there is a consensus that males and females do not differ in general intelligence. Gender differences generally focus on cognitive abilities such as visual-spatial ability (Voyer, Voyer, & Bryden, 1995) and language (Miller & Halpern, 2014). However, Hyde (2005) claimed that there are little differences in gender differences between male and female psychological variables. In contrast to this, this hypothesis is not applicable to the reading achievement gap which are evident cross-culturally (Lynn & Mikk, 2009; Reilly, 2012).

A survey done by Ofsted (2012) of primary schools in England found that girls outperform boys in English. This has been an issue in England, specifically

in reading attainment. Marks (2008) study of 15-year-olds in 31 countries worldwide, revealed the gender gap in reading has been favoring girls.

There are four language skills in English, mainly: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Reading skills are needed by the students to face national tests and local tests of English. Therefore, reading skills should be taught as early as Kindergarten up until the higher education level. In parallel to Kennedy's (1981:5) claim, reading is an ability that requires individuals to recognize visual form in associating it with the sound and/or meaning from the past, and by experience, understand and interpret its meaning. In essence, reading depends on one's individual ability in understanding and knowing the message being delivered by the author.

Reading is often considered a difficult skill. The learner cannot get the reading achievement which is the most important aspect of reading comprehension, especially in English. It is a teacher's responsibility to undertake this problem. In addition to that, teachers have to teach reading skills so that learners are able to understand the reading materials given. have to show how to teach reading as well so the learners can understand the reading material given. It is very important for increasing the knowledge of the learners. Reading is a skill in a language that is applied to an English lesson, especially for Junior High School. In order to prepare the students to undertake the National Examination, students need to be able to comprehend the reading material. The students have to answer the question related to the reading materials, such as the topic of the

paragraph, main idea, etc. The reading material for Junior High School is a genre such as a recount text and descriptive text.

Reading comprehension skills is a fundamental skill to obtain further academic learning success. To get further knowledge, college students are required to have critical and analytical competence in comprehending academic texts, in searching for more academic information through various types of reading materials such as textbooks, journals, reports, or electronic messages; however, not all students are good at comprehending the text being read. Most of them understand the informational of the text; in other words, they are good at decoding the text but struggling to comprehend what the underlying meaning and purpose beyond the text are. Due to this condition, Perfetti (1985) declares that the problem that caused some students to struggle is the fact that they lack in reading comprehension strategies that is used as a background knowledge.

Studies that were done by Brown & El-Dinary (1996); Wold (1996); Fisher, Frey, & Williams (2002) found that maintaining reading strategy instruction provide positive effects on student's ability to comprehend reading. Readers with reading comprehension strategy awareness organize, monitor, and evaluate their comprehension by constantly questioning and reacting to the texts they read to construct meaning before, during, and after the reading process. According to some researchers (Dole, Duffy, Pearson, & Roehler, 1991) by having students generate their questions improves text comprehension while Pinnel (2000) claims that one way to enhance comprehension is by having readers monitor their thinking process while reading. Massey (2003) states that readers

are aware of their text comprehension content is due to their mental activity while undergoing the process of questioning the text. By questioning the text while reading aids independent students to think critically about the purpose of reading, conducting prediction, selection, connection, evaluation, review, and to gain future benefits from the text that is being read (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on background study above, the statement of problem of this research is “The Effects Vocabulary Towards Reading Comprehension and the Difference Between Them in Terms of Gender in XYZ School”

In line with the background of the research as described above, the statement of the problem being discussed in the research are:

1. Gender determine students’ vocabulary size score
2. Gender determine students’ reading comprehension score
3. Vocabulary size determine reading comprehension score in both genders

1.3 Scope of the Study

The research focuses on the correlation between gender and two factors, student’s vocabulary size and student’s reading comprehension skills.

The scope of this research is limited to the grade 7 students of XYZ School in the academic year of 2020/2021. The materials used in the research are also based on Vocabulary Size and TOEFL paper-based reading test. The researcher used the book Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL Test (2001) as a guideline.

1.4 Research Questions

The problems of the research are formulated in the following questions and sub questions:

- 1) Is there a significant difference between male and female students' vocabulary size?
- 2) Is there a significant difference between male and female students' reading comprehension score?
- 3) Is there a monotonic relation between Vocabulary Size and Reading Comprehension in general?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of the research reported in this thesis is to find out whether vocabulary size affects reading comprehension skills in grade 7 students' reading comprehension test scores.

The secondary objective in this research is to figure out whether gender plays a role in grade 7 students' vocabulary size and reading comprehension.

Through the vocabulary size test and TOEFL Reading Comprehension test, the researcher analyzed the vocabulary size, reading comprehension and how it is different between males and females.

Overall, the aims of this research are:

1. To find out if there is a significant difference between the male and female students' vocabulary size score

2. To find out if there is a significant difference between the male and female students' reading comprehension
3. To prove whether there is a monotonic relation between vocabulary score and reading comprehension in general

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research is hopefully helpful to a lot of readers. The result of this expected to be useful for:

a) The Students

To motivate and make enthusiasm the students in the learning process especially in reading teaching and helpful for students will be able to create more enjoyable and meaningful learning.

b) The Teacher

To give English teachers a preliminary knowledge on students' vocabulary level and reading comprehension skills. Through this study, it is expected that English teachers might be able to find a suitable teaching method to develop students' reading skills.

c) The School

This research useful to improve the quality of education and develop English language teaching of the school

d)The Researcher

The researcher will improve his knowledge in teaching reading method and have experience in observation and apply with classroom action research at school.

1.7 Outline of Chapters

The chapters are outlined as the following:

1) Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the background of this study, problem statements, scope of the study, purpose of the study, significance of the study and organization of the study.

2) Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the literature used as the foundation for this study. There are several theories discussed and elaborated, such as Vocabulary Size, Reading Comprehension Skills, and Gender Gap. It also included the previous researches that has been conducted by other researchers. It refers mostly discusses about the description of vocabulary, reading comprehension, gender and how they are connected. This chapter is concluded by the Research Framework and Research Hypothesis.

3) Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter emphasized on the methodologies conducted by the researcher to answer the problems. There are several parts in this chapter such as Research Design, Place, Time and Research Subjects, Research Procedures, Populations and Samples, Data Collection Technique, Research Instrument, Research Instruments' Validity and Reliability, Data Analysis Technique and Statistics Hypotheses.

The data in this study is collected using Quantitative data from 86 students of grade 7 from XYZ School. The tests that are employed in the research are Vocabulary-size Test and TOEFL Reading Comprehension.

4) Chapter 4: RESEARCH DISCUSSION

The focus of this chapter is on showing and analyzing the data collected. The researcher has shown the result of the Validity and Reliability test towards the data collection. Then the research predicts the relationship between the data collected and relate them to the researcher hypotheses.

As the result of this study, it is concluded that although female participants tend to score higher than the male participants in vocabulary and reading, there is no significant difference between the scores. It is also summarized that vocabulary affects reading comprehension for female and male participants.

5) Chapter 5: CONCLUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In this chapter, the researcher concludes the research with an encouragement towards schools to focus on vocabulary instructions in order to

raise students reading comprehension. Some of the recommendations for further studies are: to have more participants and adding more variables.

