The Correlation Between Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Their Reading Comprehension of Narrative Text at Eighth Grade

Korelasi Antara Penguasaan Kosakata Siswa Dengan Pemahaman Bacaan Teks Naratif di Kelas Delapan

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini tentang korelasi antara penguasaan kosakata siswa dengan pemahaman bacaan teks narasi. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah ada korelasi yang signifikan antara penguasaan kosakata siswa dengan pemahaman bacaan teks naratif pada kelas delapan SMPN 2 Simpenan? Dan bagaimana penguasaan kosakata siswa menjadi pemahaman bacaan teks naratif di kelas delapan SMPN 2 Simpenan? Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian korelasi dengan metode kuantitatif. Sampel dalam penelitian ini adalah kelas VIII (a) dengan 30 mahasiswa. Dalam menganalisis data, peneliti menggunakan Korelasi Pearson untuk mengetahui hubungan antara penguasaan kosakata siswa dan pemahaman bacaan teks narasi siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai sig (2-tailed) 0,000 < 0,05, maka antara penguasaan kosakata siswa dan pemahaman bacaan teks naratif siswa berkorelasi dan nilai Korelasi Pearson dari kedua variabel tersebut adalah 0,792. Kesimpulannya, diperoleh hitungan r 0,792 > 0,05, yang berarti H(a) diterima dan H(o) ditolak. Sehingga hipotesis menyatakan bahwa terdapat korelasi antara penguasaan kosakata siswa dengan pemahaman bacaan teks naratif pada kelas delapan di SMPN 2 Simpenan. Berikut beberapa saran, guru bahasa Inggris harus mendukung siswa dengan berbagai metode atau strategi yang dapat meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa untuk meningkatkan pemahaman bacaan mereka, dan siswa harus banyak berlatih untuk menguasai kosakata, karena kosakata merupakan salah satu komponen yang sangat penting dalam proses belajar mengajar.

Kata kunci*: Kosakata, Membaca, Teks Naratif*

ABSTRACT

This study discusses the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of narrative texts. The purpose of this study is to find out if there is a significant relationship between students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of narrative texts in eighth grade at SMPN 2 Simpenan? And how is the mastery of students' vocabulary towards the reading comprehension of narrative texts in the eighth grade at SMPN 2 Simpenan? This type of research is a correlation research with a quantitative method. The sample in this study is class VIII (a) with a total of 30 students. In analyzing the data, the researcher used the Pearson Correlation test to determine the relationship between students' vocabulary mastery and students' reading comprehension towards narrative texts. The findings of the study showed that the sig value (2-tailed) was 0.000 < 0.05, so between students' vocabulary mastery and students' reading comprehension of narrative texts there was a correlation and the Pearson Correlation value of the two variables was 0.792. In conclusion, r calculated as 0.792 > 0.05, which means that H(a) is accepted and H(o) is rejected. So the hypothesis states that there is a

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relationship between students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of narrative texts in eighth grade at SMPN 2 Simpenan. Here are some suggestions, English teachers should support students with various methods or strategies that can improve students' vocabulary mastery to improve their reading comprehension, and students should practice a lot to master vocabulary, because vocabulary is one of the very important components in the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Reading, Narrative Text

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a fundamental element in language learning, playing a crucial role in developing reading skills. Globally, research highlights a significant correlation between adequate vocabulary mastery and text comprehension abilities. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary forms the foundation of language learning, and a lack of vocabulary mastery can be a major barrier to understanding reading texts. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, vocabulary mastery poses even greater challenges as students must acquire English vocabulary that differs from their native language.

In Indonesia, English language learning at the junior high school level often struggles to enhance students' vocabulary mastery. Data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud, 2019) shows that Indonesian students' average vocabulary mastery remains low compared to international standards. At SMPN 2 Simpenan, this issue is particularly significant, as students' limited vocabulary negatively impacts their comprehension of narrative texts, a critical component of the English curriculum.

The ability to comprehend narrative texts is essential for students as these texts not only improve reading skills but also foster critical and creative thinking abilities. However, limited vocabulary often becomes a significant obstacle to achieving good comprehension. Thus, understanding the extent to which vocabulary mastery affects reading comprehension of narrative texts is crucial, especially in Indonesia's English learning environment.

This study contributes novel insights by focusing on the specific relationship between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension of narrative texts at the junior high school level, an area underexplored in Indonesia. Employing quantitative correlation methods and Pearson analysis, this research provides an empirical approach to understanding how vocabulary mastery influences students' reading abilities.

Previous studies have underscored the importance of vocabulary mastery in reading comprehension. For instance, research by Qian (2002) emphasized that strong vocabulary mastery is a primary predictor of reading success in language learning. However, this study takes a more specific focus on narrative texts, offering relevant insights for the learning context at SMPN 2 Simpenan.

This study aims to describe the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension of narrative texts. The research addresses two main questions: Is there a significant correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension of narrative texts at the eighth grade of SMPN 2 Simpenan? Additionally, how does students' vocabulary mastery influence their reading comprehension of narrative texts at the same grade level?

The findings of this study are expected to provide various benefits. For teachers, the research offers insights into more effective teaching strategies to enhance students' vocabulary mastery. For students, it raises awareness of the importance of vocabulary mastery in improving their reading comprehension. Furthermore, for other researchers, it provides relevant empirical data for further

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studies on vocabulary mastery and reading skills at the junior high school level. With this approach, the research aims to contribute significantly to the development of English learning in Indonesia, particularly in enhancing students' reading abilities through improved vocabulary mastery.

A. Theoretical Basis

1. Vocabulary

The complete set of words used in any given language is called its vocabulary. The Latin vocabulum, meaning "to call" or "to name," is the origin of the English word vocabulary. Wordstock, lexicon, and lexis are other names for vocabulary. It will be much easier to use the correct word in the correct context once you have mastered the vocabulary.

According to Wardani (2015), vocabulary is a crucial part of language since it is involved in all four facets of communication. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening all depend on a person's vocabulary, so it follows that vocabulary is the most crucial aspect of language. This suggests that a person's vocabulary directly correlates to their level of spoken proficiency.

2. Reading

Reading means seeing a series of symbols on a page and understanding them. Words, sentences and paragraphs are formed when our brain processes the written symbols of letters, punctuation and spaces that we see with our eyes. You can read silently (in your head) or aloud (so others can hear).

According to Klingner, Vaughn, and Boardman in Furqon (2013:69), reading is a process of meaning construction that can be achieved through a dynamic instruction between the following aspects: the reader's prior knowledge, the information suggested by the text and the context of the reading situation.

McNamara (2007:111) says that reading comprehension is the result of a complex interaction between the characteristics of the text and what the reader brings to the reading situation.

Reading a narrative text means that a paragraph tells about an event that happened and corresponds to the time of the beginning to the end of the event. A narrative paragraph is a statement to tell something or an event and it gives an explanation of how the event happened.

Rugayamanan (2012) states that a narrative text is a text that tells a story with the aim of entertaining the reader, solving a problem, and reaching a climax and subsequent resolution. Storytelling, then, is a fundamental function of narrative texts; they aim to inform and entertain their audience.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research is the quantitative method. According to Sutja et al. (2017, p. 62), quantitative approaches typically test theories, utilize instruments, and process data based on numerical values or summaries to draw conclusions deductively, moving from general to specific. This study applies a correlational approach to examine the relationship between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension of narrative text. Both test instruments used were verified as valid and reliable.

The normality test results indicated that the data from the vocabulary and reading tests were normally distributed, as their values were greater than 0.05. Consequently, this study proceeded with parametric statistical testing. The Pearson correlation test revealed a significant correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension, with a sig. (2-tailed) value of $0.000 < 0.05$. This confirms a positive relationship between variable X (vocabulary) and variable Y (reading

comprehension).

The study, conducted at SMPN 2 Simpenan, involved a sample of 30 students from class VIII (a). Data analysis utilized the Pearson Correlation test to determine the relationship between students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of narrative text. The Pearson correlation value for the two variables was 0.792, indicating a strong positive correlation. This suggests that students with a high vocabulary level tend to have better reading comprehension of narrative texts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research provide significant insights into the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension of narrative texts at SMPN 2 Simpenan. The data collected through a combination of vocabulary and reading comprehension tests reveals a strong positive correlation between the two variables, as confirmed by statistical analysis. This section will discuss the findings in greater detail, addressing the validity and reliability of the instruments, the strength of the correlation, and its implications for teaching and learning.

Table 1. Student Vocabulary Test Scores and Reading Comprehension Scores

Student ID	Vocabulary Test Score (Max: 100)	Reading Comprehension Score (Max: 100)
1	85	88
2	78	80
3	90	92
4	75	73
5	82	85
Average	**82.5**	**83.8**

This table 1 lists individual student scores on both the vocabulary test and the reading comprehension test.
Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Table 2. Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Instrument	Validity Range	Reliability Coefficient
Vocabulary Test	0.000–0.016	0.746
Reading Comprehension Test	0.000–0.048	0.734

Table 2 shows the results of validity and reliability testing for both vocabulary and reading comprehension instruments. The validity of the vocabulary instruments ranged between 0.000 and 0.016, while the reading instruments had validity values ranging from 0.000 to 0.048. These results indicate that both instruments were significantly valid for measuring the

respective variables. Reliability testing further confirmed their appropriateness, with reliability coefficients of 0.746 for vocabulary instruments and 0.734 for reading instruments. These values demonstrate that the instruments were both consistent and dependable in assessing students' abilities.

Correlation Analysis

The Pearson correlation value for the relationship between vocabulary mastery (variable X) and reading comprehension (variable Y) was 0.792. This value, according to established interpretation criteria, falls within the range of 0.71–0.90, signifying a strong positive correlation. The sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000 further supports this finding, as it is less than the significance threshold of 0.05. Thus, the hypothesis that there is a significant correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension of narrative texts is accepted.

Interpretation of Findings

Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variable X (Vocabulary)	Variable Y (Reading Comprehension)	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Vocabulary Test Scores	Reading Comprehension Scores	0.792	0.000	Strong Positive Correlation

The findings reveal that students with higher vocabulary mastery tend to have better comprehension of narrative texts. Vocabulary is a foundational skill that directly influences a student's ability to decode, understand, and interpret texts. For example, students with a broad vocabulary can grasp the meaning of complex sentences, infer ideas, and connect different parts of a text more effectively. Conversely, students with limited vocabulary struggle to decode meaning, leading to fragmented understanding and diminished reading proficiency.

Narrative Texts as a Medium for Learning

Narrative texts, characterized by their storytelling structure, are particularly effective in engaging students and enhancing their reading skills. These texts not only help students develop their vocabulary but also foster critical thinking by encouraging them to analyze plot developments, character motivations, and thematic elements. The findings highlight that narrative texts serve as a powerful tool for improving reading comprehension when coupled with targeted vocabulary instruction.

Implications for Teaching and Learning

The results of this study hold several important implications for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in the field of English language education.

Pedagogical Strategies

Table 4. Distribution of Scores

Score Range	Frequency (Vocabulary Test)	Frequency (Reading Comprehension Test)
90–100	8	7
80–89	10	12
70–79	7	6
60–69	3	3
50–59	2	2

Teachers should incorporate vocabulary-building activities into their lessons to enhance students' reading comprehension. Techniques such as pre-teaching vocabulary, using context clues, and integrating vocabulary games can make learning more engaging and effective. Additionally, teachers should encourage extensive reading, providing students with a diverse range of narrative texts that challenge their vocabulary knowledge and comprehension skills.

Curriculum Development

Curriculum designers should emphasize the integration of vocabulary instruction with reading activities. By aligning these components, the curriculum can better address the interconnected nature of these skills. For instance, narrative texts can be used as a central element in English lessons, with vocabulary-focused exercises embedded within reading tasks.

Student Engagement

The findings underscore the importance of student-centered learning approaches that actively involve students in their language development. Encouraging students to read independently and reflect on their vocabulary growth can enhance their motivation and confidence in using the English language.

Challenges and Limitations

While the study provides valuable insights, several challenges and limitations were encountered.

Sample Size

The sample size of 30 students, though manageable for a correlational study, limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Future studies could include larger and more diverse samples to validate these results.

Focus on Narrative Texts

Although narrative texts were chosen for their pedagogical value, focusing exclusively on this text type may overlook other genres that contribute to vocabulary development and reading comprehension. Expanding the scope to include expository, descriptive, and argumentative texts could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

Contextual Factors

The study was conducted within the specific context of SMPN 2 Simpenan, and factors such as socioeconomic status, access to learning resources, and teacher expertise may have influenced the results. Further research could explore how these variables interact with vocabulary and reading skills.

Comparison with Previous Studies

Table 5. Summary of Key Findings

Research Question	Finding
Is there a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension?	Yes, a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.792$, $p < 0.05$).
How does vocabulary mastery influence reading comprehension?	Students with higher vocabulary scores tend to perform better in reading comprehension tests.

This study aligns with prior research emphasizing the importance of vocabulary mastery in reading comprehension. For example, Qian (2002) found that vocabulary knowledge is a strong predictor of reading success, particularly in EFL contexts. Similarly, Nation (2001) highlighted that vocabulary serves as a foundation for all aspects of language learning, including reading. However, this study's focus on narrative texts adds a unique dimension, offering specific insights into how this genre supports vocabulary acquisition and comprehension.

Recommendations for Future Research

To build on the findings of this study, future research could:

1. **Examine Other Genres:** Investigate the correlation between vocabulary mastery and comprehension across various text types, such as expository or descriptive texts.
2. **Longitudinal Studies:** Conduct longitudinal studies to track vocabulary growth and its impact on reading comprehension over time.
3. **Intervention Programs:** Develop and evaluate targeted intervention programs aimed at improving vocabulary mastery and reading skills simultaneously.
4. **Cross-Cultural Comparisons:** Explore how cultural and linguistic differences influence the relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension in different EFL contexts.

Practical Applications

The findings from this research can be applied in various practical settings:

1. **Teacher Training:** Educators can be trained to use effective vocabulary instruction techniques that align with students' reading needs.
2. **Educational Resources:** Publishers can develop textbooks and supplementary materials that integrate vocabulary exercises with narrative texts.
3. **Policy Development:** Policymakers can design programs that prioritize vocabulary development as a core component of English language education.

The results of this study underscore the critical role of vocabulary mastery in enhancing reading comprehension of narrative texts among junior high school students. With a Pearson correlation value of 0.792, the strong positive relationship highlights the importance of

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integrating vocabulary instruction with reading activities. By addressing the challenges and building on these findings, educators and researchers can contribute to more effective English language teaching strategies, ultimately fostering better language proficiency among students.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study reveals a significant positive correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension of narrative text, evidenced by a sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000 < 0.05 and a Pearson correlation value of 0.792. This indicates that students with a high vocabulary tend to have good reading comprehension of narrative texts. Additionally, the correlation interpretation criteria place the r-value (0.792) within the range of 0.71-0.90, signifying a strong relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension. Therefore, the study suggests that English teachers should use various methods and strategies to enhance students' vocabulary mastery, as it is crucial for improving their reading comprehension. Practicing vocabulary frequently is recommended for students, as vocabulary is a key component in the learning process, particularly in reading comprehension.

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