

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the background of the research, research problems, objectives of the research, research hypothesis, significance of the research, scope and limitation of the research, and definition of key terms.

#### A. Background of the Research

Language is a fundamental tool for human communication that enables individuals to express ideas, share information, and interact with others. Through language, people are able to share knowledge, express feelings, and participate in social and academic interactions. In the era of globalization, English has gained a prominent position as an international lingua franca used widely in education, science, technology, and global communication.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning has become an essential component of formal education systems, including in Indonesia.

Among the fundamental competencies in EFL acquisition, reading represents a critical skill that encompasses the process of comprehending written discourse through active engagement between the reader and the text. Reading is not merely the activity of recognizing written symbols, but a cognitive process in which readers construct meaning by connecting

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<sup>1</sup> David Crystal, *English as a Global Language*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

textual information with their background knowledge and experiences.<sup>2</sup> In this process, readers are required to think, interpret, and make sense of the text rather than simply decode words mechanically. This active engagement enables learners to understand ideas more deeply and retain information more effectively. Through reading, learners are exposed to vocabulary, grammatical structures, and discourse patterns that support overall language development.<sup>3</sup>

In EFL learning, reading is regarded as a crucial skill because it provides learners with direct and meaningful exposure to the target language. Through regular reading activities, students encounter authentic language use, sentence patterns, and vocabulary in context, which supports their language development.<sup>4</sup> However, the benefits of reading cannot be maximized if reading is conducted only occasionally. Therefore, reading needs to be performed regularly and consistently to form what is known as a reading habit.

Reading habit is a pattern of reading behavior that occurs continuously, voluntarily, and repeatedly throughout time, demonstrating students' interest and motivation in reading activities. In the context of language learning, reading habit allow students to engage with English texts more frequently, which increases their exposure to vocabulary items.

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<sup>2</sup> William Grabe and Fredricka L Stoller, *Teaching and Researching Reading*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> James D. Cooper, E. W. Warncke, and D. A. Shipman, *The What and How of Reading Instruction* (Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing, 1988), 21–24.

<sup>4</sup> William Grabe, *Reading in a Second Language: Moving from Theory to Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Frequent encounters with words in different contexts help learners recognize word meanings, understand their usage, and retain them more effectively. Thus, students who develop good reading habit are more likely to experience improvement in their vocabulary knowledge.

Reading habit are closely related to vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary mastery is conceptualized as the learners' capacity to identify, comprehend, and appropriately apply lexical items in accordance with contextual demands.<sup>5</sup> Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, students may struggle to comprehend written texts even when they are familiar with basic reading strategies.<sup>6</sup> This condition indicates that vocabulary mastery supports effective reading, while reading activities themselves contribute to vocabulary growth.

The relationship between these two variables is therefore reciprocal. On one hand, students need adequate vocabulary knowledge to comprehend texts they read. On the other hand, regular reading provides continuous opportunities for students to acquire new vocabulary incidentally. Repeated exposure to words in meaningful contexts allows learners to gradually broaden and deepen their vocabulary knowledge,<sup>7</sup>

This relationship is supported by theories of language acquisition, particularly the Input Hypothesis, which underscores the significance of

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<sup>5</sup> Jeremy Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, 5th ed. (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> D A Wilkins, *Linguistics in Language Teaching* (London: Arnold, 1972).

<sup>7</sup> I S P Nation, *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

comprehensible input in facilitating language development. According to this theoretical perspective, optimal language acquisition takes place when learners encounter linguistic input that is both understandable and contextually meaningful. Reading functions as an important source of such input, allowing learners to acquire vocabulary naturally without relying solely on explicit instruction.<sup>8</sup> Students who actively participate in regular reading activities tend to have a broader vocabulary than those who rarely read.

Despite the importance of reading habit in supporting vocabulary mastery, many Indonesian students still demonstrate low levels of reading ability and limited vocabulary knowledge. One contributing factor to this problem is insufficient vocabulary mastery, which hinders students' ability to understand English texts effectively.<sup>9</sup> This situation highlights the need to strengthen students' reading habit as a foundation for vocabulary development.

In the context of general senior high schools, several previous studies have reported that students' reading habit have a substantial impact on their vocabulary mastery and understanding literature.<sup>10</sup> These findings suggest that students who engage more frequently in reading activities tend

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<sup>8</sup> Stephen D Krashen, *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications* (London: Longman, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> Erna Iftanti, "A Survey of the English Reading Habits of EFL Students in Indonesia," *TEFLIN Journal* 23, no. 2 (2012): 149–62.

<sup>10</sup> N. R Laili, "Correlation between English Reading Habit and Vocabulary Mastery at Eleventh Graders of SMAN 1 Palangka Raya," *Unpublish Thesisi*, 2018.

to achieve higher vocabulary mastery due to increased exposure to language input.

In the context of madrasah aliyah, this problem becomes more complex due to the dense curriculum that combines general subjects with Islamic religious studies. As a result, students often have limited time to access various English reading materials. In such contexts, English textbooks provided by schools function as the primary source of English exposure for students.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, students' reading habit related to the use of English textbooks play a crucial role in their vocabulary development.

However, in practice, many madrasah aliyah students use English textbooks only to complete assignments or prepare for examinations. This task-oriented use of textbooks limits students' opportunities to engage in meaningful and extensive reading. As a result, students may miss valuable chances to acquire vocabulary incidentally through regular reading activities.<sup>12</sup>

Although previous studies have confirmed the significant role of reading habit in vocabulary development, most of them have focused on students' engagement with various English reading materials such as novels, magazines, and online texts. Limited attention has been given to students' reading habit related to the use of English textbooks, particularly

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<sup>11</sup> Tom Hutchinson and E Torres, "The Textbook as Agent of Change," *ELT Journal* 48, no. 4 (1994): 315–28.

<sup>12</sup> Richard R Day and Julian Bamford, *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

in the madrasah aliyah context, where textbooks often function as the primary source of English exposure. This situation indicates a research gap that needs to be addressed, as textbooks remain the main learning resource for English instruction in madrasah aliyah.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the correlation between students' reading habit and their vocabulary mastery among the eleventh-grade at MAN 1 Tulungagung. By focusing on reading habit related to English textbooks, this research is expected to provide a clearer understanding on how regular reading practices contribute to vocabulary mastery in the madrasah aliyah context and offer practical insights for improving English learning outcomes.

## **B. Research Problems**

1. How is the students' reading habit of the eleventh grade at MAN 1 Tulungagung?
2. How is the students' vocabulary mastery of the eleventh grade at MAN 1 Tulungagung?
3. Is there a correlation between students' reading habit and their vocabulary mastery of the eleventh grade at MAN 1 Tulungagung?

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<sup>13</sup> Karunia Janah, Mohammad Adnan Latief, and Sri Andreani, "Exploring EFL Students' English Reading Habits: Reading beyond Classroom Practice 1 Karunia Eka Nafilatul Janah\*," *Journal of English Teaching Adi Buana* 06, no. 01 (2021): 17–31.

### **C. Objectives of the Research**

The purpose of this study is to answer the research questions above.

Specifically, the objectives are:

1. To describe the students' reading habit of the eleventh grade at MAN 1 Tulungagung.
2. To describe the students' vocabulary mastery of the eleventh grade at MAN 1 Tulungagung.
3. To analyze whether there is a correlation between students' reading habit and their vocabulary mastery of the eleventh grade at MAN 1 Tulungagung.

### **D. Research Hypothesis**

Based on the research problems and research objectives, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

- a. Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ):

There is no correlation between students' reading habit and their vocabulary mastery of the eleventh grade at MAN 1 Tulungagung.

- b. Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ ):

There is a correlation between students' reading habit and their vocabulary mastery of the eleventh grade at MAN 1 Tulungagung.

### **E. Significance of the Research**

Practically, the findings of the study can be contributive for various

stakeholders. For students, the results may encourage them to develop good reading habit as an effective way to improve their vocabulary. For teachers, the study provides information about how reading habit influence vocabulary development, which can help them design more effective and engaging reading activities. Furthermore, for future researchers, this study can serve as a valuable reference for further investigations related to reading habit, vocabulary mastery, and other aspects of English language learning.

## **F. Scope and Limitation of the Research**

### **1. Scope of the Research**

This study is directed to investigate the correlation between students' reading habit and their vocabulary mastery. It is conducted in a Madrasah Aliyah (MAN) context, specifically involving eleventh-grade students at MAN 1 Tulungagung. In this study, reading habit is limited to the use of English textbooks as the primary material in the EFL curriculum, covering aspects of frequency, duration, interest, and motivation in reading.

### **2. Limitation of the Research**

This study is limited on the area of the reading material and research context. In this research focuses only on textbook based reading habit and vocabulary mastery within the context of Madrasah Aliyah or religious based secondary schools. The study does not include other forms of reading materials such as novels, newspapers, online articles,

or digital media. Therefore, the findings of this study are not intended to represent students from general secondary schools and may not be generalized beyond religious-based educational institutions.

### **G. Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid misunderstanding, confusion, and ambiguity regarding to the concepts in this research topic, the researcher needs to provide explanations and definitions of the key terms used in this research.

#### **a. Correlation**

In this study, the correlation is intended to see whether the condition of the first variable(reading habit) is associated with the condition of the second variable(vocabulary mastery).

#### **b. Reading Habit**

Reading habit is defined as the consistent practice of reading English textbooks, characterized by frequency, duration, interest, and motivation.

#### **c. Vocabulary Mastery**

Vocabulary mastery is the students' knowledge and skill in understanding and using words correctly. In this research, it focuses on how well eleventh-grade students at MAN 1 Tulungagung can understand, and use vocabulary from their English lesson.