

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background

Vocabulary is a popular issue which is applied in linguistic research (Schmitt, 2019). According to Novianti (2017), vocabulary also is typically taught in lists and high priorities given to accuracy and the ability to construct correct sentences in the Grammar-Translation Approach. Moreover, vocabulary is a core component in learning English because vocabulary is a basic one for students, who can speak, listen, read, and write in English. Then, according to Susanto (2017), vocabulary is crucial to be mastered by learners in order to understand the language. Furthermore, according to Alqahtani (2015) vocabulary learning is important point to emphasized knowing about new words at books or in classrooms.

Moreover, according to Schmitt, Schmitt, and Clapham (2001) vocabulary level test (VLT) is a means of determining the extent to which test takers could recognize the form-meaning connections of words at four word frequency levels (2000, 3000, 5000, 10000 words). Besides, the new form of VLT consists of five frequency levels (1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, and 5000 words) (Webb et al., 2017). The greatest value of VLT is that it indicates students can focus to their learning English with their appropriate word frequency level (Webb et al., 2017). Furthermore, VLT can be useful for students' vocabulary mastery because in VLT, students do not only know the meaning of some words but also the definition.

Moreover, writing is one of important language skills that need to be mastered in learning English. According to Indah, et al (2015) by writing, the writer can share anything in their mind to paper or computer screen for nowadays such as share the idea or feeling. It has always occupied a good place in most English language courses. One of the reasons is that more and more people need to learn writing in English for

occupational or academic purposes after learning vocabulary. To write well, people must have good capability in writing skills.

Moreover, people who want to write an essay or a story must know the steps in writing process and aspects of writing. The writers must be able to organize ideas, to construct sentences, and to use punctuation. Besides, they must be able to arrange their writing into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts. Most theories revealed that a good writing product consists of three elements, such as purpose, audience, and content (Indah, 2015). Furthermore, descriptive text is a text that provides information with a purpose such as description of things, animals, person, or the others (Anggun, 2016). In descriptive writing, the writer usually told how something looks, smells, sounds, tastes, and/or feels (Anggun, 2016).

Limited observation was done to students of SMP Al-Hasan, Panyileukan, Bandung, when the researcher had a teaching practice program, especially carried out at grade VIII, some students showed good enough vocabulary mastery even though there were still several words which made them confused. Grade VIII students also have learned about descriptive text in early second semester. For this reason, the researcher intends to find students' vocabulary mastery with vocabulary level test (VLT) and its correlation to their writing descriptive text.

## **B. Research Questions**

There are three research questions regarding the problem mentioned in the background.

1. What is the level of students' vocabulary mastery?
2. What are the students' writing skills in writing descriptive text?
3. How significant is the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery level and their writing descriptive text?

### **C. Research Purposes**

There are three research purposes regarding the problem mentioned in the background.

1. To find out what the level of students' vocabulary mastery.
2. To find out what the students' writing skills in writing descriptive text.
3. To find out the significant correlation between the level students' vocabulary and their writing descriptive text.

### **D. Research Significances**

This research gives several significances.

1. Practically, this study gives significance to:

- a. Students

The result of this study is expected to help students know their English vocabulary by using Vocabulary Level Test and their writing skill in writing descriptive text. Moreover, this research could motivate them to practice more vocabulary to be able to master writing skill as well.

- b. Teachers

This study could contribute to all English teacher to increase students' English vocabulary because it is essential to students can pass English subject well and could contribute to increase students' writing skills appropriate with their writing especially in writing descriptive text.

2. Theoretically, the result of this research can be beneficial for other researchers or other readers the source of their reference about the correlation between students vocabulary mastery with vocabulary level test and their writing descriptive text.

## **E. Research Framework**

Vocabulary is an essential aspect that should be acquired in learning a language. Study vocabulary size is some important things either English for the second language (ESL) or English for foreign language (EFL). From both, the vocabulary level test will be good for vocabulary mastery. In investigating language learners' vocabulary mastery, some researchers focused their studies either on receptive or productive vocabulary mastery (Novianti, 2017). Vocabulary mastery is able to understand the other people which use English by saying something and it needs to express the idea of the speaker (Susanto, 2017). Moreover, vocabulary level test (VLT) which is a test to examine learners' vocabulary size, was designed to identify learners' vocabulary knowledge both receptively and productively (Schmitt, 2010 cited in Novianti, 2017).

The VLT is currently available nearest to standardize test currently available (Meara, 1994, 1996 cited in Kremmel & Schmitt, 2017). Each section on VLT consists of 30 items of a multiple matching format and every three items represent 100 words frequency. However, VLT asks learners more than the meaning, but instead of the definitions (Schmitt, 2010 cited in Kremmel & Schmitt, 2017). On VLT testing, there are two versions of VLT for testing vocabulary, namely receptive and productive versions (Novianti, 2017). The designs of even the most prominent in vocabulary tests, such as the VLT (Kremmel & Schmitt, 2016).

Furthermore, the new form of vocabulary level test is have five frequency word level (1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, and 5000 words) (Webb et al., 2017). Each cluster targets three words, although some researchers have argued that knowledge of the meaning of the three distractor words is also tested as the test takers need to be familiar with them when they discard them (Kremmel & Schmitt, 2017). Within each level, there is a fixed ratio of word classes to represent the distribution of English word classes. This ratio was 5 (noun): 3 (verb): 1 (adjective) in the initial version of the VLT (Kremmel & Schmitt, 2017) and is now 3 (noun): 2

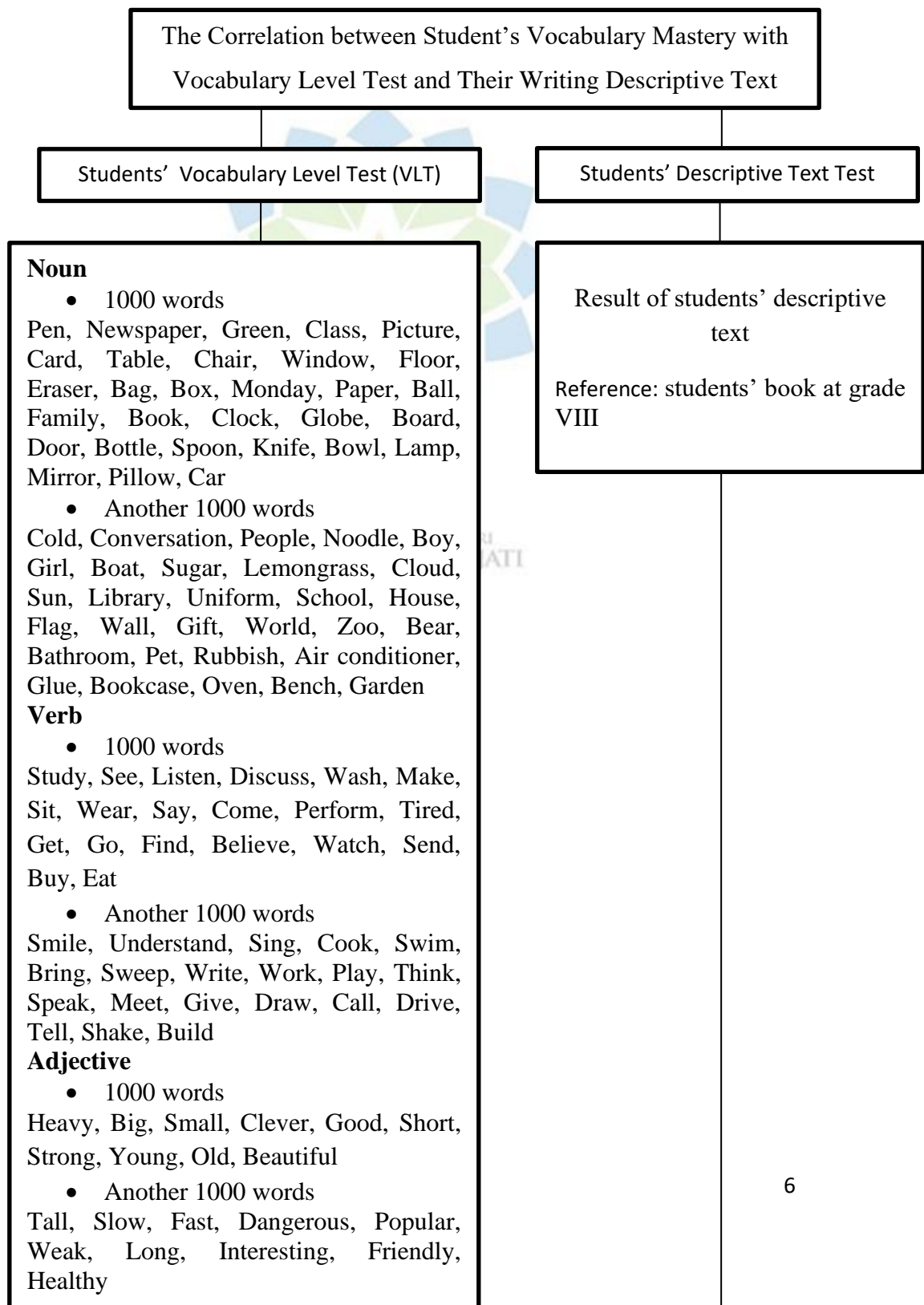
(verb): 1 (adjective) in the latest revised versions (Kremmel & Schmitt, 2017).

The frequency counts used were ones commonly available in 1993: Thorndike and Lorge (Schmitt et al., 2001), Kucˇera and Francis (Schmitt et al., 2001) and the General Service List (GSL) (Schmitt et al., 2001). Words were taken in a stratified sampling from the Thorndike and Lorge list, with reference to frequency data from Kucˇera and Francis and the GSL. For 2000 words section, which 1000 and 2000 words level have a ratio 1:2 (The first thousand words of the GSL are usually those with a frequency higher than 332 occurrences per 5 million words, days of week, months, titles (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Mister), numbers, and frequent greetings (Hello, Hi etc).

Besides, after learning vocabulary, students can linking it to another prime skill in English; speaking, reading, listening, and writing. According to Hajiveya (2015) learning vocabulary is an essential part of mastering a foreign language as great points to the high correlation between vocabulary and various measures of language proficiency which is reading, listening, speaking and writing (Nation & Beglar, 2007; Schmitt, 2010).

Writing is one of skills in learning English which use for communication because no one can write automatically without consciously learn (Mahmudah, 2014). Furthermore, descriptive text is one of writing kinds. According to Zulaikah (Eka Agustina Zulaikah & M.Muklas, 2018), descriptive text is the text which the way describe of places, things, and people. In descriptive text, imagination and perceptive of students can make some sense to the reader such as to make reader hear, see, and feel to the subject with good word. Descriptive writing appeals to the sense how it something feels, smells, tastes, looks, and/or sounds (Anggun, 2016). Regarding the correlation between vocabulary and other language skill, it can be considered that vocabulary mastery and writing descriptive text has significant evidence point to a high correlation.

Therefore, in this case, this research attempts to investigate the correlation between the level students' vocabulary and their writing skill in writing descriptive text. The research use two kinds' variables. The first is the correlation between the level students' vocabulary as the "X" variable which is the independent variable, and the second is students' writing skill in writing descriptive text as the "Y" variable which is the dependent variable.



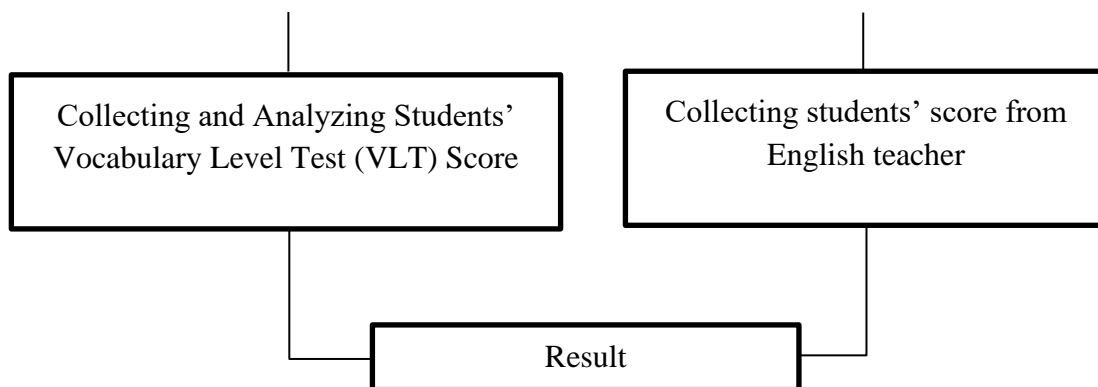


Figure 1.1 Research Scheme

#### F. Research Limitation

This research has limitation in vocabulary level test (VLT) and test in writing descriptive text. Moreover, VLT has five levels which consist of 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, and 5000 words level (Webb et al., 2017). This research makes a test only until 2000 words. Susanto (2017) vocabulary learning in Indonesia emphasized 1000-2000 words for junior high school textbook and practical use such as writing. Besides, for writing in descriptive text, the researcher got result of students' writing descriptive text from the English teacher.

#### G. Hypothesis

The hypothesis is a statement a quantitative research in which the researcher makes a prediction or conjecture about the outcome of the relationship among characteristics (Creswell, 2012). The hypothesis in this study is an alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) and the null hypothesis ( $H_o$ ). It means the hypothesis is a temporary theory that needs to be tested.

The formulated hypothesis is described as follows:

1.  **$H_a$** : There is a significant correlation between the level students' vocabulary mastery (X) and their writing skills in writing descriptive text (Y).
2.  **$H_o$** : There is no significant correlation between the level students' vocabulary mastery (X) and their writing skills in writing descriptive text (Y).

## H. Previous Study

There are three previous studies that are related to this study. The first study was originally conducted by Webb, et al (Webb et al., 2017). He revealed two version of vocabulary level test (VLT); last form and new form. This study took 1,463 test takers to create two equivalents between two versions of VLT. This study revealed if VLT has four level categories which are consists of 2000, 3000, 5000, and 100000 frequency. The result of this study make an initial attempts to validate the new form using Messick's (1989, 1995) validity framework.

The second previous study was conducted by Novianti (2017). The study focuses on investigate learners' vocabulary mastery especially to college students. Moreover, the study took the research in English Education Program in one of college in Indonesia. The study conducted in second undergraduate student college. The study was comparing between students who took some English courses outside of college with students who does not take it. The study took participants of 52 students. The result of the study is one student can be achieved until 1733-2000 words level but the others only can be achieved 1400-1667 words level.

The third previous study was conducted by Hong Li (2019). The study focuses on listening vocabulary level test (LVLT) to explore the effect of students' vocabulary knowledge on GEPT listening comprehension performance. Moreover, the study also tells about how students have challenge in listening among reading and writing. LVLT have different format from written VLT. LVTL forms was like multiple choice format which means have four answer; three distractors and one correct answer of the correct definition in each one question and sentence example with each word that become the question. The study has 146 L2 students second-year English course from four different universities. The method of the study is using randomly selected. The result of the study is there is a strong correlation between vocabulary knowledge and students listening skills but in comprehension III, most of the students have a



challenge to answer LTVL because the item is short talks. The result also show if the L2 students can pass 3000 words vocabulary level.

After looking previous research about vocabulary level test, this research has difference with them because this research using correlation study and for the participants, the researcher takes students of junior high school (JHS) especially grade VIII. Therefore, the researcher is interested in doing correlation study between the level students' vocabulary and their writing in writing descriptive text which agree with their syllabus.

