

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

English is the most commonly used language among foreign languages in the world. In this modern era, English becomes a very important language. People in many countries learn it either as the first language, the second language, or foreign language. It has given a lot of advantages to the people who speak it. Therefore, it is crucial for people to master all skills in English.

In English, there are four skills that should be mastered namely reading, listening, speaking, and writing. One of those skills is writing which belongs to one of the two productive skills that is expected for the learners to achieve in order to ensure his communicative competence. According to Ali Saukah (2000: 1992), writing is a communicative act, a way of sharing observation, information, thoughts, or ideas with ourselves and others. It is also a visual representation of speech in written form. Through writing skill, someone can express their ideas and thought. Students need to learn how to communicate by writing in English and learn to communicate by using the language to share their observation, information, thoughts, or ideas with themselves and others.

Essay writing is an essential part of every degree programme. At the university level, essays provide a very different challenge to that experienced in all earlier form of study. Completing a good essay requires a

broad range of skills, which is why so many degree programmes build them into their assessment patterns. A good essay demand that a student shows the ability to plan, time-manage, research, summarize and develop cohesive and balanced arguments before reaching clear, concise conclusions. It is the distillation of the philosopher Francis Bacon's (1561-1626) dictum that, "Reading make a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man". It means that writing is the most difficult one.

In writing an essay text, there are some aspects that should be considered such as cohesion and coherence. Nurgiantoro (2001:308), points out that there are five aspects in writing assesment namely content (the idea that is expressed), organization, vocabulary, language mastery (grammar), and mechanics. Therefore to make good essay writing, students should have good ability in language components. Vocabulary becomes one of the language components which have to be considered.

Vocabulary mastery is a crucial factor in assessing writing. It is not only relevant aspect in establishing quality of composition but also in mastering four major skills. There are speaking, reading, writing, and listening. According to Wilkins in Thornbury (2002), "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed". Students with lacking vocabulary will find difficulties in their development of either receptive skills (listening and reading) or productive skills (speaking and writing). For instance, students will have problem in speaking because students do not know how to say certain things in English. This might also

happen when someone is doing essay writing test. They will not be able to construct the text well whenever they do not know how to write or express their ideas in written language. Consequently, vocabulary is the most influencing factor of writing skill.

Based on the explanation above, it is interesting to find out whether or not there is a correlation between vocabulary mastery and essay writing skill. The researcher wants to conduct the thesis with the title “ a study on the correlation between students’ vocabulary mastery and their essay writing skill”.

#### **B. The Reasons for Choosing the Topic**

The reasons why the writer chooses this topic are:

1. Vocabulary is one of the important aspects in language mastery.
2. Writing language which belongs to one of productive skills is different from receptive skills, therefore the writer wants to know the students’ ability in their essay writing skill .
3. Students’ vocabulary mastery will help the students to construct and develop their essay writing skill.

### **C. The Problems of the Research**

From the reasons mentioned above, the problem of research is :

“Is there any significant correlation between students’ vocabulary mastery and their essay writing skill of 5<sup>th</sup> semester students of Muhammadiyah university?”

### **D. The Aims of the Research**

The aims of the research are :

1. to find out the size of vocabulary mastery.
2. to find out the level of essay writing skill.
3. to find out whether or not there is a correlation between students’ vocabulary mastery and their essay writing skill of 5<sup>th</sup> semester students of Muhammadiyah university of Purwokerto in academic year 2014/2015

### **E. The Contributions of the Research**

Theoretically, this research will be a verification as to the correlation between vocabulary mastery and essay writing skill.

Practically, this research hopefully will give information to the teachers, particularly lecturers of English department, as the encouragement to the development of students’ vocabulary mastery. This research will also be useful for the students in English department. To the researcher, this research may give more knowledge regarding the influence of vocabulary mastery for students’ essay writing.