

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher explains why the researcher is interested in knowing students' perceptions of reading English novels toward vocabulary mastery. This chapter also includes the research questions that guide the analysis. Then, the researcher explains the research objectives or targets to study. The significance of the analysis also shows the benefits of research for certain people. Finally, the chapter organization is present, showing a description of each chapter.

### **Background of the Research**

To master English, learners must learn several skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. To master a language, listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills must be taught effectively (Sadiku, 2015, p. 29). In order to master these four skills, vocabulary is important. Vocabulary is essential in learning a foreign language. According to Richards and Renandya (2002), vocabulary is the essential component of language competency and serves as the foundation for how effectively learners speak, listen, read, and write. It might be deduced that a student's mastery of vocabulary is a key requirement in learning a language. Murtiningsih et al. (2016) argued, "Vocabulary is the key element of language learning" (p. 7). Vocabulary is also essential to facilitate communication. A limited vocabulary in a second language hinders successful communication; thus, vocabulary mastery is often seen as a vital feature of foreign language learners (Norqulova, 2021). Learning vocabulary needs to be

done to develop vocabulary mastery. One way to build vocabulary mastery is by reading.

As explained above, reading is one of the most important skills to be mastered by language learners. Reading is one of the linguistic competencies or abilities a person must have to learn another language (Murtiningsih et al., 2016). In general, there are two ways to do reading: intensive reading and extensive reading. In intensive reading, the reader focused more on a deeper understanding of language features. The goal of intensive reading is to get a comprehensive and detailed comprehension of the text: not just what it means but also how it is generated (Carrell & Carson, 1997, p. 52).

Meanwhile, for extensive reading, the reader is more focused on understanding the meaning as a whole. As specified by Bamford and Day (1997), extensive reading is commonly connected with reading a vast quantity of material to gain an overall comprehension of the content. The meaning of the text was more important to readers than the meaning of individual words or phrases.

Extensive reading was very suitable to be used to develop vocabulary mastery. One of the advantages of extensive reading is that it exposes students to a wide range of vocabulary and provides them with access to advanced vocabulary that they will most likely find in academic books (Cummins, 2008). The hallmark of the extensive reading approach was that the reader feels happy while reading. The primary goal of the extended reading strategy is to get students to enjoy reading in English (Murtiningsih et al., 2016, p. 5). The way to approach extensive reading was to pay attention to the reading material that was read.

Murtiningsih et al. (2016) said, "One of the considerations to do extensive reading is about the selection of the reading material" (p. 6). Several materials were used for extensive reading, such as books, newspapers, or novels. Choosing materials for extensive reading might be important because the readers have to choose reading materials with a large amount of unfamiliar vocabulary so that the readers' vocabulary develops. The selection of extensive reading material was important since it necessitates using the least unfamiliar vocabulary in the text (2-5 percent of unfamiliar words) (Murtiningsih et al., 2016).

Novels were often used for extensive reading because novels have a large vocabulary, so readers would also get new vocabulary. The novel has many words and lets the reader apply the content in a realistic way (Murtiningsih et al., 2016). Therefore, novels were a beneficial medium for developing vocabulary mastery. According to Tsai (2012), reading books such as novels can develop vocabulary mastery. Novels can develop vocabulary mastery; with a broad vocabulary, reading skills also increase (Al-Bajalan & Alishah, 2017, pp. 20257-20258).

Several researchers have carried out research related to reading novels as a medium to develop vocabulary mastery. For example, a study conducted by Murtiningsih et al. (2016) discussed how English novels with the theme of young adults could improve vocabulary mastery in first-year students. Their study showed that by reading English novels, the vocabulary of first-year students experienced a significant increase. Another study discussing the use of English novels as a medium to develop vocabulary mastery was conducted by Abdelrady, Jahara, Elmadani, and Kumar (2022). This study was conducted on Sundanese

EFL students. The study results showed that literature such as novels can improve students' vocabulary mastery. Most students thought that using English novels could develop their vocabulary mastery. Further research was carried out by Tsai (2012); this study was conducted on students at a university in Taiwan with an intermediate reading level. This study showed that using novels in the reading class could improve students' vocabulary mastery, especially students who believed that by reading novels, their vocabulary would develop rapidly.

Although many researchers, Murtiningsih et.al (2016), Tsai (2012), and Jahara, Elmadani, and Kumar (2022) have researched reading English novels as a medium to develop vocabulary mastery, their research only focused on students' reading comprehension; participants' vocabulary skills could be increased by using novels. They did not focus on students' perceptions about what strategies they used to develop vocabulary mastery while reading English novels or their difficulties in reading English novels to develop vocabulary mastery. Therefore the researcher was interested in doing the study.

### **Identification of the Problem**

Extensive reading is one of the reading activities in ELED. In the extensive reading activities that were carried out in ELED, novels were used as the reading material. Because of the extensive reading activity in ELED, some students became interested in reading English novels. Several students at ELED used English novels as learning media to develop vocabulary mastery and also as part of their entertainment. However, most of the students often experienced difficulties with vocabulary mastery.

First, based on preliminary observations that had been done by the researcher, students who used English novels as learning media to develop vocabulary mastery and also as their entertainment has yet to find a suitable way to improve vocabulary mastery by reading English novels. Second, students could not maximize English novels to develop their vocabulary mastery. In this study, the researcher focused on the perceptions of ELED students at one of the Islamic Private Universities in Yogyakarta regarding reading English novels for vocabulary mastery.

There are several reasons why this study was conducted. First, listening, speaking, reading, and writing are skills that language learners must master. To master these four skills, foreign language students must have adequate vocabulary mastery. Novels were often used as media to develop vocabulary mastery and as part of entertainment by students. Because learning by using novels was not only fun but also helped students gain knowledge, such as improving reading skills and increasing vocabulary mastery. Students had different strategies for developing vocabulary mastery while reading English novels. According to Lawson and Hogben (1996), students had their way of developing vocabulary mastery, such as marking words they did not know or reading unknown words repeatedly. Through this study, the researcher found out what strategies students used while reading English novels to develop vocabulary mastery.

In addition, reading novels was a challenging thing. Based on the researcher's observation, students experienced difficulties while reading English novels, especially in vocabulary mastery. According to Tsai (2012), students had

difficulties with reading English novels to develop their vocabulary mastery. Through this study, the researcher discovered the difficulties that English Education Department students face while reading English novels to develop vocabulary mastery.

Therefore, the researcher was interested in examining the problem of reading English novels towards vocabulary mastery qualitatively. The researcher wanted to know the students' perceptions of reading English novels towards vocabulary mastery, the strategies students used to develop vocabulary mastery when reading English novels, and the difficulties students faced in using English novels as a medium to develop vocabulary mastery. Extensive reading in this study was carried out outside the classroom, therefore the extensive reading was carried out lightly.

### **Delimitation of the Research**

In this study, the research focused on the perceptions of English Education Department students about reading English novels for vocabulary mastery. Especially students' opinions about appropriate strategies to develop vocabulary mastery and what difficulties they faced while reading English novels to develop vocabulary mastery. This research occurred in the Department of English Education at the Islamic Private University in Yogyakarta. The participants in this study were students in batch 2019. The findings of this study presented the perceptions of English Education Department students at an Islamic Private University in Yogyakarta and not students from other departments or universities.

### **Research Question**

Based on the background above, the research formulated two research questions about English Education Department students' perceptions of reading English novels toward vocabulary mastery:

1. What strategies do students use to develop vocabulary mastery by reading English novels?
2. What are the difficulties English Language Education Department students face when reading English novels to develop vocabulary mastery?

### **The Objectives of the Research**

Based on the research question above, this research was purpose as follows:

1. To discover ways students at private Islamic University in Yogyakarta in the English Language Education study program used to develop vocabulary mastery while reading English novels.
2. To investigate what difficulties students at private Islamic University in Yogyakarta in the English Language Education Department have when reading English novels to develop their vocabulary mastery.

### **The Significance of the Research**

The research is expected to provide more benefits and knowledge for students, teachers, and future researchers.

**The Students.** This research will help determine what strategies can be used to develop vocabulary mastery using English novels. By knowing the right strategies to develop vocabulary mastery, students may apply the strategies to

develop vocabulary mastery by reading English novels. Therefore, students can minimize difficulties in finding suitable strategies to develop vocabulary mastery by reading English novels. Knowing the right strategy is also expected to increase students' motivation to read English novels.

**The Teachers.** Using novels as a medium to develop students' vocabulary mastery has often been done by teachers. Therefore, teachers can use this research to determine what strategies should be applied to students to develop vocabulary mastery by using English novels. Therefore teachers can help students find the right strategy to develop vocabulary mastery by using English novels.

Furthermore, teachers can find out what kinds of difficulties are experienced by students while using English novels to develop vocabulary mastery. By knowing students' difficulties in reading English novels, teachers may be able to avoid the difficulties their students face when reading English novels so that teachers can be more careful.

**The Future Researchers.** The results of this study can be used by future researchers who have the same interest. The results of this study are also expected to be a reference for those with the same interest.

### **Organization of the Research**

This research consisted of three chapters. The first chapter describes the research background, research identification, problem boundaries, research questions, research objectives, and research significance.

The first chapter described the background of the study and showed why the researcher was interested in conducting the research. Then identification



showed some problems regarding the study, and problem boundaries indicate some problems that the researcher selected. There were two research questions. This chapter also provided research objectives and significance for students who used novels to improve vocabulary mastery, teachers who used novels as teaching media to improve students' vocabulary mastery, and future researchers.

Chapter two was a literature review. This chapter provided a definition of reading, types of reading, materials for reading, the definition of novel, the definition of vocabulary mastery, strategies for developing vocabulary mastery using English novels, and the difficulties usually faced by students while reading English novels to develop vocabulary mastery. This chapter described the theory related to the general overview of using English novels to develop vocabulary mastery. At the end of chapter two, there was a review of related studies.

Chapter three was the methodology. This chapter has described how the researcher carried out the research. This chapter discussed methods, instruments, participants, settings, and data collection techniques. In this chapter, the researcher also explained how to analyze data.

The fourth chapter has described the findings and discussion. Here the researcher wrote down the results of the answers to the research questions. The research questions were regarding the strategies used by EFL students when reading novels to develop vocabulary mastery and the difficulties experienced by EFL students when reading novels to develop vocabulary mastery. Then the discussion was also supported by other studies that have similar topics.

The fifth chapter explained the conclusions and recommendations. The conclusion was a summary of the findings and discussion. Furthermore, in the recommendation, the researcher wrote down the benefits and advice that could be obtained by a certain group of people.