



**THE INFLUENCE OF THE MASTERY OF FUNCTION
WORDS ON READING ABILITY OF THE SEVENTH GRADE
STUDENTS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL**

**An Ex-Post Facto Research in SMP Negeri 1 Semarang in Academic Year
2019/2020**

FINAL PROJECT
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of *Sarjana Pendidikan*
in English

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2020

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MOTTO AND DEDICATION

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me

Phillipians 4:13

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest

Matthew 11:28

He has made everything beautiful in its time

Ecclesiastes 3:11

This final project is dedicated to :

1. The best parents I have ever had (Bapak Sutoto & Ibu Eleonora)
2. My extraordinary sisters (Christina & Widya)
3. My witty niece (Bella) & nephew (Kevin)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I am sincerely grateful to The Almighty God for the blessings, blissfulness, and guidance that is given, during the study and the process in finishing this final project.

The author realizes that the preparation of this final project cannot be inseparable from the guidance, advice, and cooperation from various parties, therefore with all humility and respect, the author would like to convey her gratitude to:

1. Mrs. Alief Noor Farida, S.Pd, M.Pd as the advisor, for her directions, patience, and advices so that I am able to finish this final project.
2. Head of the English Department and all lecturers in English Department for sharing lots of priceless knowledge and experiences.
3. Mrs. Nining Sulistyaningsih, M.Pd, Headmaster of SMP Negeri 1 Semarang who has given permission to conduct the research.
4. Mrs. Herowati Inayah, S.Pd, as the English teacher and all teachers in SMP Negeri 1 Semarang who have helped and facilitated to collect the research data.
5. My dearest parents, Drs. J.C. Sutoto Pradjarto, M.Pd. and Dra. Eleonora Dwi Wahyuningsih, M.Pd. for their supports, guidance, and prayers until I have finished this final project.
6. My sisters, Christina & Widya, my sweet niece and nephew, Bella and Kevin for always cheering me up in my ups and downs.
7. My best friends, Novita, Grace, Aziz, Reforma, Adhimas, Rombel F friends and KKN friends, Lilik, Alfiah, for always become my consolation.
8. Paduan Suara Mahasiswa UNNES (Voice of Conservation) for the unforgettable experiences and for being my second home and family.
9. Vincent Bastian Tertio Sayudha, for the prayer, support, motivation, and the love.

The Writer

ABSTRACT

Irmawati, Monica Ratna. 2020. *The Influence of The Mastery of Function Words on Reading Ability of The Seventh Grade Students of Secondary School (An Ex-Post Facto Research in SMP Negeri 1 Semarang in Academic Year 2019/2020). A Final Project, English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang*. Advisor : Alief Noor Farida, S.Pd, M.Pd.

Keywords : influence, function words' mastery, reading ability

This study was an ex-post facto research which aims to find out the influence of the mastery of function words on reading ability of the seventh grade students of secondary school and to find out how the reading ability between students with adequate function words' mastery and students with inadequate function words' mastery is. The samples used in this research were two groups of students who have adequate and inadequate function words' mastery. Each group consists of 30 students that is chosen by using stratified random sampling. In analysing the data, researcher used Independent Sample t-Test.

The result shows that the mastery of function words significantly influences students' reading ability. It is found that there is a significant difference of students' reading ability between students with adequate mastery in function words with those having inadequate mastery in function words. It is found that students with adequate function words' mastery have better and higher ability in reading than students having inadequate function words' mastery.

For the suggestion, it is better for students to learn function words in details and it is suggested that students had better have curiosity and initiative to learn function words by themselves. For English teachers, it is suggested that the teaching of function words should be inserted in the middle of the learning. It can be taught integratedly through reading texts or any other teaching materials, and not in separated teaching materials.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL	ii
DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	iii
MOTTO AND DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF APPENDICES	xi
CHAPTER 1	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic	7
1.3 Research questions.....	8
1.4 Objectives of the Study	9
1.5 Significance of the Study	9
1.6 Definition of Key Terms	10
1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study	10
CHAPTER II.....	11
2.1 Review of the Previous Studies	11
2.2 Review of the Theoretical Studies.....	18
2.1.1 Definition of Function Word	18
2.1.2 Types of Function Word.....	20
2.1.3 Concept of Reading.....	29
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	32
2.3 Hypotheses	35
CHAPTER III	36
3.1 Research Design	36
3.2 Subjects of the Study	37
3.2.1 Population.....	37
3.2.2 Sample.....	37
3.3 Research Variables	39
3.3.1 Independent Variable	39

3.3.2	Dependent Variable	39
3.4	Instruments of Data Collection	39
3.4.1	Function Words Test	39
3.4.2	Reading Ability Test	40
3.4.3	Scoring Test Item	40
3.4.4	Validity of The Test.....	41
3.4.5	Reliability of The Test.....	44
3.5	Methods of Data Collection	46
3.6	Procedure of Analysing Data	47
3.6.1	Normality Test.....	47
3.6.2	Homogeneity Test.....	48
3.6.3	Hypothesis Test	49
CHAPTER IV	51
4.1	Data Description.....	51
4.2	Prerequisite Test	53
4.2.1	Normality Test.....	53
4.2.2	Homogeneity Test.....	54
4.3	Data Analysis.....	56
4.3.1	The Influence of Function Words' Mastery on Reading Ability	57
4.3.2	The Reading Ability of Students with Adequate Function Words Mastery and Students with Inadequate Function Words Mastery	58
4.4	Discussion.....	59
CHAPTER V	64
5.1.	Conclusions.....	64
5.2.	Suggestions.....	65
REFERENCES	67
APPENDICES	74

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. 1 Definition of Key Terms	10
Table 2. 1 Subject Pronoun.....	23
Table 2. 2 Object Pronoun	24
Table 2. 3 Possessive Adjectives & Possessive Pronouns.....	24
Table 2.4 Coordinate Conjunction	25
Table 2.5 Subordinate Conjunction	26
Table 3. 1 Invalid Test Items of Function Words.....	42
Table 3. 2 Invalid Test Items of Reading Ability	43
Table 3. 3 Reliability Statistics of Function Words Test	45
Table 3. 4 Reliability Statistics of Reading Ability Test	46
Table 4. 1 Reading Ability Score of The First Group and The Second Group	52
Table 4. 2 Summary of Data Description.....	53
Table 4. 3 Test of Normality.....	54
Table 4. 4 Test of Homogeneity.....	55
Table 4. 5 Independent Sample t-Test.....	56
Table 4. 6 t-Test of Reading Ability.....	57
Table 4. 7 The Mean of First Group and Second Group.....	58

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2. 1 Modal Auxiliary	28
Figure 2. 2 Theoretical Framework.....	34

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1	74
Appendix 2	79
Appendix 3	90
Appendix 4	91
Appendix 5	92
Appendix 6	93
Appendix 7	94
Appendix 8	95
Appendix 9	95
Appendix 10	96
Appendix 11	97
Appendix 12	98
Appendix 13	99
Appendix 14	103
Appendix 15	122

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

“Words in language can traditionally be divided into two major groups on the basis of their grammatical behavior and main functions: content words (also known as lexical words) and function words (sometimes also referred to as grammatical words)” (Biber et. al., 1999). Each kind of word has its own purpose. Also, as part to form a sentence, these words complement each other.

Content words are called “open-ended” or “open-class” words. Open-class words mean this class of words can be frequently added by new words. We can add and create infinite number of words in this class of words. Many new words are increased throughout the year. Content words belong to parts of speech which consist of verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs.

Function words can be called close-class words. Function words do not have clear meanings in lexical or vivid concepts. They are lexically unproductive and are generally invariable in form. It is claimed that, “there are approximately 500 or so function words in English, and, of the 100 most common words in English, most are function words” (Smith & Witten, 1993). According to Biber et. al. (1999), “function words in English include parts of speech such as determiners, pronouns, primary auxiliaries, modal auxiliaries, prepositions, adverbial particles, coordinating conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions, *wh*-words,

existential *there*, the negator *no*, the infinitive marker *to*, and numerals (including ordinals and cardinals).”

The use of function words are different in each different language. Each language has its own rule about the use of function words. The use of English function words and first language function words cannot be equated. Lam (2009) stated that, “the learners cannot depend on prepositional knowledge from their first language.” The second and foreign language learners often find difficulties in using English function words because there are differences in their first language and English function words.

In English, function words can be classified as grammar and vocabulary. In English grammar, function words have roles to merge each content word, so it will have appropriate meaning. Meanwhile, if it is compared with content words, function words can be classified as vocabulary (Fries, 1974). According to Wilkins (1972, p. 111), “without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed.”

Eventhough it is sometimes difficult to learn, function words are rarely studied in schools. There is a few materials and books which discuss about function words in details. Sometimes, they are not studied explicitly. Function words are sometimes learned together with another materials and with another language skills. Function words mostly appear in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. However, the learning of function words sometimes has not been focused yet. The materials are focused on each English skill, not the functions words. Consequently, students found difficulties and made errors and mistakes in using function words,

so function words which appear in texts sometimes are not understood well by students. Moreover, they do not have explanation of the errors in more detail. It indicates that their errors do not receive proper control in their language learning from their teacher (Hendriwanto & Sugeng, 2013).

After having short interview with the English teacher of seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Semarang, it is found that there are some books which are used to develop English skills in the classroom. Those books are *Bright English*, *When English Rings The Bell*, and *Buku PR Bahasa Inggris*. These three books are used by the teacher to support the learning. However, for the students, it is only two books which must be owned. There are *Bright English* and *When English Rings a Bell* which are being loaned to students from School Library. Meanwhile, *Buku PR Bahasa Inggris* is not owned by the students. There is also a book which is only owned by the teacher, that is *Buku Mandiri*. However, this book is rarely used for classroom learning.

Then, after having skimming and scanning of those four books, it is found that not all of them have materials which discuss about grammar, in this case function words. From those four books, only two books which have grammar section in each chapter, they are *Buku PR Bahasa Inggris* and *Buku Mandiri*. The students' books have very few grammar section in each chapter. Meanwhile, the materials in each chapter mostly in the form of dialogues with many pictures. According to the English teacher, in order to teach grammar, the teacher should explain the grammar materials in the class using whiteboard and students should listen and then write it down on their notebooks.

Not only the mastery of grammar which is needed to learn English effectively, but the mastery of English skills are also very important. In order to master English, people should sharpen four basic skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. One of those skills that sometimes hard to master is reading skill. Reading is not just translating written words but also comprehending and acquiring. It is related to reading comprehension. “By reading, the students may get more knowledge as they are able to comprehend and construct the meaning of the text.” (Khoiriah & Suparman, 2017)

Reading is an important part in language skills. According to Beare (2014), “reading is important part of learning English.” By reading, students can learn and know many information that are provided in books, magazine, newspaper, articles and etc. “Reading is an interactive process between the reader, the text and the context in which the text is presented” (Grabe, 2009). There is a process in readers’ mind involving recognizing the words and connecting information from the text to the readers’ background knowledge before generating the meaning. Reading for meaning is known as reading comprehension (Febtisari & Fitrawati, 2017, p.2).

Comprehension of reading text is not an easy thing to do. According to Anderson (1985), “comprehension is also influenced by the ability to connect prior knowledge with new knowledge in order to create meaning.” Rahmawati (2019) stated that “students who succeed in comprehending text are actively involved in the reading processes that require the ability to make predictions, to confirm or disaffirm those predictions, to ask questions, to infer and visualize, and to monitor understanding they read.”

Reading cannot be separated from reading comprehension and reading ability. Both of them are important in reading. Reading ability implicates translating some kinds of text into voices or spoken words, while comprehension implicates acquiring meaning from those words. Urquhart and Weir (1998) stated that, “reading ability can be described as a cognitive ability which a person is able to use when interacting with texts, while comprehension can be viewed as the product of reading a particular text.”

Based on the pre-observation with the English teacher, it is known that not all students have good reading in the class. The quality of students’ reading ability can be seen from their scores in daily tests (*Ulangan Harian*), Mid-Term Test (*Penilaian Tengah Semester*) and Final Test (*Penilaian Akhir Semester*). According to the teacher, there is significant contrast between students with the high score and students with the low score. The prominent matter which effects the students’ score is their indolence or laziness. Students are mostly lazy to read texts which are provided in the tests.

The low understanding of vocabulary and grammar may also effect students’ ability in reading. Sometimes, the longer the texts, the more difficult to understand. It is because the vocabulary and grammar used in the texts, in this case, function words, are more complicated. “Vocabulary knowledge has long been recognized as having a close relationship with the development of reading ability” (Grabe, 2009). Meanwhile, “grammatical knowledge is important to the comprehension of texts” (Givón, 1995).

Students have different background of learning English. Not all students learned English in the elementary school. According to *Permendiknas Nomor 22 Tahun 2006* and *Permendiknas Nomor 23 Tahun 2006*, English subject is one of the compulsory local content (*Muatan Lokal Wajib*) for all elementary school students from grade I to grade VI. The time allocation provided is 2 hours of study. It is stated that local content is a curricular activity to develop competencies that are adjusted to the characteristics and potentials of the region, including the excellence of regions where the material cannot be grouped into existing subjects. The substance of local content is determined by the school.

From the explanation above, we can understand that English subject is not compulsory for elementary school children. English subjects are positioned as local content. In *Permendikbud Nomor 67 Tahun 2013* about elementary school curriculum page 9-10, it is not mentioned about the existence of English subjects in elementary school.

In line with this, English subjects are learned in secondary school or in junior high school. Because students begin to study English in junior high school, the material taught is also a basic material. This research try to examine seventh grade students of junior high school because materials about grammar and function words taught are still in a basic, as well as the reading skills taught in class.

There is a secondary school which is chosen. SMP Negeri 1 Semarang is chosen because the errors and mistakes of the mastery of function words are found in students' learning in this school. The researcher found these errors when doing Internship Program (*PPL*) in SMP Negeri 1 Semarang in 2019. From the

explanation above, the writer is interested to conduct a study which aims at investigating whether or not there is influence of function words' mastery on reading ability on seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Semarang.

1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic

There are some reasons why this topic is chosen to be conducted. One of the reasons is the usage of function words are sometimes confusing. The combination of function and content words will create some different meanings. In English, words often have different meanings in different settings (Chung & Pennebaker, 2007). Also, the usage of function words should be adjusted to the settings and contexts. For example, I live *at* Jalan Nilam Raya number 24, Sumur Batu, Kemayoran, Jakarta and I live *on* Jalan Barito, Kebunagung, Sumenep, Madura (*Buku PR Bahasa Inggris SMP/MTs Kelas VII Semester 1*). From the example, it is known that there is difference between the use of *at* and *on* based on the address which is showed.

Then, according to the writer's experience in Internship Program in SMP Negeri 1 Semarang, some students find difficulties in differentiating the use of function words. There are many errors and mistakes in using function words. Because function words are always used in all language skills, these errors also happen in all language skills. These errors indicate that the students' mastery of function words is still at the low level.

One of the obvious mistakes happen in reading skill. Based on the researcher's experience in Internship Program of seventh grade students in SMP Negeri 1 Semarang, students often asked the meaning of some words and

vocabularies in some texts from their books. Vocabularies which are provided in the text are sometimes strange for them. Also, students tend to be lazy to read, especially if long texts are provided. It happened not on one or two students, but most of students in each class. When students are given texts, they often confused with the vocabularies and the content of the text.

Another reason why this topic is chosen is because function words are rarely studied in SMP Negeri 1 Semarang. It is because some learning books which students own do not provide section of function words. After having skimming and scanning of the books used in class, it is found that only a few books which provide grammar section which consists of explanation and exercises. Unfortunately, the books which provide grammar section are only owned by teachers. Students are using loan books from school library which are provided by *Kemendikbud*. These books mostly provide dialogues with pictures in all chapter. Also, these books provide vocabulary exercises which mostly talk about content words without any emphasis in the function words.

1.3 Research questions

The research questions of this study are:

1. How does the mastery of function words influence reading ability of the seventh grade students of secondary school?
2. How is the reading ability of students with adequate function words mastery compared with students with inadequate function words mastery?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. This study aims to show how the mastery of function words influences reading ability of the seventh grade students of secondary school.
2. This study aims to compare the reading ability of students with adequate function words mastery compared with students with inadequate function words mastery is.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The result of this study hopefully can be useful for any parties:

1.5.1 The Students

The researcher hopes that this study can improve students' reading ability through mastering function words. Then, it is hoped that this study can motivate students to learn more about function words.

1.5.2 The Teacher

The writer hopes that this study will make teachers give more attention about the usage of function words in classroom learning.

1.5.3 The Researcher

By doing this research, hopefully the researcher can improve her knowledge about the usage of function words and their influence towards students' reading ability. Also, it is expected that the writer can have experience in doing research at school.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid mistakes and misunderstanding of the terms and content of the research topic, it is important to define the key-terms used in this study:

Table 1. 1 Definition of Key Terms

	Definition
Nordquist, 2019	Function Word: A word that expresses a grammatical or structural relationship with other words in a sentence
Grabe and Stoller, 2002:09	Reading Ability: The efficiency to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

1.7.1 Scope

There are many kinds of function words in English grammar such as: preposition, conjunction, pronoun, auxiliaries, determiner, etc. However, in this research, the researcher only uses some function words which have been learned in seventh grade of secondary school.

Furthermore, there are a lot of texts for reading, but this research will only use some texts which are learned in seventh grade of secondary school such as thanking and apologizing letters, announcement texts, and descriptive texts.

1.7.2 Limitation

The researcher investigates the influence of function words' mastery on reading ability to seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Semarang.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Review of the Previous Studies

Function word is a part of English grammar which rarely learned explicitly in classroom activity. The usage of function words are sometimes ignored. Some students are sometimes wrong in choosing the correct function words which should be used. Anjayani (2016) found there are some errors and mistakes happen in the usage of preposition. This study showed that there are 1002 prepositions in 72 students' writing, "there were 117 incorrect preposition usage or 11.68%."

In line with them, Wulandari (2010) found that, "people who learn English as a second language mostly have difficulty in understanding and using prepositions." The non-native speakers found difficulties to use words which do not have clear lexical meaning though those words have important functions in sentence.

Not only prepositions, determiners also become one of the function words which incorrectly used. Felice and Pulman (2008) stated that, "prepositions and determiners are known to be one of the most frequent sources of error for L2 English speakers." The errors are about 17% for determiners and 12% for prepositions. It was found that prepositions are challenging for learners because they can appear without predictable pattern. For example, we say, I study **in** Semarang, but I study **at** UNNES.

As stated before, it is known that determiners become one of function words which is difficult. Sometimes, it makes non-native English learners confused with the usage of determiners. Atibrata (2012) found that there were 98 determiner

errors. “Most of them were articles with 71 cases (72.44%), followed by possessives with 12 cases (12.24%), demonstratives with 10 cases (10.20%), and quantifiers with 5 cases (5.10%).” From this research, it can be assumed that the students mostly found difficulties in the use of articles in writing in English.

Determiners can be found not only in sentences, but also in many genre of texts. The use of determiners is found in research articles. Fitriani (2019) analyzed the central determiners that are used in the abstracts of journals. It is found that central determiners were used in sentences of the abstracts. This research also revealed that, “the terms of central determiners in subject were constructed through 7 determiners such as demonstrative article, personal pronoun, possessive pronoun, indefinite pronoun, demonstrative article, definite article, and indefinite article.”

In line with the above previous studies, articles are included in determiners. Swasti (2016) investigated the errors on the use of English articles. This study found that the dominant errors on English articles which were made by the students are grammatical errors (indefinite a/an-for-zero). This condition shows that the students find difficulties to differentiate between countable and non-countable nouns. It can be concluded that students have weak understanding of English articles which still included in function word. These kind of errors are also supported by Fatimah (2017). This study investigated the errors of the use of article made by students in eleventh grade students of SMAN 5 Kediri in writing analytical text. The errors are categorized into 3 kinds, there are omission, addition, and confused type. It is found that there were seven categories from 18 categories of article usage. The most frequent error was addition type with 63.158%.

Another function words which mostly used are pronoun. Hendriwanto & Sugeng (2013) found that, “there were fourteen types of grammatical errors of the students’ narrative writing.” The highest is pronoun errors with 11.56%. There are two types of these errors. They are incorrect usage of relative and subjective pronouns in both subjects and objects position.

Moreover, function words which is investigated are conjunctions. Pangaribuan et al. (2018) found that, “students made error in using subordinate conjunction (since, in case, as, because) in complex sentences.” According to them, the errors that were made by the students are “substitution”. Substitution means a word in a sentence is substituted by another.

Not only subordinate conjunction, a research about coordinate conjunction is also conducted. Irawan (2018) investigated students’ acquisition order of coordinating conjunction. This research used a test which consists of 70 questions about the usage of seven coordinating conjunctions as the research instrument. These conjunctions are ‘for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so’ or we can abbreviate it as FANBOYS. This study revealed that the acquisition order here was caused by several conditions. First condition is the “and” conjunction are the most frequently conjunction that appear in the daily activity, and the “nor” are the most rarely used in daily interaction. The second condition is coordinating conjunction are not being taught explicitly in the classroom activity. Then, the last is related to the textbook. After being analyzed, it was found that, “and conjunction is used about 722 times in both first and second semester books, meanwhile nor conjunction is only present for 2 times in both semesters.”

As well as that, another study about coordinate conjunctions were also conducted. Deviyana (2017) analyzed the types of error and the students' grammatical error in using coordinate conjunction in writing compound sentences. The results of this study found that there are 47 errors in sentences. "The highest percentage of the errors belong to misformation categorized (72.34%), followed by omission (17.02%), addition (8.51%) and misordering (2.13%)." Then, Mareta (2019) found there are some errors of conjunction usage in students' analytical exposition text. From this research, it is found that the errors of the usage of conjunction can be classified into three categories, those are, coordinate conjunctions, correlative conjunctions, and subordinate conjunctions. "Coordinate conjunction has the most errors with 25 errors, then subordinate conjunction with 22 errors and the last is correlative conjunction with only 2 errors."

The previous studies above are talking about usage error of each kind of function words. Fatah (2014) examined the grammatical errors that was mostly happened in students' spoken English while they were practicing Micro-Teaching. The subject of the research is 6th semester students of LTM class in the academic year of 2012/2013. This research found there were 210 errors which consists of 27 errors from Usage of Be (12.9%), 46 errors from Tenses (21.9%) 4 errors from Passive Voice (1.9%), 9 errors from Preposition (4.3%), 32 errors from Article (15.2%), 7 errors from Demonstrative Pronoun (3.3%), 11 errors from Noun Clause (5.2%), 6 errors from Adjective Clause (2.9%), and 68 errors from Noun Form (32.4%). Mostly the grammatical error happened in the use of function words. Moreover, Pratiwi, Rukmini & Faridi (2017) found there were 83.3% grammatical

errors happen in students' writing of business letter. It showed that only few students who had less understanding in grammar aspects, such as preposition, modal, article, verb forms and tense sequence. There were 12.5% students who had very few grammatical errors.

The mastery of grammar might affect other language skills, especially reading. Andini et al. (2014) found that there were correlation between students' grammar mastery and reading comprehension. This research showed that there was a positive correlation between them. Furthermore, it showed that the correlation between grammar mastery and reading comprehension is significant. Reading and grammar knowledge are linked each other. Pao (2016) investigated the influence of reading habit and grammar knowledge on the students' writing capability on narrative text. In his study, Pao pointed out that, "reading habit influenced the students' capability of writing narrative texts ($\beta = 0.745, p < 0.05$), knowledge of grammar influences the students' capability of writing narrative texts ($\beta = 1.304, p \leq 0.05$) and reading habit and knowledge of grammar influence the students' capability of writing narrative texts ($R^2 = 0.574, F - count = 35.073, p < 0.05$)."

The research about the correlation of grammar mastery and reading are also found in these studies. Karyadi (2016) found that, "there is a correlation between mastery of grammar and reading comprehension achievement in SMK SMART Bekasi." It is found that with the level of significance 0.05 (5%) and $df = 28$, the r_{table} is 0.374 and the r_{value} is 1.023. It means that the $r_{value} > r_{table}$ ($1.023 > 0.374$). Then, Negara (2016) also found that there is a positive correlation between

grammar mastery and reading comprehension ability of the first semester students in STIE Pontianak in Academic Year 2016/2017. The coefficient correlation of the result was 0.970, and it is higher than the r_{table} . The results also showed that, “the correlation between students’ grammar mastery and reading comprehension ability is significant. It is showed by the t_{value} is higher than the t_{table} ($24.9 > 2.71$).”

From some researches before, grammar knowledge is one of the factors that impact in comprehending the text. Zuhra (2015) found that the students face difficulties when the text is long and complicated with various different modifying phrases. In reading comprehension, especially in facing the test, students have difficulty in creating good sentence to make it coherent and relevant according to the specific text. It is believed that if students have adequate vocabulary and good grammar comprehension, the length of the text will not be a problem and they will be able to comprehend and answer the test easily.

The leverage between grammar and reading comprehension also supported by another research. Sasmita (2012) found out the students’ problems in comprehending English reading text. “The research finding shows the factors that make students have difficulties in understanding English reading text is grammar knowledge and lack of vocabulary.” Furthermore, Dini (2015) found that there is significant positive correlation between students’ grammar mastery and their reading ability. The coefficient correlation between them is ($0.6117259 > 0.393$) at significance level 0.01. It is also found that “there is significant correlation between students’ vocabulary mastery and their reading ability with the coefficient correlation ($0.728 > 0.393$) at the significance level 0.01.”

Function words in English, if it is compared with content words, can be classified as vocabulary (Fries, 1974). Furthermore, Simanjuntak, Suparman, & Sukirlan (2015) found that there is a significant effect of students' reading interest and vocabulary mastery on their reading comprehension. "It means that the higher students' reading interest and vocabulary mastery, the higher students' get reading comprehension."

Vocabulary has a role in the ability of reading. Meylana (2019) found that there are some factors which affected students in their reading comprehension. Those factors are the lack of vocabulary, lack of using reading strategies, did repetition which make them running out of time, and also face serious problem because of grammar. Ratnawati (2006) found that, "there is significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the seventh grade students of SMP N 13 Semarang in academic year 2005/2006." The correlation coefficient between them is 0.417, which is higher than the r_{table} that is 0.220 ($0.417 > 0.220$).

Based on previous studies mentioned above, it can be concluded that function words which are part of grammar and vocabulary are sometimes difficult for non-native people because they do not have clear lexical meaning even though they have important functions in the sentence. It is known that many errors and mistakes happen in the usage of function words.

Another conclusions from those previous studies are there are correlations between grammar knowledge, vocabulary mastery and reading ability. Grammar

knowledge is one of the factors that impact in reading. Moreover, there is significant effect of students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

The previous studies above mostly discuss about the influence of grammar knowledge, vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Most of them have discussed function words in details. In addition, the research gap here is the previous studies mostly discuss about each kind of function words separately. Almost none of them conducts a study about function words as a whole and its influence on reading ability. Therefore, this present study then tries to find out if there is any influence of the mastery of function words on students' reading ability.

2.2 Review of the Theoretical Studies

In this section, the writer serves some theories related to this study. There will be discussion about the definition of function word, types of function words, the nature of reading, reading ability, and assessing reading ability.

2.1.1 Definition of Function Word

“In English grammar, a function word is a word that expresses a grammatical or structural relationship with other words in a sentence” (Nordquist, 2019). In contrast to a content word, a function word has little or no meaningful content. Nonetheless, Shea (2014) stated that “the fact that a word does not have a readily identifiable meaning does not mean that it serves no purpose.” It means that eventhough function words have no meaningful content, but they have roles in constructing words and sentences.

As opposed to content words, function words are concluded as a closed group. It is unwilling to accept of new members. Function words are a group of words which have less number if it is compared with content words. Nevertheless, function words tend to appear more often than content words. “Statistically a 190-word text in English consists of as many as 90 function words” (Krzyszowski, 1994). “Function words usually have a simple structure and consist of a single morpheme only; in consequence, they are mostly very short and tend to be more abstract” (Krejtz, Szarkowska, & Łogińska, 2015). In spoken language, they are mostly unstressed.

Function words help us to link meaning and information. “Function words are important for understanding, but they add little meaning beyond defining the relationship between two words” (Beare, 2019). However, without function words, those words will only become set of words and have no meaning. It will make the readers confused with the meaning of those words.

Function words can also be called as structure words or grammatical words. Pennebaker (2011) stated that, “function words account for less than one-tenth of 1% of your vocabulary but make up almost 60% of the words you use.” It means that the function words that human used are very limit if it is compared with content words or vocabulary we use in daily life. However, most function words we use have been forming the words we use everyday.

Function words consist of many types of words. “Function words include pronouns, prepositions, articles, conjunctions, and auxiliary verbs” (Chung & Pennebaker, 2007). According to Nordquist (2019), “function words include

determiners, conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, modals, quantifiers, and question words.” Meanwhile, Beare (2019) said that, “function words include auxiliary, prepositions, articles, conjunctions, and pronouns.” Based on the above opinions, it can be concluded that function words include prepositions, determiner, pronoun, conjunction and auxiliary.

2.1.2 Types of Function Word

There are many types of function words, such as preposition, determiner, pronoun, conjunction and auxiliary. In this section, the writer serves some definitions and functions of those types of function words according to some experts.

a. Preposition

Preposition is a part of function words. Seaton and Mew (2007) stated that, “preposition as a word that connects one thing with another, showing how they are related.” “Prepositions begin prepositional phrases, which contain nouns and other modifiers. Their function are to give more information about nouns” (Nordquist, 2019). Leech, Deuchar, and Hoogenraad (1982) stated that, “prepositions introduce prepositional phrases, and express relations of possession, place, time, etc. It is usually followed by a noun or pronoun.” Meanwhile, Brown (2000) said that, “preposition as a word used to express some relation of different things or thoughts to each other, and is generally placed before a noun or a pronoun.”

Preposition is a part of English grammar. Preposition is categorized as parts of speech and one of function words in English grammar. Preposition has an important function in English grammar. One of the function of preposition is it

shows the relation between noun or pronoun and some other words in a sentence. (in, at, on, to, with, by, of, etc.)

The relations which are shown by prepositions are quite a lot. Prepositions show many relations (for different nouns) in sentence. Prepositions describe the relationships such as space (place, position, direction) and time. “Prepositions are used for many purposes such as preposition for time e.g. in, on, at, etc, preposition for place e.g. in, on, at, preposition for direction e.g. to, towards, into, through, etc, preposition for agent e.g. by, preposition for device, instrument or machines. e.g. on, by, with, prepositions used after verbs to make prepositional verb. e.g. look at, look after, laugh at” (Kamlasi, 2018). Meanwhile, Anjayani (2016) stated that, “there are several kinds of English prepositions with different functions which are usually used.” There are preposition of place, preposition of time, preposition of movement, preposition to show a method, reason, accompaniment, etc.

From the explanation above, we can conclude that preposition is part of function words which has function as a connector of some words to make those words relatable and have proper meaning.

b. Determiner

Determiner is a word which introduces a noun. “Determiners are words which specify the range of reference of a noun in various ways” (Leech & Startvik, 1981). For example, by making it definite (*the girl*), indefinite (*a girl*), or by indicating quantity (*many girls*). Hornby (1982, p. 117) said that, “a determiner may identify a person or thing, or two or more persons or things,” as in *this dictionary*, *those chairs*, *Bella's* or *my sister's doll*, etc. “Determiners come before adjectives in noun

phrases, and show what part of a general class is being talked about. They include articles ('a'; 'the'), possessives ('my', etc.), demonstratives ('this', etc.) and quantifiers (e.g., 'each', 'many', 'all')" (Swan, 2005).

Determiners are concluded as function words. Ba'dulu (2008) mentioned that, "determiners are function words covering the articles, numerals, demonstratives, and possessive pronouns and they commonly occur with nouns to form noun phrases." Meanwhile, Radford (1997, p. 295) stated that, "a determiner is a word like a/the/this/that which is typically used to modify a noun, but which has no descriptive content of its own." From those statements, it is known that determiners are categorized as function words.

The function of determiner in a sentence is important. The term determiner is used to describe the grammatical element which appears at the beginning of a noun phrase. "Noun phrases are one of the components of a sentence. A noun cannot appear by itself. It must minimally be preceded by a determiner." (Master, 2013, p. 34)

Determiners are divided into some types. Some kinds of determiners are articles (a, an, the), possessive pronouns (my, your, their, our, ours, whose, his, hers, etc), demonstratives (that, this, those, these), quantifiers (some, both, most, many, a few, a lot of, any, much, a little, enough, several, none, all), and numbers. "They function as adjectives to modify nouns and go in front of a noun to show the reader whether the noun is specific or general." (Nordquist, 2019)

From all of the explanations above, it can be concluded that the determiner are function words that occurs before a noun to modify, specify, and identify a noun in various ways, in order to form a noun phrase.

c. Pronoun

Pronoun has been known as one of the parts of speech and function words. Dykes (2007) said that the word ‘pronoun’ comes from the Latin pronomen which has meaning ‘for a noun’.” It is used to avoid confusing and bumbling repetition. Similarly, Stobbe (2008) stated that pronoun can be used in place of noun to avoid monotonous repetition. Pronouns are divided into several different categories. Some categories of pronoun by their function are proposed by DeCapua (2008), as follows:

1) Subject Pronoun

Subject pronoun is a pronoun which replaces the subject of the sentence or clause. It can be found at the beginning of the sentence or precedes the main verb. Subject pronoun informs who or what the doer of the verb is, or who or what is described by the verb.

Table 2. 1 Subject Pronoun

	Singular	Plural
1 st Person	I	We
2 nd Person	You	You
3 rd Person	He, She, It	They

Adopted from Swick (2005, p. 12)

2) Object Pronoun

Object pronouns are used as the object of verb; direct object or indirect object. It indicates the recipient of an action. It is preceded by verb or takes

place at the end of the sentence. Like the subject pronoun, there are eight object pronouns, as follows:

Table 2. 2 Object Pronoun

	Singular	Plural
1 st Person	Me	Us
2 nd Person	You	You
3 rd Person	Him, Her, It	Them

Adopted from Swick (2005, p. 12)

3) Possessive Pronoun and Possessive Adjective

These two possessive words are divided because of the different function in a sentence. Possessive adjective is followed by noun or noun phrase (Sentence a), but possessive pronoun is not (Sentence b).

a) This is *my* phone

b) It is *mine*

Possessive adjective and possessive pronoun are similar because they refer to possession, but different in their function:

a) Possessive adjectives form part of a noun phrase.

b) Possessive pronouns replace noun phrases.

Table 2. 3 Possessive Adjectives & Possessive Pronouns

Possessive Adjectives	Possessive Pronouns
My	Mine
Your	Yours
His/Her	His/Hers
Its	Its
Our	Ours
Their	Theirs

d. Conjunction

“Conjunctions are members of a small class that have no characteristic form. They function chiefly as nonmovable structure words that join such units as parts of speech, phrases, or clauses” (Frank, 1972, p. 206). A conjunction is a joiner that conjoins part of a sentence. “Conjunction belongs to function words, such as pronoun, conjunction, preposition” (Pangaribuan, et al., 2018).

Conjunction has some functions. “One of its function is to connect words or phrases that have the same grammatical function in a sentence. This use of conjunctions is called parallel structure” (Azar, 1989). The conjunctions that are used for parallel structure are *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*.

There are two types of conjunctions. There are coordinate and subordinate conjunction (Pangaribuan et al., 2018).

1) Coordinate Conjunction

“Coordinate conjunction joins structural units that are equal grammatically. It comes before the last unit and is grammatically independent of this unit” (Frank, 1972, p. 206). This conjunction is also called coordinators. Oshima and Hogue (2006) stated that there are seven coordinators. “They can be remembered by the phrase FAN BOYS (For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So).” Here are the more specific explanation about FAN BOYS according to Oshima and Hogue (2006):

Table 2.4 Coordinate Conjunction

Coordinator	Function
For	To add a reason
And	To add similar, equal idea
Nor	To add a negative equal idea
But	To add an opposite idea
Or	To add an alternative possibility
Yet	To add an unexpected or surprising continuation

Coordinator	Function
So	To add an expected result

Adopted from Oshima & Hogue (2006, p. 166)

2) Subordinate Conjunction

“Subordinate conjunction introduces a clause that depends on a main, or independent clause. The subordinate conjunction is grammatically part of the clause it introduces; it is never separated from its clause by a comma” (Frank, 1972). The examples of subordinate conjunction are when, if, although, than, until, since, before, after and etc. Wren and Martin (1990) stated that, “subordinate conjunction joins a clause another on which it depends for full meaning. The subordinate conjunctions include *after, because, if, although, that, whether, than, though, till, before, and unless.*” Hartanto (1996) stated that, “subordinate conjunction join a main clause with dependent clause. It is called modes of defenses, which has nine kinds. They are apposition, cause or reason, result of effect, purpose or intention, condition, concession, comparison, time and the way or the level.”

Subordinate conjunctions are “the conjunction used to connecting two sentences which are not equal. The two sentences serves as dependent clause and main/independent clause” (Panggabean, 2016). There are some functions of subordinating conjunctions in sentences. The function of these conjunctions are as follows:

Table 2.5 Subordinate Conjunction

No.	Function	Subordinating Conjunction
1	cause or reason	as, because, for, since, whereas, wherefore, etc.
2	comparison that showed the nature of the same	as well as, rather...than..., than, as...as, etc.

No.	Function	Subordinating Conjunction
	level and nature is not the same level	
3	concession	although, even though, though, however, provided, nevertheless, etc.
4	Condition	if, provided that, provided, since, unless, whether, as if, etc.
5	Manner	as, how, according, as far as, etc.
6	Purpose	that, in order that, so that, lest, etc.
7	Time	as, as soon as, while, as long as, before, until, since, still/till, whenever, after, etc.
8	Result	That
9	apposition	That

Adapted from Panggabean (2016)

e. Auxiliary

“Auxiliary verbs are also called helping verbs. Auxiliary add structural meaning or semantic coloring to verbs carrying the full burden of lexical meaning” (Frank, 2006). According to her, there are three types of auxiliaries which each of it serving a different purpose.

1) Tense Auxiliaries

Tense auxiliaries consist of be, have, will – shall. The tense auxiliaries perform a structural function only.

Be occurs with the -ing present participle in the progressive forms of the tenses, and with the –ed past participle in the passive forms of the tenses. Have is used for the perfect tenses. (Be and have are also independent verbs). Shall and will are used for the future tense

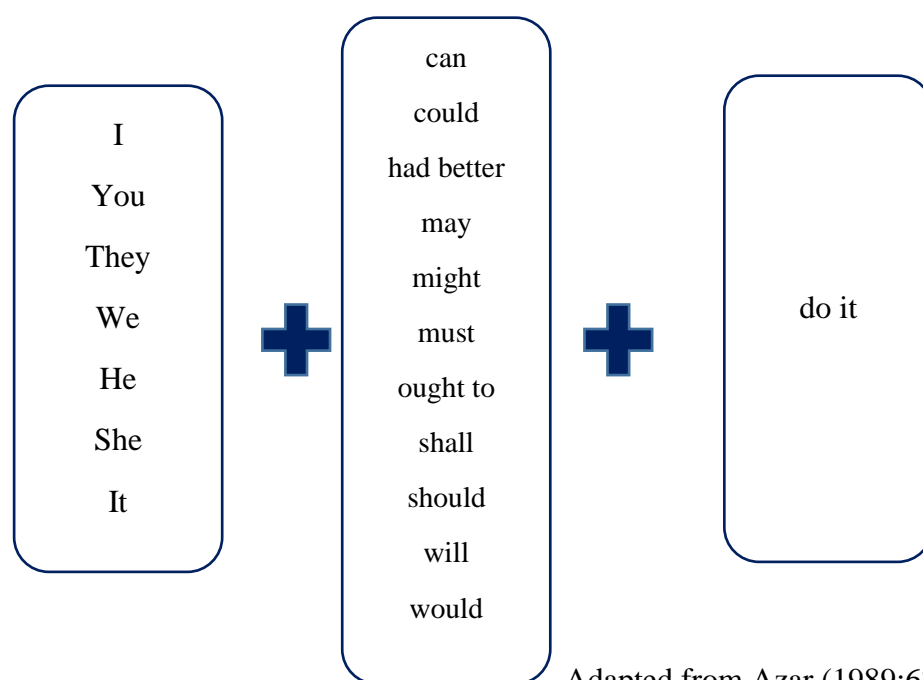
(Frank, 2006)

2) Do Auxiliary

The do auxiliary is accompanied by the simple form of the verb (the infinitive without to). It is used only in the simple present tense (do or does offer) and in the simple past tense (did offer). It provides an auxiliary to auxiliary-less verbs to enable them to function in the grammatical patterns.

3) Modal Auxiliary

Modal auxiliary generally expresses a speaker's attitudes, or "moods". For example, modals can express that a speaker feels something is necessary, advisable, permissible, possible, or probable; and, in addition, they can convey the strength of these attitudes (Azar, 1989, p. 68). Modal auxiliaries generally have no –s suffix for third person, and no infinitive or participial form (Frank, 2006). This following chart shows modal auxiliaries:



Adapted from Azar (1989:68)

Figure 2. 1 Modal Auxiliary

The definitions and the functions of function words have been discussed in this section. Nevertheless, function words used in this research, are the function words which appeared in the textbooks of the 7th grade of junior high school. Those function words are prepositions, determiners (include articles, quantifiers),

pronouns (subjective pronouns, objective pronouns, possessive pronouns, possessive adjectives), conjunctions (coordinate conjunctions only), and auxiliary.

2.1.3 Concept of Reading

This part explains the nature of reading, reading ability, and assessing reading ability.

a. The Nature of Reading

Reading is one of language skills which is important to learn. “Reading can be defined as the ability to read at an appropriate rate with adequate comprehension” (Nunan, 2003). It means that reading is an activity to understand about what is being read. Grabe and Stoller (2002, p. 9) said that, “reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately.” It means that reading is an activity to obtain information from such texts. Those kind of text can be formed of book, newspapers, online articles, and etc. Furthermore, Jain and Patel (2008) stated that, “reading is the most important activity in language class.” From those statements, it can be concluded reading is an important activity which not only used to gain information, but also to develop readers’ knowledge from the text they read.

Reading is a process of receiving idea and meaning. Anderson et. al. (1985) defined, “reading as the process of making meaning from written texts. It means that we need the harmony of related sources.” According to Wixson, Peters, Weber, and Roeber (1987), “reading is the process of creating meaning that involves: (a) the reader's existing knowledge; (b) the text information; and (c) the reading context.” Grabe (1991 in Alyousef, 2005) said that, “reading as an interactive

process between readers and texts that result in reading fluency.” It means that the success in reading can be seen from the level of fluency. Furthermore, Ahmadi and Pourhoseini (2012) stated that, “the main goal of reading is to gain the correct message from a text that the writer intended for the reader to receive.”

Reading is an interactive process between the readers’ knowledge about the topic presented and what is written in the reading text. Harris and Sipay (1980) defined that, “reading is the meaningful interpretation of printed or written symbol.” According to La Ode and Yunus (2016), “reading is the result of the interaction between the perception of graphic symbols that represent language and the reader’s language skill and knowledge of the world.” In this process, the readers try to evolve the meaning which is built by the writer.

Based on those definitions which have been presented, it is concluded that reading is one of English language skills which reading is one of language skills which is advantageous to gain information in the text. By reading, we will open our mind and thoughts in facing of a problem.

b. Reading Ability

Reading ability or reading skill is an ability to process a transfer of idea from text to brain from writer to reader. Urquhart and Weir (1998) stated that, “reading skill is a cognitive ability which a person is able to use when interacting with texts.” In reading, people can develop their mind and build critical thinking about the topic and the idea of the text they read.

Reading is very useful for students. Stone (2009, p. 39) stated that, “reading is a fundamental goal that children must master in order to be successful in school

and in life.” In order to master reading ability, there are some skills based on some experts. Hughes (1989) described that, “there are four levels of reading skills: macro-skills, micro-skills, grammatical and lexical abilities, and low-level operations.” Each level of reading skills is beneficial and important for mastering reading ability.

c. Assessing Reading Ability

Reading skill is a receptive skill. According to Wilda (2013), “the reading macro-skill are scanning text to locate specific information, skimming text to obtain general idea, identifying stages of argument, and identifying examples presented in support of an argument.” Furthermore, Wilda (2013) stated that, “the micro-skill underlying reading skills are identifying referents of pronouns, using context to guess meaning of unfamiliar words, and understanding relations between part of text.”

There are many techniques which can be used to assess reading ability. According to Wilda (2013), those techniques are “multiple choice, true/false, completion, short answer, guided short answer, summary cloze, information transfer, identifying order of events, identifying referents, guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words from context.” The following is some techniques which mostly used to test reading ability. These techniques are taken from Wilda (2013). The technique to assess reading ability which is used in this research

- 1) Multiple choice. The test takers’ ability in reading is seen from their answer in choosing one of a number of choices by marking the options of the multiple choice.

- 2) True/false. The test-takers should respond to a statement by choosing one of the two choices, true or false.
- 3) Completion. In completion, the test takers should complete a sentence with a single word.
- 4) Short answer. It is in the form of questions and requires the test takers to answer briefly.

The technique to assess reading ability which is used in this research is multiple choice test. Meanwhile, in scoring the reading test, Hughes (1989) suggested that, “errors of grammar, spelling or punctuation should not be penalized, as long as it is clear that the test-taker has successfully performed the reading task which the item set.”

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The following is a brief discussion about the relation between the Mastery of Function Words and Reading Ability. According to Fries (1974), if function words are compared with content words, they can be classified as vocabulary. Meanwhile, Biber et. al. (1999) stated that when it is seen from the grammatical behavior, function words are concluded as grammar. Function words are also called grammatical words. In this research, function words are discussed as both vocabulary and grammar.

As vocabulary, function words have roles in reading ability. Ratnawati (2006) found that there is correlation which is significant between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension of the seventh grade students of junior high school. Simanjuntak, Suparman, & Sukirlan (2015) found there is significant effect of

students' reading interest and vocabulary mastery on their reading comprehension. According to Boyer (2017), there is a relationship between vocabulary development and reading comprehension. The knowledge of words support reading comprehension. The limitation of vocabulary knowledge can be resulted in poor reading comprehension. It is because readers are not able to understand what they have read. From those studies, it means the students' reading comprehension ability is influenced by the mastery of vocabulary and vocabulary development.

In line with this, function words which are concluded as vocabulary and grammar can give contribution on students' reading ability. Meanwhile, Andini et. al. (2014) found out that there is a positive correlation between grammar mastery and reading. Karyadi (2016) also found that there is a correlation between grammar mastery and reading comprehension achievement which is found in the level of SMK. Negara (2016) found that there is positive correlation between the mastery of grammar and the ability of reading comprehension. Moreover, Givón (1995) stated that grammar knowledge is important to the comprehension of texts. From the researches above, it can be concluded that grammar mastery and grammar knowledge can influence the ability of reading.

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that reading ability is influenced by the mastery of grammar and vocabulary. When students have good and better grammar and vocabulary mastery, their ability in reading might be good and better too.

The following is a diagram which shows the relation between the mastery of function words and reading ability:

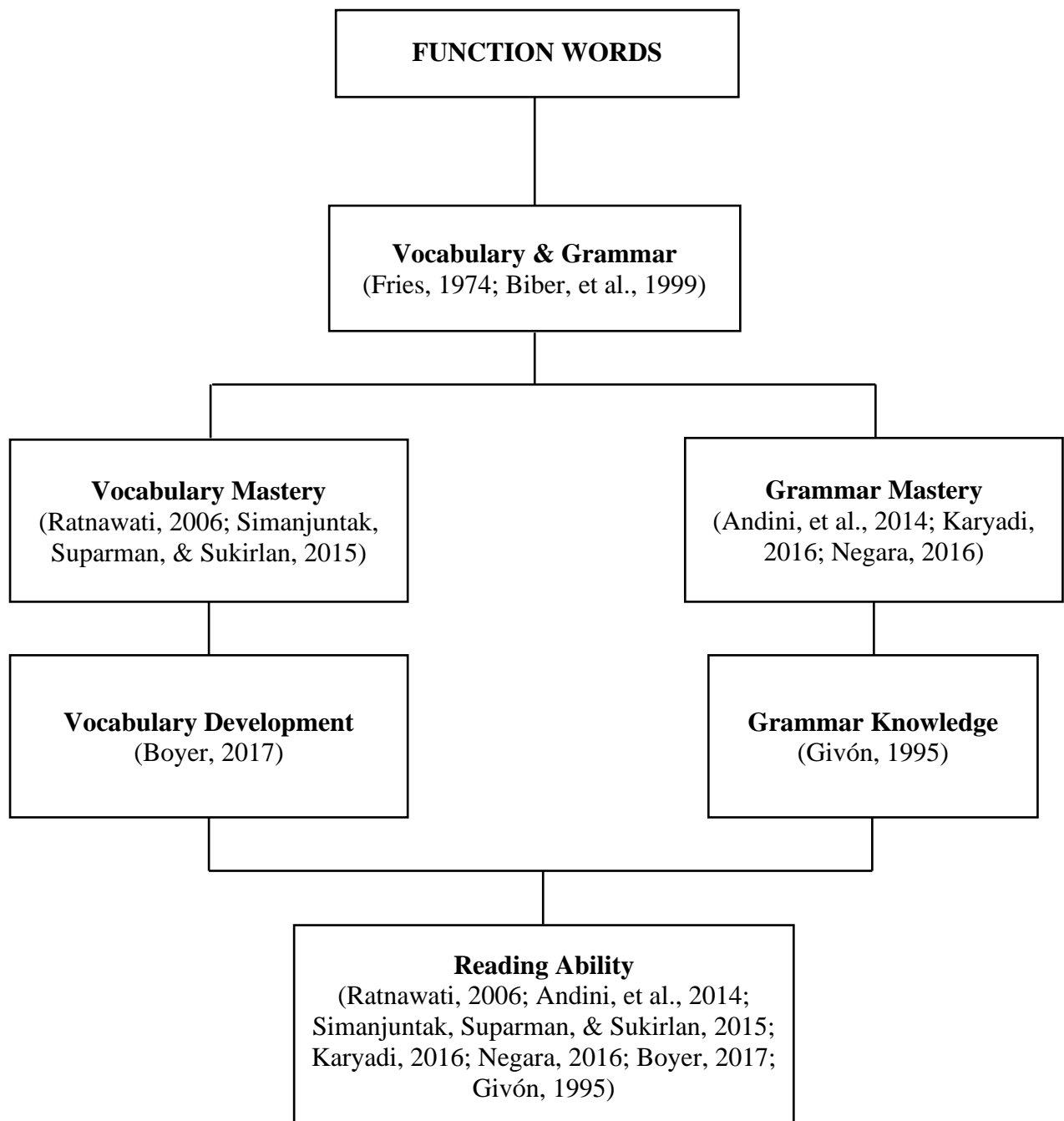


Figure 2. 2 Theoretical Framework

2.3 Hypotheses

Based on the discussion on related theories and theoretical framework, the hypothesis of this research is formulated as follows:

- a. There will be a significant difference of students' reading ability between students with adequate mastery in function words with those having inadequate mastery in function words.
- b. Students with adequate mastery of function words will have higher ability in reading than those having inadequate mastery of function words.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents a description on the conclusions and suggestions of the result of the research. It is hoped that, the conclusions and suggestions written in this chapter will be useful for English education in general, for the students, the teachers and the further researchers in specific.

5.1. Conclusions

The objectives of this study is to find out how the mastery of function words influences reading ability of the seventh grade students of secondary school. From the results of the data analysis, it is clear that there is significant difference in students' reading ability between students with adequate function words mastery (First Group) and the students with inadequate function words mastery (Second Group). In other words, it can be concluded that the mastery of function words influences students' reading ability.

This study also aims to know how the reading ability of students with adequate function words mastery compared with students with inadequate function words mastery is. Based on the results of the data analysis, it is also known that the First Group has higher and better reading ability than the Second Group. Finally, it can be concluded that the students with adequate function words mastery have better and higher ability in reading than the students with inadequate function words mastery.

5.2. Suggestions

The result of this research indicates the mastery of function words influences the reading ability. From this result, there are some suggestions that are given by the researchers. These suggestions are intended to students, teachers and the further researchers.

The first suggestion is for the students. One of the factors to have good reading ability is having good mastery of function words. Function words which are seldom learned as a whole, is proven to bring influence for reading ability. Consequently, it is better for students to learn function words in details. It is also better if students can master it because function words frequently appear in phrases, clauses, sentences of texts. Students had better have curiosity and initiative to learn function words by themselves, because most of students' books do not provide materials about function words.

The second suggestion is intended to the teachers. Eventhough function words are rarely studied as a whole, English teachers are suggested to teach function words in the class once in a while. The teaching of function words can be inserted in the middle of the learning. It can be taught integratedly through reading texts or any other teaching materials, and not in separated teaching materials. In the writer's opinion, the order of the presentation of function words should be started from the function words which appear most often.

The last suggestion is for further researchers. It is hoped that this research will be useful for other researchers who might develop similar topic of research. It is hoped that this research can give new knowledge and novelty about the causal

correlation between the mastery of function words and reading ability. Also, it is expected that this research can become references of another future researches. It is hoped that there will be other researches which talks about the influence of function words in other language skills (listening, speaking, or writing) and involves different research subjects in other level of learners.

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