



## ENHANCING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE THROUGH READING THEMATIC STORY AT SMPN 6 WATAMPONE

Alfaraida Rumaisyah<sup>1</sup>, Ishak<sup>2</sup>, Wahyu\*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>123</sup>Institut Agama Islam Negeri Bone

\*Corresponding Author Email: wachyou92@gmail.com

### Abstract

This study discusses reading thematic stories to increase students' vocabulary knowledge. This study used thematic stories as learning media. This study applied a pre-experimental method with a one group pre-test and post-test design. The population of this research is junior high school students from SMP Negeri 6 Watampone. The sample of this study consisted of 30 grade 7 students. This study used one instrument, namely the multiple-choice test. Data collection was carried out by conducting a pre-test and post-test to measure the development of students' vocabulary knowledge before and after treatment. As a result, it was revealed that there was a significant difference from the pre-test and post-test. The average pre-test score was 29.50 and the post-test average score was 79.83. From T-test the research found that the significant value (significant 2-tailed) value is lower than alpha ( $\alpha$ ) ( $0.00 < 0.05$ ). It means that reading thematic story can improve students' vocabulary knowledge.

**Keywords:** Reading, Thematic Story, Vocabulary Knowledge

### INTRODUCTION

In language learning, there are four basic skills that must be mastered, namely: Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Listening. Learning vocabulary words is essential for developing all that language skills in English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) (Alqahtani 2015). So, one aspect that supports these four skills is vocabulary, without vocabulary it will be difficult to master these four skills.

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in language acquisition, particularly when it comes to learning foreign languages (Cameron 2001). The fundamental basis for language learning lies in the acquisition of vocabulary (Afzal 2019). To achieve fluency in a specific language, the primary focus should be on mastering its vocabulary. A wide range of vocabulary is vital for effective communication skills, as it enables individuals to express their emotions, thoughts, and ideas. Therefore, vocabulary serves as a fundamental and indispensable aspect of language proficiency.

Effective communication relies on vocabulary as a crucial component. Grammar alone cannot convey much, and without vocabulary, communication becomes impossible (Thornbury, 2002). This means that possessing strong grammar skills is futile if one lacks an extensive vocabulary. Students who do not acquire a rich vocabulary will struggle to communicate their thoughts effectively, whether in speech or writing. Additionally, they will face challenges in comprehending the words used by others due to their limited vocabulary. In the realm of communication, vocabulary serves as a tool for exchanging information, comprehending others, and fostering connections between individuals.

Vocabulary learning in the classroom should be essential in order to avoid issues with the students' vocabulary mastering because it has become one of the key components of the English teaching and learning process. However, based on pre-observation conducted by the researcher on 14 June 2022 at SMP Negeri 6 Watampone several students still had a lot of vocabulary-related issues. The first issue is that students were too lazy to memorize every new word they heard or read in a text. Second, students had trouble understanding the meanings of new words. Third, they were uninterested in learning English and lacked motivation.

Thematic learning serves as an effective approach for incorporating learning methods within a meaningful context. Moreover, it directs students towards specific learning techniques and facilitates collaborative and interactive learning opportunities for both students and teachers in the classroom (Min, Rashid, and Nazri 2012). By employing thematic learning, where themes are central to students'

educational experience, students can establish stronger connections between their existing knowledge and the subject matter they are learning (Wardani, Sunardi, and Suharno 2020). According to Wardani et al. (2020), thematic learning not only engages students in an enjoyable manner but also promotes their comprehension of abstract ideas related to the content. Thematic teaching strategies are based on concepts that are often linked to students' real-life experiences, making it easier to cultivate their interest and active participation in the learning process (Yuh-Tyng Chen 2012). With the aim of enhancing students' vocabulary knowledge, the researcher proposes the integration of thematic learning with reading comprehension. Thematic reading is utilized as a learning strategy to augment students' vocabulary proficiency. Based on the problem Identification above, the question that has been formulated by the research is "Is the use of reading thematic story effective in enhancing student's vocabulary knowledge at SMPN 6 Watampone ?".

Numerous studies have explored the use of storytelling as a means of facilitating vocabulary acquisition among students. One such study conducted by Lenore van den Berg and Nanda Klapwijk in 2019, titled "The Impact of Second-Language Storybook Reading on the Vocabulary Acquisition of Grade 1 Learners," focuses on the influence and enhancement of students' vocabulary knowledge through reading storybooks. By employing quantitative data, the researchers observed the disparity in vocabulary skills among Class 1 students before and after implementing reading materials and interactive vocabulary learning instructions. The outcomes of this research indicate a noticeable improvement in children's vocabulary knowledge as evidenced by pre- and post-tests using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test IV (PPVT-IV) (Berg and Klapwijk 2019).

Similarly, Elissavet Chlapana and Eufimia Tafa's 2014 study, "Effective practices to enhance immigrant kindergarteners' second language vocabulary learning through storybook reading," delves into the investigation of interactive and direct instruction methods on vocabulary acquisition among kindergarten-aged immigrant children during storybook reading. The study involved eighty-seven immigrant children from 12 different kindergartens. The findings revealed that interactive instruction yielded more positive outcomes in terms of target vocabulary learning compared to direct instruction. Moreover, the impact of instructed words surpassed that of uninstructed words (Chlapana and Tafa 2014).

Shahriar Mohammad Kamal conducted a study in 2019 titled "Developing EFL Learners Vocabulary by Reading English Comprehension in EFL Classroom." The purpose of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of reading comprehension in English as a means to enhance the vocabulary knowledge of EFL students. The findings of the study indicated that reading comprehension is a valuable approach for developing vocabulary. The research emphasizes the importance of regular reading for expanding students' word stocks (Kamal 2019).

In 2018, Jiren Liu and Jianying Zhang conducted a study titled "The Effects of Extensive Reading on English Vocabulary Learning: A Meta-analysis." The objective of this study was to conduct a meta-analysis to determine the overall impact of extensive reading on vocabulary learning in an EFL setting. The study aimed to provide researchers and teachers who are interested in extensive reading with new research directions and inspiration to design more effective instructional methods. (Liu and Zhang 2018).

In 2010, Sri Darma Siahaan conducted a study titled "Using Story Reading Technique to Improve EFL Young Learners' Vocabulary." The purpose of this study was to enhance the vocabulary knowledge of EFL students. The researcher implemented three cycles of classroom action research using the technique of reading storybooks. The study involved ten participants from the first grade of an elementary school. Quantitative data collected through tests were analyzed using SPSS, while qualitative data gathered through observation and interviews were analyzed descriptively. The results indicated that the technique of reading storybooks could improve students' vocabulary knowledge (Siahaan 2012).

Cindy Puspitasari conducted a study titled "Enhancing Vocabulary Skills of Tenth Grade Students at SMAN 2 Palopo in 2020." The objective of the research was to improve students' vocabulary through the use of short stories. In order to select the participants, a purposive sampling technique was employed, resulting in a sample size of 25 students. The reason for selecting this particular sample was that some students struggled with reading and encountered difficulties expressing their ideas. The

research utilized vocabulary tests in the form of pretests and posttests to measure the effectiveness of using short stories as a learning strategy. The findings indicated that incorporating short stories into English instruction positively impacted students' vocabulary knowledge (Puspitasari, 2020).

Vocabulary acquisition and learning are closely intertwined as vocabulary plays a vital role in expressing thoughts, emotions, and opinions. Vocabulary is an integral component of language and cannot be isolated. Multiple definitions exist for vocabulary. It refers to the collection of words necessary to communicate effectively in a specific language (Berg & Klapwijk, 2019). Without a sufficient vocabulary, effective communication and comprehension of spoken or written words would be impossible. Vocabulary encompasses the comprehension of words and their meanings (Liu & Zhang, 2018). Webster New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines vocabulary as a list of words and phrases arranged alphabetically and accompanied by definitions in a dictionary, glossary, or lexicon (Tarina, 2021). These definitions collectively emphasize that vocabulary encompasses a range of words and phrases that must be acquired to facilitate effective communication.

The acquisition of vocabulary plays a vital role in the process of learning English. Typically, students begin by focusing on developing their speaking and listening skills, followed by the improvement of their reading and writing abilities. However, without a solid grasp of vocabulary, it is challenging for students to achieve proficiency in these four language skills. Vocabulary holds significant importance in all aspects of language usage, not just limited to English. Consequently, it is crucial to emphasize vocabulary instruction in all language learning contexts. According to Thornbury, teaching vocabulary involves transferring new knowledge into the existing mental lexicon of students, as stated by Nazara in 2019.

Hiebert and Kamil define vocabulary as the understanding of word meanings that individuals utilize to express their thoughts and gain knowledge about new ideas, as mentioned by Siahaan in 2012. One's vocabulary serves as a means to convey their feelings and thoughts, reflecting their mindset. When learning new concepts, vocabulary is essential for comprehension. Thornbury emphasizes that without vocabulary, effective communication becomes impossible, as expressed by Panjaitan, Sibarani, and Saragih in 2021. Therefore, mastering vocabulary becomes particularly important for learners who are acquiring a new language. Without vocabulary knowledge, individuals will struggle to speak, write, and comprehend conversations.

McCarthy suggests that the most significant challenge faced by language learners is their vocabulary, as it constitutes the largest portion of meaning in any language. Thus, learning vocabulary is the key to successfully acquiring a second language, as noted by Yaacob et al. in 2019. This statement underscores the importance of vocabulary in language learning, especially for second language or foreign language learners, who often encounter difficulties due to their limited vocabulary. Therefore, placing emphasis on vocabulary acquisition is of utmost importance.

Learning vocabulary is crucial due to its continuous expansion. Individuals cannot completely conquer a language's vocabulary since it evolves over time. Hieber and Kamil (2005) assert that vocabulary acquisition is not a skill that progresses linearly or can be completely mastered. The growth of vocabularies occurs throughout a person's entire lifespan. As per Ur (1996), students should focus on acquiring the following aspects:

1. In terms of pronunciation and spelling, students need to understand how a word is pronounced and how it is written.
2. Additionally, students should know how to arrange words to form coherent sentences.
3. When it comes to collocation, words or phrases that seem similar in meaning can be differentiated based on how they commonly appear together with other words. The specific collocations associated with certain items can determine whether they sound "right" or "wrong." For example, students may use the expression "spend the money" rather than "use the money," or "spend the time" rather than "use the time."
4. Regarding meaning, it encompasses various aspects:
  - a. Denotation: It refers to the dictionary definition or literal meaning of a word. For instance, the word "cat" denotes "a kind of animal."

- b. Connotation: It refers to the implied meaning of a word beyond its explicit description. For example, the connotative meaning of the word "home" includes concepts such as "a nation," "a place of warmth," "comfort," and "affection."
  - c. Appropriateness: This refers to whether an item is suitable or fitting for a given context. Students need to understand if a certain word is commonly used, relatively rare, more suitable for writing than speaking, or appropriate for formal or informal discourse.
  - d. Synonym: It pertains to a word or phrase that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another word or phrase in the same language. For instance, the word "intelligent" has the same meaning as the word "smart."
  - e. Antonym: It refers to a word or phrase that has the opposite meaning of another word or phrase in the same language. For example, "small" is an antonym of "big."
  - f. Hyponym: It involves a word with a more specific meaning than a general or superordinate term that can be applied to it. For instance, "scarlet," "vermillion," and "crimson" are hyponyms of the term "red."
  - g. Superordinate: It represents a higher-level category or term within a classification system. For example, "flower" is a superordinate term for "rose," "jasmine," and "orchid."
  - h. Translation: It refers to finding words or expressions in the learner's native language that have equivalent meanings in the target language. For example, the word "Study" in Indonesian has the same meaning as the word "Belajar."
5. The process of word formation involves analyzing vocabulary items and identifying their individual components. Knowing how these components are combined provides valuable insights. For instance, if students grasp English affixes like sub-, un-, and -able, they can make educated guesses about the meanings of words like "subconscious," "unbreakable," or "unpredictable." (Ur, 1996, p.60)

However, this research focuses only on one aspect among the five mentioned above, which is Meaning. Within the aspect of meaning, there are eight subcategories, but the researcher only concentrates on three of them: denotation, synonym, and translation.

Hiebert and Kamil categorized vocabulary into two types: oral vocabulary and print vocabulary. Oral vocabulary pertains to the words we understand when speaking or reading aloud, while print vocabulary refers to words we recognize when writing or silently reading. They divided vocabulary based on the four fundamental English skills. They argued that beginner language learners primarily acquire word sequences through oral representations, but as they learn to read, print vocabulary becomes increasingly important for literacy compared to oral vocabulary (Hiebert and Kamil, 2005).

Other studies have also classified vocabulary into two types. Stuart, according to Webb (2008), distinguishes between receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary, or passive vocabulary, refers to words that are initially encountered through reading and listening before being comprehended, absorbed, and retained in memory (Nor Ashikin, Noraziah, and Nur Fatima Wahida, 2016, p.2). Nation describes passive vocabulary as words that are known and recognized for their meaning in both written and spoken forms. On the other hand, productive vocabulary involves creating words with correct spelling, punctuation, and pronunciation, using them accurately and purposefully in various contexts, and focusing on meaningful application (Noroozi and Siyyari, 2019, p.2). In brief, receptive vocabulary refers to words that students can identify and comprehend when used in context, but they may not be able to produce these words themselves. Productive vocabulary, on the other hand, includes terms that learners understand, can pronounce correctly, and can use naturally in speaking and writing.

Chlapana & Tafa (2014) suggested that interactive instruction during storybook reading involves asking different types of questions, both closed and open-ended, to engage children in discussing the story and actively participating in the process of explaining vocabulary. The main aim of this approach is to foster a positive attitude towards reading and create enjoyable reading sessions. By actively involving learners in discussions about the characters, events, plot, and vocabulary of the stories they listen to, interactive vocabulary instruction facilitates the acquisition of a second language (L2) and enhances understanding of L2 vocabulary (Berg and Klapwijk, 2019).

An alternative to traditional reading programs is the thematic unit approach, which centers around novels with varying reading levels that revolve around a specific theme (Bell, 1988). Wright (2002) defines "stories" broadly as any accounts of dramatic events, whether based on fact or fiction, including traditional stories, local legends, contemporary fiction, news articles, personal anecdotes, stories created by students, and those encountered through personal storytelling, television, theater, cinema, newspapers, and public events (Nazara, 2019).

Stories provide a meaningful context where grammar and vocabulary interact in a coherent manner, making them effective for teaching second or foreign languages. They promote the development of vocabulary, grammar, oral skills, and literacy skills (Gutierrez Arvizu, 2020). Stories encourage language learners to use their imagination and be creative, as long as they focus on comprehending the overall meaning of the story. Prior to acquiring the necessary reading skills to independently learn vocabulary, story reading offers students the opportunity to encounter new words. Nazara (2019) found that students' word knowledge increased after reading the same story multiple times, even without explicit word explanations from the teacher.

To create engaging learning environments for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) vocabulary to young students, one effective strategy is to incorporate story reading. This approach appeals to young learners as they have a natural inclination to acquire new vocabulary through short stories. By reading stories, EFL students can enhance both their listening and comprehension skills, leading to improved vocabulary acquisition (Siahaan, 2012).

According to Duff, Tomblin, and Catts, the notion that reading development can significantly impact a child's exposure to unfamiliar words suggests that reading ability may be linked to the rate of vocabulary growth. Empirical research supports this idea, demonstrating that reading written materials aids older children and adults in acquiring a large number of new words (Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985; Sternberg, 1987). Tager-Flusberg (2015) suggests that word learning through reading can positively influence vocabulary performance in both oral and written tasks, as words encountered in texts become partially accessible for use in both forms of language.

Hofstetter (2021, p. 115) identifies three approaches to foster word learning: handwriting, looking up words in a dictionary, and using flashcards. In practice, these strategies can be combined. Consider a language student reading interesting articles or short stories. Whenever she encounters a new term, she records it in a vocabulary notebook and tries to infer its meaning from the context when it reappears in the text. At the end of the reading session, she searches for the definitions of the recorded words (and verifies their pronunciation if using an online dictionary). Subsequently, she creates flashcards for each word. As most language learners enjoy acquiring new words, this process is primarily driven by internal motivation.

Setting goals for learners can serve as a motivational factor for reading. The entire class should have collective learning goals, while individuals can establish their own personal objectives. The curriculum should be simplified and aligned with the learners' aims. It is essential to utilize exercises and assignments that target specific skills, focusing on one aspect of learning at a time. Additionally, monitoring learners' progress and acknowledging their accomplishments can inspire and encourage them. Visual aids provided by the instructor should be incorporated into instructions (Kamal, 2019, p. 31).

## METHOD

The researchers employed a quantitative methodology centered around analyzing numerical data through statistical methods. The findings of the study suggest that the English vocabulary of grade 7E students at SMP Negeri 6 Watampone can be enhanced by reading thematic stories. Utilizing thematic stories as a means to bolster students' English vocabulary represents a novel approach within the realm of English language learning.

The primary objective of this study was to assess the efficacy of reading thematic stories in fostering vocabulary development among seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 6 Watampone. The research followed a pre-experimental design, which involves a single group and utilizes both pre-tests and post-tests to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented intervention. (Rukminingsih, Adnan,

and Latief, 2020). This research was located at SMP Negeri 6 Watampone, Jl. Lapawowi Karaeng Sigeri, district of Tanete Riattang, Bone regency, South Sulawesi. Meanwhile, The population of this research is all of the student in SMPN 6 Watampone from seven grade in the academic year 2022/2023. The total of the population is 2013 students. The researcher applied cluster sampling, which is the Eighth Grade of SMPN 6 Watampone consist of 30 students. In this study, there were 301 student populations divided into seven groups. The researchers only chose one of the seven population groups that had been divided, because researcher could not make the entire seventh grade student population as the research sample. One of the seven groups that the researcher took as a sample consisted of 30 students.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

The data have been taken from the pre-test and post-test given for student grade VII E in SMP Negeri 6 Watampone. The data shows an increase in student scores from the pre-test to the post-test. This score is used to find out whether there is a significant development of students' vocabulary knowledge who have not previously done treatment and after doing treatment by reading thematic stories. The results were presented in the following table.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of students' pre-test

|       |       | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | 10    | 3         | 10.0    | 10.0          | 10.0               |
|       | 15    | 3         | 10.0    | 10.0          | 20.0               |
|       | 20    | 2         | 6.7     | 6.7           | 26.7               |
|       | 25    | 5         | 16.7    | 16.7          | 43.3               |
|       | 30    | 1         | 3.3     | 3.3           | 46.7               |
|       | 35    | 9         | 30.0    | 30.0          | 76.7               |
|       | 40    | 3         | 10.0    | 10.0          | 86.7               |
|       | 45    | 4         | 13.3    | 13.3          | 100.0              |
|       | Total | 30        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

From the table, it could be seen there are 4 students who got the highest from 30 students, 3 students got the lowest score 10, 3 students got score 15, 2 students got score 20, 5 students got score 25, only one student got score 30, 9 students got score 35, 3 students got score 40, 4 students got highest score 45. It can be seen that the score that most students got was 35, there are 9 students who get that score. The score that the least students got was 30, only one student got this score.

Thus, it can be known that the highest score obtained by students is 45 and the lowest score is 10. Based on the classification of scores that have been determined, the overall score of students where the lowest is 10 and the highest is 45 indicates that students are in the lowest classification, namely Very Poor.

Post-test was given after the researcher gave the treatment by using reading thematic story as learning media to development student vocabulary knowledge. The result post-test shown in table:

Table 2. Frequency and percentage of students' post-test

|       |    | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | 70 | 1         | 3.3     | 3.3           | 3.3                |
|       | 75 | 10        | 33.3    | 33.3          | 36.7               |
|       | 80 | 9         | 30.0    | 30.0          | 66.7               |

|  |       |    |       |       |       |
|--|-------|----|-------|-------|-------|
|  | 85    | 9  | 30.0  | 30.0  | 96.7  |
|  | 90    | 1  | 3.3   | 3.3   | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 30 | 100.0 | 100.0 |       |

From the table, it could be seen only one student who got the highest from 30 students, only one student got the lowest score 70, 10 students got score 75, 9 students got score 80, 9 students got score 85, only one student got the highest score 90. It can be seen the score that most students got was 75, there are 10 students who get that score. The score that the least students got was 90 and 70, only one student got these scores.

Thus, it can be known that the highest score from post-test obtained by students is 90 and the lowest score is 70. Based on the classification of scores that have been determined, the highest student's score 90 can be classified as Very Good. The student's score 85 to 75 can be classified as Good. the student's score 70 can be classified as Fair.

Table 3. the paired sample test of pre-test and post-test

#### Paired Samples Test

|        |                      | Paired Differences |                |                 |   |         | T       | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|---------|---------|----|-----------------|
|        |                      | Mean               | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |         |         |    |                 |
|        |                      |                    |                |                 | Lower                                     | Upper   |         |    |                 |
| Pair 1 | pre-test - post-test | -50.333            | 10.662         | 1.947           | -54.315                                   | -46.352 | -25.857 | 29 | .000            |

Based on table above, in the pre-test and post-test the researcher found that the significant value (significant 2-tailed) is lower than alpha ( $\alpha$ ) ( $0.00 < 0.05$ ). It means that it is significant.

#### Discussion

Pre-experimental research is what this study entails. This study used reading thematic stories in order to enhance student' vocabulary knowledge. The results of this research indicate that class VII E students' vocabulary can grow by reading thematic stories. An improvement of the student learning outcomes as research subjects shows that this research is success. According to the analysis of the pre-test results, the greatest score pupils could achieve was a 45, while the lowest was a 10. Meanwhile, in the post-test the highest score obtained by students was 90 and the lowest. the score is 70.

This study supported earlier studies by Lenore van den Berg and Nanda Klapwijk (2019) found that the usage of storybooks by students had positive response by them. Reading short stories helps students' vocabulary. It helps kids learn vocabulary more quickly and enjoy studying (Berg and Klapwijk 2019). as a result, almost all of them see an improvement in their vocabulary after treatment. Reading English comprehension is beneficial at improving students' vocabulary knowledge reading abilities in EFL student of private university, according to Shahriar Mohammad Kamal (2019). Additionally, Sri Darma Siahaan's study (2012) discovered that using story reading was very effective to increase student' vocabulary development and story reading recommended in English learning (Siahaan 2012). This research additionally reveals that employing interactive methods for vocabulary instruction can aid students in acquiring new vocabulary. This finding is supported by Chlapana and Tafa (2014), who demonstrated that direct instruction alone was less effective for vocabulary acquisition compared to incorporating reading aloud sessions along with interactive vocabulary instruction. Berg and Klapwijk (2019) also demonstrated that integrating reading with interactive and explicit word instruction, along with more conventional approaches to vocabulary teaching, enhances the speed and quantity of vocabulary acquisition. According to Chlapana and Tafa (2014), utilizing interactive vocabulary instruction engages students more actively in the learning process.

The pre-test is given before the treatment is carried out. The students did the pre-test and after analyzing the score data of the students' pre-test results, the mean of the pre-test was 29.50. on the pre-test it can be said that the scores obtained by students are very low. Then after conducting the pre-test, the researcher conducted 5 treatment meetings with learning media to read different thematic stories at each meeting. However, one of the reading texts was discussed at two meetings due to insufficient time.

After the treatment was carried out, at the 6th meeting the researcher gave a post-test. The mean in the post-test was 79.83. In the mean that obtained from the post-test, it can be seen that there is a significant difference with the mean from the pre-test. This discrepancy demonstrates an increase from the initial assessment to the subsequent assessment.

The purpose of the study was to investigate whether reading thematic stories enhances English vocabulary knowledge among seventh-grade students. The researcher tested the null hypothesis (Ho), which stated that the use of reading thematic stories does not enhance students' vocabulary knowledge, and the research hypothesis (H1), which suggested that the use of reading thematic stories does enhance students' vocabulary knowledge. According to Table 4.4, the t-Test results revealed that the probability value (significant 2-tailed) is lower than the alpha level ( $\alpha$ ) ( $0.00 < 0.05$ ). Therefore, this indicates that the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected, and the research hypothesis (H1) is accepted.

Based on table 2 it can be seen that in pre-test all students are included in the Very Poor category. The score obtained was very low, there were 3 students (10%) having the lowest score and 4 students (13%) having the highest score. The highest score on this pre-test cannot even be included in the Good category, it can only be included in Very Poor category. Based on table 3.3, it can be seen that in the post-test students' scores increased, there was one student (3%) who got the lowest score and there was one student (3%) who got the highest score. Even so, student scores were dominated in Good category.

The study's statistical analysis revealed that students had a significantly low level of vocabulary knowledge prior to using reading thematic stories as a learning medium. This was evident in the pre-test results. However, following the implementation of the treatment, an improvement in student learning outcomes was observed, as indicated by the post-test results.

## CONCLUSION

The researcher reached the conclusion that the seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 6 Watampone were able to enhance their vocabulary effectively by reading thematic stories. This conclusion was based on the analysis of findings, data, and discussion presented in the previous chapter. By actively engaging the students in the learning process, the use of thematic stories proved beneficial for teaching and learning. The evidence supporting this claim was obtained through the students' test results. The average score on the pre-test was 29.50, while the average score on the subsequent post-test was 79.83. The research further determined, through a T-test, that the calculated significant value (significant 2-tailed) was lower than the predetermined alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value of 0.05. This outcome indicates that reading thematic stories can enhance students' vocabulary knowledge.

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