

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background to the present study and also sets out the research questions and its purpose. Then, the significance and scope of the study are presented briefly before discussing the clarification of terms and the outline of the thesis.

1.1 Background of the Study

Teaching and learning English for most non-English speaking countries always provides a space for public discussion. It also attracts experts, practitioners of education and governmental authority to discuss the teaching of EFL. This phenomenon is always challenging, because teaching EFL involves various factors such as students' age, teaching learning facilities, teachers' competency, culture, environmental setting and so forth, which directly influence the learning outcomes.

As matter of fact, although English has been taught since students study at the Elementary level, the result is not so satisfactory. A large number of school graduates do not have good competency in the subject. This condition is difficult to solve because the factors affecting the environment of learning in the classroom still exist in the arena of our educational activity. Those factors are even linked each other creating classroom environment. In relation to the problems, Peck (in Murcia, 1991) mentions that "native language, cultural background, age, emotional and social needs, learning style, level of education and previous instruction in English are 'important factors' to support the learning process".

From the factors above, it is evident that teacher plays the most important part of the success of teaching activity in the EFL classroom. A teacher is supposed to have ability in bridging the language being taught. The teachers are also expected to have strategies on how to solve the troubles that block the continuity and the success of teaching a foreign language. Moreover, apart from his/her duty to teach his/her students well, a teacher also has a responsibility to motivate his/her students to study by their own. The students are intentionally required to be independent in enhancing their English competency.

In terms of teaching English, there are four primary skills that should be studied by learners; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Those four skills stand over the capability of how students acquire vocabulary, language usage, pronunciation, syntax and semantics. In other words, to make students master the four skills of language, they should have first master a number of vocabularies. Therefore, the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for a successful foreign language use; without extensive vocabulary, we will unable to use the structures and function we may have learned for comprehensible communication (Rivers, 1983 cited in Nunan, 1992:117).

It is clear that mastering adequate vocabulary is the first phase for foreign language learners to comprehend the targeted language both productively and receptively. However, many people get troubles in understanding English either verbally or non-verbally because of their lack of vocabulary. Mastering EFL vocabulary is the first one of other

determinant factors when someone wants to comprehend texts written in English. "Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (Thornbury 2002: 13).

Considering the facts above, the researcher is of the opinion that the importance of vocabulary in the context of teaching and learning EFL is very reasonable to highlight, both theoretically and practically. Vocabulary is the first central part of the language acquisition once students learn English as a foreign language.

In line with the above issue, the fact shows that in the period of 24 years, since 1979 until 2003, non-native students who found difficulties in speaking English increase by 124 % (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005, cited from LD Online.htm). This situation is not surprising, Calderon et al (2005), cited in LD Online.htm, said that the ability of students in mastering vocabulary becomes the main reason. Meanwhile, Vanvlodorp in uk-online said that the condition mentioned above usually happened because students lose their motivation and interest to learn vocabulary.

In many ESL classes even when the teachers have devoted much time to vocabulary teaching, the results have been disappointing. Sometimes after months or even years of English, many of the words most needed have never been learned, especially in countries where English is not the main language communication (Alen, 1983: 5).

A number of studies have recently dealt with lexical problems (problems related to words). Through the researches are finding that

lexical problems frequently interfere with communication; communication break down when people do not use the right words (Alen, 1983: 5).

Viewing the condition above, the researcher concludes that teacher's creativity to apply strategies of teaching vocabulary is really needed in the process of teaching and learning EFL. The strategies are important part for the sake of enabling students to be active and interested in learning vocabulary in particular and other skills of English language in general. A teacher should understand situations of teaching environment so that s/he will be able to use the strategy suited to the class situation.

In fact, teachers of English might have been striving to create such effective teaching learning process to help the students achieve what targeted by the curriculum. However, we cannot deny the general fact that students' language mastery is not as that of expected by national curriculum. This may indicate that the teachers teaching strategies might not meet the students' characteristics of vocabulary language learning strategies. There might be a problem concerning the teachers' vocabulary teaching strategies in the classroom and students' learning strategies.

Based on the facts above, the writer conducted this research on the teachers' strategies in teaching EFL vocabulary to students at Senior High School level. Expectedly, this study can provide more ideas of how far teachers' teaching strategies can accommodate students' learning strategies through understanding the problems and providing possible solutions.

1.2 Research Questions

In this research, the researcher formulated the problems of the study in the following questions:

1. What teaching strategies are implemented by the high school English teachers to accommodate the students' vocabulary learning strategies?
2. What problems are faced by the Senior High School English teachers when they teach EFL vocabulary?
3. How do the teachers overcome the problems in teaching EFL vocabulary?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the research problem, the researcher has some objectives as follow:

1. To investigate what strategies implemented by the English teachers for the teaching of EFL vocabulary to the Senior High School students
2. To explore the problems faced by the English teachers in teaching EFL vocabulary to the Senior High School students.
3. To discover teachers' ways of solving the problems encountered in teaching EFL vocabulary.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The researcher hopes that this research can give some benefits as follows:

1. The result of the study will hopefully give a meaningful input for teachers, educators, and local authorities about the strategy of teaching EFL vocabulary to the Senior High School Students.
2. It is hoped that the study will also give a new vision for other researchers to conduct further research dealing with other subjects at different level of education.
3. For the Senior High School English teachers, the research will hopefully help them in teaching EFL vocabulary and help them in coping with their problems they face.
4. Hopefully, this research will give contributions to EFL teaching-learning in general and teaching EFL vocabulary to the Senior High School in particular. Moreover, the result of this research can be useful for any one caring about education in our beloved country.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This research is an attempt to investigate the senior high school English teachers' strategies in teaching EFL vocabulary to their students. As in general the practice of teaching and learning EFL vocabulary in schools today is not taught exclusively in certain time allocation but it is integrated or incorporated to teaching program of other language skills,

the research coped with investigating the teachers' strategies in teaching EFL vocabulary once as a part of English teaching in general.

1.6 Thesis Organization

The thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter One is general introduction that elaborates the background of the study, purposes of the study, research questions need to be discussed, and significance of the study. Chapter Two elaborates the theoretical framework underpinning the study that is the teachers' strategies in teaching EFL vocabulary to Senior High School students. Chapter Three discusses the design and methodology of the study, including research site, participants, data collection techniques, and how the data will be analyzed. Chapter Four presents and analyzes the data obtained in the study and the last Chapter Five provides conclusion and recommendation for English Teachers or anyone who cares toward the development of teaching and learning English in Indonesia.