

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the research paper. It is divided into several parts namely background, statement of problems, scope of the study, purposes of the study, research methodology, significance of the study, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

The role of vocabulary in learning a foreign language is inevitable. Rich vocabulary totally helps students to master English and its four major skills which cover listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This is in line with Richards and Renandya (2002) who believe that vocabulary plays crucial part in one's foreign language learning and language proficiency that can affect how well learners speak, listen, read and write. Besides, Schmitt (2000) also asserts that vocabulary is a core element of foreign language learning by which students are bridged to understand and learn new words. Moreover, Brown (2001, p.377, cited in Utami, 2014) emphasizes the significance of vocabulary to communication by asserting that, in fact, "survival level communication can take place quite intelligibly when people simply string words together-without applying grammatical rules at all." In this sense, vocabulary is regarded as one of essential factors that gives big influence to the people's communication. Thus, vocabulary seems to be an important aspect of language learning that needs to be considered to support the four other language skills.

The importance of vocabulary, however, is not sufficient to trigger the practice of ELT giving a greater emphasis on vocabulary teaching and vocabulary learning since it was found that the vocabulary teaching and learning seems to be neglected in learning English in Indonesian context (Cahyono and Widiati, 2008). This confirms Richards and Renandya (2002) who found the fact that vocabulary

education was given little priority in second language programs and traditionally vocabulary learning was often left to look after itself and received almost no attention in many language programs.

This is an unfortunate situation after considering the fact that for a country in which English is a foreign language, like Indonesia, teaching English is very likely to face many obstacles and challenges and they particularly deal with vocabulary. For instance, in the wide implementation TEFL in Indonesia in secondary school level, where English is dominantly taught through several kinds of texts, students are inevitably required to read the texts and also understand what the texts are about. In this stage, one of the most crucial problems coming up is students are still lack of vocabulary. Some more worrisome problems also occur in the National Examination, by which junior high school students are required to read five text types and answer fifty questions relating to the texts. Data from preliminary study conducted on November 14th, 15th and 16th showed that problems appear when students find difficulties in understanding what the texts are about and, in some cases, when students don't even know what are being asked by the questions. This fact confirms Kweldju (2005) and Priyono (2004) who found that students' limited vocabulary has been the main problem for students in learning English in EFL context. They further suggested that solution of the problems of ELT in Indonesia lies in the good handling of vocabulary in teaching and learning process. Thus, it will be a big duty for English teachers to improve students' vocabulary mastery, in this case vocabulary size, by using effective strategies in teaching and learning vocabulary.

According to Read (2000), the term 'vocabulary size' refers to the number of words that a person knows. Further, Nation (2001) asserts that EFL students need to have adequate knowledge of "the number of words in of the foreign language, the number of words known by native speakers, and the number of words needed to use the language" (p.6). It is also pointed out that a learner's vocabulary size is important for successful guessing of words in a context too, because this will affect the density of unknown words in a text.

One of the ways that may contribute to enrich students' vocabulary mastery and vocabulary size is by employing strategies to learn the vocabulary.

Vocabulary needs to be learnt by applying effective strategies as it enables learners to understand the concepts of unfamiliar words, gain a greater number of words, and use words successfully for communicative purposes (Cahyono and Widiati, 2008). Meanwhile, Intaraprasert (2004) emphasizes that the main goals of vocabulary learning are: 1) to discover the meanings of a new words; 2) to retain the knowledge of newly-learned words; and 3) to expand the knowledge of English vocabulary. Employing effective strategies in learning vocabulary will have positive contribution to students' vocabulary growth which in turn will affect their language skills.

Many studies have been widely carried out that are focused on investigating vocabulary learning strategies that are employed by EFL learners. Zarin and Khan (2014) who investigated vocabulary learning strategies among undergraduate learners revealed that memory strategy was found as the most frequently used strategy whereas metacognitive strategy as the least frequently one. However, this finding was different from study of Kafipour and Naveh (2011) whose data gathered showed that students used metacognitive strategy most frequently and social strategy least frequently. This is in accordance with many other studies under the same topic (Tuluhong, 2006; Mustapha and Asgari, 2010; Mokhtar, 2009). Concerning the relationship between students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary mastery, Purwanti, et al. (2016) revealed that there is relationship between senior high school students' vocabulary mastery and their strategies in learning vocabulary. The relationship was on determination, social, memory, and metacognitive strategies. This was also in line with Baharudin and Ismail (2014) whose findings of the study revealed that there is a relationship between the use of vocabulary learning strategies of undergraduate students and their Arabic vocabulary size. Several other studies also confirmed that relationship exists between vocabulary learning strategy used by students and their vocabulary mastery, in this case students' vocabulary size (Komol & Sripetpun, 2011; Boonkongsaen & Intaraprasert, 2014; Mokhtar, 2009).

It can be inferred from the explanation above that strategies in learning vocabulary play crucial role for the improvement of vocabulary instruction and students' vocabulary mastery. However, very few extensive researches have

tackled both of vocabulary learning strategies and its relationship with students' vocabulary mastery, particularly in secondary schools context.

Departing from the point of view, it seems important to investigate the practice of vocabulary learning in Indonesian context. The study aims at describing strategies employed by students in vocabulary learning. Further, the present study is also aimed at investigating the relationship between students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary mastery.

1.2 Statements of Problems

The study tries to seek answers to two research questions. The second research question is broken down into six sub-questions, as follow:

1. What strategies are employed by students in vocabulary learning?
2. What is the relationship between students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary mastery?
 - a. What is the relationship between Determination strategy and vocabulary mastery?
 - b. What is the relationship between Social Discovery strategy and vocabulary mastery?
 - c. What is the relationship between Social Consolidating strategy and vocabulary mastery?
 - d. What is the relationship between Memory strategy and vocabulary mastery?
 - e. What is the relationship between Cognitive strategy and vocabulary mastery?
 - f. What is the relationship between Metacognitive strategy and vocabulary mastery?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

Referring to the research questions in part 1.2, the study is aimed to achieve two main objectives as follow:

1. To describe strategies which are employed by students in vocabulary learning
2. To describe the relationship between students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary mastery.

This purpose is broken down into six sub-purposes based on vocabulary learning strategies classification which covers:

- a. To investigate the relationship between Determination strategy and vocabulary mastery
- b. To investigate the relationship between Social Discovery strategy and vocabulary mastery
- c. To investigate the relationship between Social Consolidating strategy and vocabulary mastery
- d. To investigate the relationship between Memory strategy and vocabulary mastery
- e. To investigate the relationship between Cognitive strategy and vocabulary mastery
- f. To investigate the relationship between Metacognitive strategy and vocabulary mastery

1.4 Significance of the Study

The results of the study are expected significant for three related parties as follows:

- a. Policy makers

The study is conducted as an attempt to help policy makers in solving Indonesian students' problems in learning English in terms of vocabulary difficulties. Through the study, the policy makers are expected to be well acknowledged about the importance of vocabulary and vocabulary learning regarding to strategies vocabulary learning that may contribute to improve students' vocabulary mastery.

b. Practitioners

The study is expected to give valuable contributions to the English teachers regarding strategies that can be used to improve students' vocabulary. Besides, the study is assumed to give a positive impact for the students in enriching their vocabulary since the study hopefully initiates EFL teachers to teach vocabulary effectively after considering students' vocabulary learning strategies and to trigger EFL students to apply various strategies in learning vocabulary.

c. Theory

The study is also hoped to provide a comprehensive description about the practice of vocabulary learning in EFL classroom, particularly in how vocabulary is being learnt by students in today context. In addition, the study is presumed to reveal a comprehensive description about the relationship between vocabulary learning strategies and students' vocabulary mastery so as to help students to improve their vocabulary mastery.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study was limited merely on describing the practice of vocabulary learning in a junior high school context. The study focused on describing strategies which were used by the students in vocabulary learning, as well as describing the relationship between vocabulary learning strategies employed by students and their vocabulary mastery.

Meanwhile, students' vocabulary mastery was limited only in receptive knowledge or receptive vocabulary through vocabulary size test adapted from Nation and Berglar (2007). This is due to the fact that students' vocabulary mastery in junior high school level tends to focus on receptive vocabulary by which they recognize meaning of the words in English texts that will also be tested in the Final Examination. Besides, Nation (2001, in Ayuningtyas, 2011) states that at most stage of language learning, learners' receptive vocabulary is much larger than their productive vocabulary.

1.6 Research Methodology

1.6.1 Design

Having the aims to describe and understand the nature of an event and a phenomenon, in this case is students' strategies in vocabulary learning in one of junior high schools and also to investigate the relationship between students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary mastery, this study was conducted under a mixed method approach.

Convergent parallel mixed method design was particularly employed since the study simultaneously collected both qualitative and quantitative data with same weighing, merged the data, and used the results to understand a research problems, in this case students' vocabulary learning strategies and the relationship between the strategies employed and students' vocabulary mastery. In addition, they study employed two data sets which were given equal priority to provide strengths and to offset weaknesses of other data (Creswell, 2012). The qualitative data set was gathered through questionnaire, observation, and interview, meanwhile the quantitative data was collected and analyzed using Multiple Correlation test to answer the second research question which deals with vocabulary learning strategies used by students and their relationship with students' vocabulary mastery.

1.6.2 Site and Respondents

The school chosen is one well-known private school in Bandung. The respondents of the study involved 30 8th graders of the private junior high school. The subjects were purposively chosen after considering their characteristics suiting the need of the study and their willingness and interest to be respondent of the study.

The school was chosen since they practice vocabulary teaching and learning within their English classes. Meanwhile, the students were selected because of their higher possibility in learning vocabulary in their English classroom and also their higher vocabulary size.

1.6.3 Data Collection

Four data collection instruments were used in the study: questionnaire, semi structured interview, classroom observation, and receptive vocabulary test, in this case Vocabulary Size Test.

The questionnaire instrument was designed to investigate strategies employed by students in vocabulary learning process. This 30 statements questionnaire was adapted from Smith's questionnaire (1997) and the findings from questionnaire were validated by having semi structured interview with some of the respondents.

In addition, classroom observation instrument was designed to investigate the practice of vocabulary teaching and learning which focuses more on how vocabulary is learnt by students in EFL classrooms. This instrument was also employed to confirm the observed participants' responses from the questionnaire and interview with their actual classroom setting.

The last research instrument named vocabulary size test was employed to answer the last research question of the study that is to find relationship between vocabulary learning strategies employed by students and their vocabulary mastery. A receptive vocabulary test namely Vocabulary Size Test was given to assess students' vocabulary mastery in the level of receptive knowledge. The vocabulary size test was adapted from Nation and Beglar's Vocabulary Size Test (2007) so as to reveal the vocabulary size of the students by selecting the best English definition or synonym of each word being asked among four choices. The instrument tested three dimensions of vocabulary knowledge they are the knowledge of written word form, the form-meaning connection and, to some extent, concept knowledge.

1.6.4 Data Analysis

Data that were collected through questionnaire and interview were analyzed by following Creswell's step (2007, in Ary, 2006) as follows: data managing, reading/memoing, describing, classifying, interpreting, representing, and visualizing. In this study, the main data collected from questionnaire were

managed and classified based on the research question that deals with students' strategies in vocabulary learning. After that, a computation and analysis using Microsoft Excel of each aspect was made in order to get a general picture about the mean and frequency of the items being offered.

Meanwhile, the last research question investigating relationship between students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary mastery was analyzed using Multiple Correlation test. This test, as asserted by Creswell (2012), is suitable for examining the combined relationship of multiple independent variables which, in this study, refer to vocabulary learning strategies that cover determination, social discovery, social consolidating, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies, with a single dependent variable, namely students' vocabulary mastery.

After all, a statistical analysis using SPSS of each aspect was made in order to get a general picture about them. The results were then presented to answer research questions of the study and then the result are ready to be visualized and interpreted supporting by related theories.

1.7 Clarification of Terms

To avoid misleading concepts, some terminologies used in the study are clarified as follows:

a. Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)

Vocabulary learning strategies are students' efforts or techniques by which language information, in this case vocabulary is obtained, stored, retrieved and used. In the present study, the strategies cover two main vocabulary learning strategies namely discovery strategy that includes determination and social strategies, and consolidating strategy that includes social, memory, cognitive, and meta-cognitive strategies.

b. Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery, in this study, is defined as ability in mastering vocabulary in the level of receptive knowledge that can be measured one of which through Vocabulary Size Test by which students were

asked to recognize the meaning of the words by selecting the equivalence or synonym of each word being asked.

c. Receptive Vocabulary

Receptive vocabulary refers to some of vocabularies to be only recognized or understood, not necessarily needed to be produced.

1.8 Organization of the Paper

The paper was presented into five chapters, as follow:

PRELIMINARIES

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

This chapter elaborated the background of the study, research question, aims of the study, limitation of the study, research methodology, clarification of terms, and organization of paper.

CHAPTER II : LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discussed the theories and related research which were used in this study.

CHAPTER III : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter gave clear discussion about the methodologies that were used in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV : FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discussed the findings of the study and then analyzed those findings in discussion clearly.

CHAPTER V : CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presented the conclusion and several recommendations of the study based on the findings in chapter four.