

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief description about the content of the study including background, research questions, aims of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, research methods, clarification of terms and organization of paper.

1.1 Background

The emergence of globalization has made the acquisition of foreign language especially English as an international language become more important. Due to the importance of English as an international language, Indonesian government, for example, has made some efforts to obtain human resources who are able to understand and master English well. As launched by Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 060/U/1993 dated 25th February 1993, Indonesian government has determined English as the foreign language to be learned by the students in Indonesia from elementary school as local content up to the university level.

Although English is a compulsory subject at school in Indonesia, the result has not been satisfactory enough yet (Nurweni & Read, 1999). In fact, many students have graduated from their school with minimum ability in using English. It is caused by some factors. One of them is because of the lack of vocabulary. Nurweni and Read (1999) administered a study in Indonesia to determine whether Indonesian students' vocabulary size had progressed over the 30 years. A total of 324 freshmen completed Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test.

The results revealed that their subjects had a vocabulary size of 1,226 frequent words and 240 general academic words. Apparently, Indonesian EFL students' vocabulary is smaller than 3,000 words.

With regard to this condition, most of the students have difficulties in understand English words. Another possible reason is the technique and method which was used by the teacher to make the students master the vocabulary well. Based on the study conducted by Rosmayanti (2008), most traditional English classrooms in Indonesia still use conventional method to teach vocabulary. Commonly, the teacher just made a list of words that was appeared in the topic, and then the list was made with the Indonesian meaning known as word list (Oxford & Crookall, 1990). After that, the teacher asked the students to memorize each word. This strategy might help students to memorize a lot of words. However, it does not guarantee that the students completely understand what they have memorized.

Therefore, in many English language classes, even where teachers have devoted much time to vocabulary teaching, sometimes, after months or even years of study English, the students seem to forget the vocabulary that they have learned. This fact is really disappointing since vocabulary is the first step to be taught before teaching other aspects of language (Nation, 2001). Similarly, Schmitt and McCarthy (1997) point out that vocabulary learning has been regarded as one of the most important parts in a second or foreign language acquisition.

A great deal of literature revealed that vocabulary provides the basis for mastering English skills i.e. writing, reading, listening and speaking (Hammer, 2007; Carter & Nunan, 2001; Lewis in Wijayani, 2009; Iriyana, 2007; Lestariningsih, 2008). The student's ability to read, to write, to listen, and to speak is conditioned by their vocabulary. In reading, vocabulary helps learners in comprehending the text. In writing, it helps them to expand their ideas based on the topic sentence that they want. In listening, it is used to comprehend and understand what other person speaks. In speaking, vocabulary facilitates the learners to explain their ideas orally. All of the four aspects are interrelated. Hence, before students master all aspects of language such as grammar, they should master vocabulary first.

It will be hard to master the language without mastering or understanding a certain number of vocabularies (Rubin & Thompson, 1994). Therefore, it has to be realized that

“no matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way” (McCarthy, 1990, p.vii).

Further, Wilkins (1972, cited in Thornbury, 2004, p. 14) says that “without grammar very little can be conveyed; but without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed”. In other words, vocabulary must not be neglected by anyone who learns a language.

Poor vocabulary knowledge of Indonesian students is a matter of serious concern among those in and around education, and their quest for finding suitable way to improve vocabulary knowledge is getting more and more intense. Therefore, it is important to attempt to find the effective media of vocabulary teaching.

Considering some problems above, one of the alternatives way suggested is the use of vocabulary journal. The vocabulary journal is a note-taking strategy for learning new vocabularies that use a several-column format. Based on the previous studies, it has been frequently suggested that vocabulary journals are recommended as effective tools for students to use to take charge of, organize and manage their vocabulary learning (Bozkurt, 2007; Fowle, 2002; Schmitt & Schmitt, 1995). This vocabulary journal also provides students with a structure to record new receptive vocabulary as it is reinforced throughout a lesson or unit.

However, so far there has been little evidence of empirical study on the use of vocabulary journals by language learners in the Indonesian classroom setting. Eventually, the present study is intended to investigate the use of vocabulary journal in enriching students' vocabulary and to find out students' attitudes towards the use of vocabulary journal.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study explained before, the study formulates the problems as follows:

1. Does the use of vocabulary journal affect students' vocabulary mastery?

2. What are students' responses towards the use of vocabulary journal?

1.3 Aims of The Study

Regarding the two research questions above, there are two aims of the study as follows:

1. To investigate whether the use of vocabulary journal affects students' vocabulary mastery or not.
2. To find out students' attitudes towards the use of vocabulary journal.

1.4 Significance of the study

Hopefully, this study will be beneficial in order to give contribution in teaching learning process, especially in teaching vocabulary. The research result is expected to be able to give benefits to:

1.4.1 Teachers

It is expected that the research can help the teachers get the description and explanation about how to use the effective technique to teach English vocabulary. By choosing an appropriate technique in teaching vocabulary, it is expected that the students can get better result in mastering English vocabulary. Then, the data of the research are also very useful for the teacher. It will help the teacher to identify the students' difficulties in learning vocabulary and also find the students who need more guiding. Then, the teacher can take some correct problems solving from those problems.

1.4.2 Students

It is expected that the result will give motivation to the students to be better in vocabulary mastery and it can invite the students' interest to learn

English as a foreign language. They will feel fun and have no burden when they learn a foreign language especially in mastering the vocabulary. It is very important because it will make them feel that learning English is not difficult and can help them for the next level.

1.4.3 The school

After conducting this research, it is expected that the school will be interested in conducting this research in the department in order to improve teacher's quality. It can also be used as the reflection in order to gain an effective and innovative teaching- learning process by applying the use of vocabulary journal as one of the technique to improve student's vocabulary mastery.

1.4.4 Researcher

This study is expected to give the researcher a valuable experience both technique and practically which can be used for doing a better teaching learning process in the future.

1.5 Scope of the research

This study is limited to examine the use of vocabulary journal in enriching junior high school students' receptive and print vocabulary mastery. In addition, this study also reveals the students' responses toward the use of vocabulary journal.

1.6 Research Methods

This study used quasi experimental, a type of research design which included experimental and control group without random sampling. It was used

because during this study the data gathered and compared in order to measure whether there is a significance change on students' vocabulary. There were two groups that were taken for this study. First, was the Experimental Group (EG) which was treated by using vocabulary journal in learning vocabulary process, and the second was the Control Group (CG) in which was employed word list.

The subjects of the study were the eighth grade students of one private junior high school in Bandung which consisted of four classes from VIII-A until VIII-D. However, not all of them were considered as a sample because of the limited time. This research involved only two classes from the four existing classes, one as experimental group and one class as control group. In addition, both of the classes have almost similar characteristics.

The methods used to collect the data from the above participants were vocabulary test. Vocabulary tests were created using the vocabulary words that appeared in the units to be covered over the five weeks period. The pre-test and post-test were administered to both experimental and control group. The pre-test was conducted to show students' basic vocabulary and later on it was used as data to compare both control group and experimental group in the post-test. Then, an audio-taped interview was conducted to the experimental group in which the class was given treatments in order to confirm the use of the vocabulary journal and to discover students' responses toward using vocabulary journal in enriching students' vocabulary mastery. The data on the tapes were then transcribed to enable further analysis.

1.7 Clarification of key terms

Some terms need to be clarified in order to comprehend the notion underlying this study. Some terms are clarified as follow:

1.7.1 A vocabulary journal: a kind of personal dictionary; learners record the words they encounter, along with their meanings and any other aspects of the word deemed important (Walter & Bozkurt, 2009).

1.7.2 Word list: a list of words that was appeared in the topic, and then the list were made with the Indonesian meaning. After that, the teacher asked the students to memorize each word (Oxford & Crookall, 1990).

1.8 Organization of paper

Organizing the paper will be useful in order to make the paper arranged systematically. This paper organization is:

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Chapter I introduces the descriptions of the study. In this chapter, there are discussions about background, research questions, aim of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, research method, clarification of key terms and organization of paper.

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Chapter II presents theoretical foundation related to the use of vocabulary journal in enriching students' vocabulary mastery. In addition, previous studies about the use of vocabulary journal are also reviewed. It is aimed to match both of the theories and the fact that is gained from the research conducted.

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODS

Chapter III describes the research methodology. It explains the research method used in this study in more detailed description. There will be discussion about research question, research design, hypothesis, population and sample, data collection and data analysis.

CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents all finding and they will be discussed in order to get more explanation.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In this chapter, the conclusions and suggestions for the future research will be provided.

