

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This part covers the background of the study, the problems of the study, the objectives of study, the significances of the study, the hypotheses, the delimitation of the study, and the definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Language is not only the principal medium that human beings use to communicate with each other but also the bond that links people together and binds them to their culture. To understand our humanity, therefore, we must understand the language that made us human.¹ People use language to communicate, and so naturally one key issue in vocabulary studies is how much vocabulary is necessary to enable this communication. As international language, English used by many communities in many countries in this world. It plays an important role of in every aspect of human life, such as communication, economics, education, science, and technology. If one wishes to achieve native-like proficiency, then presumably it is necessary to have a vocabulary size similar to native speakers.²

¹Virginia, *Language Introductory Readings*, New York: ST. Martin' Press, 1981, p. 1.

²Nobert Schmitt, *Researching Vocabulary 'A vocabulary research manual'*, 2010. P.6

In the prior English learning of students from all the countries, the main focus of the teaching was on English grammar and other aspects of standard usage. Essentially, learning English was seen as learning a scholarly skill for the purposes of reading and writing, not as learning a living language of use. Thus in learning English at school, the main pedagogical medium was reading and writing, rather than conversation. The main pedagogical style was didactic, in which students were positioned as largely passive learners. In their interviews, the students made frequent references to all three of these aspects, which interacted in the practices of didactic teacher-centred classrooms, and had become combined in their recollections of school. In the typical school lessons on English, teachers explained the grammatical rules, students did the exercises set out in the text books, and classroom interactions were largely one-way. Oral communication skills such as speaking and listening were almost totally ignored. Students rarely had the chance to use English in conversation in the classroom, and were under no pressure to become competent in this.³

Nowadays, English teaching in Indonesia has been developed from Elementary School. English is one of the foreign languages that learned in the first grade of Elementary School, even begun from kindergarten school. Most teachers tried hard to teach English creatively in order to motivate their students to study English. They used available aids as effectively as possible and think the alternative ways of teaching English. Besides, they tried to be a good model for their students so that they

³Erlenawati Sawir, *Language difficulties of international students in Australia: The effects of prior learning experience*, 2005. P. 572.

are able to learn English easily. Although they have learnt English lesson from elementary school, they still get many difficulties in learning this language. A classroom usually will be the only place for many students to practice their English. They believe English as a difficult subject because of some reasons. One of the reasons is that it is difficult to master vocabulary. It happens because they must adopt the new pronunciation and meaning of the word. To master English learning, students must pay attention to many aspects of language knowledge (grammatical structure, vocabulary, and so on) in order to reach a high degree of competence in English. And one of the most important aspects is vocabulary, which plays a great role in English learners' comprehension.

English has been highly valued in Indonesia. Because the relationship between Indonesia and the outside world is becoming closer and closer, more and more people have paid attention to learning English. In college, English is the compulsory course for students. However, vocabulary becomes the bottleneck in English learning for many students and their speed of vocabulary improvement is relatively slow. There is a large gap between the students' English ability and requirements settled in the syllabus. The current situation is, to some extent, caused by many Indonesian teachers' neglect in vocabulary teaching. Of course, many students just memorize new words mechanically and there is no systematic research in vocabulary learning.

In Indonesia, many English teachers think that students can achieve vocabulary by themselves and believe that every new word appearing in the text is marked with phonetic symbol and its Indonesian meaning, so it is unnecessary to devote great

efforts to teaching the vocabulary. They only focus on the conceptual meaning and neglect other aspects of vocabulary like collocation, connotation, denotation, synonyms and so on. And there are many teachers still adopt the traditional teaching methods which are proved to be time-consuming and inefficient by many researchers. In brief, the current situation of vocabulary learning and teaching in Indonesia can be summarized as follows:

- 1) A lack of systematic research in vocabulary learning. For many years, vocabulary learning mythology has not changed much. Many teachers have undervalued vocabulary learning strategy.
- 2) A passive way of learning vocabulary. In vocabulary learning, many students memorize new words mechanically, which should be replaced by some more efficient strategies.
- 3) Inadequacy of developing the students' competence in actual use of English as mentioned above hinders students' ability undoubtedly.

How many words a student should know? A study conducted to 1.776 students in Indonesia show that the average vocabulary size of graduate students' are 2.861 words, while the average vocabulary size of S2 students are the 2671 words and S3 students are 3211 words. Learning foreign language vocabulary demand students making the right connections between the form and the meaning of the words first when they are trying for understanding the language, including differentiating the meaning of words that are inextricably linked. Second, when producing language, using the correct form of a word for the meaning you want. A

student of foreign languages should know about words and word formation in order to be able to understand the form and meaning of words, and use the correct form of the word.

The writer thinks that in every learning language, vocabulary is one of the most important things. It can help the students to achieve of their mastery of language easier. Because during learning English the students will face many kinds of English vocabulary such as noun, adverb, adjective, pronoun, verb, preposition, interjection and conjunction or it is often called as part of speech. Students must know all parts of this case.

Vocabulary is the basis in language learning, meantime it forms obstacles. Without vocabulary, skills of language learning including listening, speaking, reading and writing cannot be successfully achieved. So we cannot deny that vocabulary learning plays a very important role in second language learning and a large vocabulary will help learners improve their language proficiency.⁴ Vocabulary is one element of the language that should be learnt and taught. It will be hard to master the language without mastering or understanding a certain number of vocabularies. Vocabulary is the first step to be taught before teaching other aspects of language. Without some knowledge of vocabulary, neither language production nor language comprehension would be possible. Mastering vocabulary is very important for the students who learn English as a foreign language. The mastery of vocabulary can

⁴ Liu Zhi-liang, *A Study on English Vocabulary Learning Strategies for Non-English Majors in Independent College*, 2010. P.153

support them in speaking when they are communicating to people, can write and translate the meaning of words when they definite English. Thus the growth of vocabulary knowledge is one of the essential pre-requisites for language acquisition and this growth of vocabulary knowledge can only be possible when teachers employ effective vocabulary teaching and learning strategies.

Learning vocabulary is very important. Schmitt states that “Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.”⁵ Thus, vocabularies are the flesh of a language while grammar is the skeleton. Therefore, many studies have attempted to improve the efficiency and performance of learners when learning English vocabulary. It has to be realized that the student’s ability to read, to write, to listen, and to speak is conditioned by their vocabulary. In reading ability, 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, they comprehend and understand what other person speaks. In speaking ability, vocabulary facilitates the learners to explain their ideas orally.⁶

Learning vocabulary is a rather than more complex that it night at first sight appear. It does not mean acquiring the same amount of knowledge for every word in language. After all, we must take into account that even native speakers of language can understand many words than they actually use. As a result there is an important distinction to be made between productive vocabulary (i.e. the words learners need to

⁵ Nobert Schmitt, *Researching Vocabulary 'A vocabulary research manual'*, 2010. P.3

⁶Budi setiawan, *improving the students' vocabulary mastery through direct instruction*, 2010. P. 12

be able to use and understand) and receptive/passive vocabulary (i.e. the words they need to recognize only), distinction which the teacher must bear in mind in his/her practice as there is obviously a lot more work involved in giving a student a productive knowledge of a word than a receptive one.⁷

However, second language learning in recent years has moved away from the quest for the perfect teaching method, focusing instead on how successful teachers and learners actually achieve their goals. Vocabulary is important and, as stated. Actually, it is indeed a challenge to most learners. To deal with this problem, we have to explore the knowledge of vocabulary and offer efficient strategies of vocabulary learning. Learning strategies can indeed facilitate the acquisition of vocabulary and influence second language acquisition as well. The present study is going to investigate the vocabulary learning strategies used by English department students of IAIN Palangkaraya and find a relationship between the strategies they use and their vocabulary size.

B. Problem of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the main problems of the study is “Is there any significant correlation between vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary size of the fourth semester students of English department of IAIN Palangkaraya academic year 2013.

⁷Rosa ma lopus campillo, *teaching and learning vocabulary: an introduction for English students*. P. 36-37

C. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is “To find out whether there is a significant correlation between vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary size of the fourth semester students of English department of IAIN Palangkaraya academic year 2013.

D. Significance of the Study

The result of this study has two significances. Theoretically, the result of this study could give contribution to the English teachers about how importance vocabulary in learning English. In case the students are reluctant to learn vocabulary since it is too boring to memorize, the teachers could use the best vocabulary learning strategies appropriate with the students. By using appropriate vocabulary in teaching vocabulary, they can enrich their vocabulary and develop their own vocabulary learning strategies enjoyable. Vocabulary learning strategies can influence the students Vocabulary size. Practically, the result of this study is expected to give awareness to the English Learner of how important vocabulary size in Language learning. They could enrich and develop their vocabulary size by using appropriate vocabulary learning strategies. Hopefully, the result could give motivation to the students to improve their English skills and enrich their vocabulary size by using appropriate vocabulary learning strategies. In addition, this study could be useful to other researcher who would like to study the similar topic.

E. Hypotheses

Hypothesis is provisional answer to problem of the study until it can be proved by collected data.⁸

Ha: There is significant correlation between vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary size of the fourth semester students of English department of IAIN Palangkaraya academic year 2013.

Ho: There is no significant correlation between vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary size of the fourth semester students of English department of IAIN Palangkaraya academic year 2013.

F. Delimitation of the Study

The writer conducts this study in IAIN Palangkaraya. The subjects of this study are the fourth semester students of English department of IAIN Palangkaraya academic year 2013. This study will focus to find out the correlation between vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary size of the fourth semester students of English department of IAIN Palangkaraya academic year 2013. There are many kinds of vocabularies, but the writer limited kinds of vocabularies tested in this research are academic vocabularies.

⁸ Suharsimi Arikunto, *Prosedur Penelitian*, Jakarta: PT. Rineka Cipta, 2002, P. 64-65

G. Definition of Key Terms

1. Vocabulary is knowledge of words and word meanings.⁹
2. Vocabulary is “An alphabetical list of words with their meaning: the words of a language: an individual’s command or use of particular words.”¹⁰
3. Vocabulary is the total number in a language: all the words known to a person or used in a particular book, subject, etc. Vocabulary a list of word with their meaning, especially one that accompanies a textbook.¹¹
4. Vocabulary is word in general: (the stock of) words known and used e.g. by one person, pr within a particular trade or profession: a list of words in alphabetical order with meanings e.g. added as a supplement to a book dealing with a particular subject.¹²
5. Learning strategies are Language learning strategies generally known as techniques or learning process that students use to support their language learning.¹³
6. Breadth of vocabulary knowledge/vocabulary size is defined as the number of words that a person knows.¹⁴
7. Vocabulary learning strategies are steps taken by the language learners to acquire new English words.¹⁵

⁹Fran Lehr, MA, Jean Osborn, Med, Dr. Elfrieda H. Hiebert, *a focus on vocabulary*, P. 5

¹⁰Webster’s English dictionary, Karisma Publishing Group, 2006. P. 454

¹¹A.S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, Oxford University Press. P. 1331

¹²Lionel Kernerman, *password kamus bahasa inggris untuk pelajar*, Kesaint Blanc. P. 573

¹³Natpassorn Riankamol, *A Survey Study of Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Gifted Students at Triam Udomsuksa school in the First Semester of Academic Year 2008*, P. 4

¹⁴Zhifa Shen, *The Roles of Depth and Breadth of Vocabulary Knowledge in EFL Reading Performance*, 2008. P. 136

8. Vocabulary refers to words we use to communicate in oral and print language. Receptive vocabulary refers to the words we understand through reading and listening. Productive vocabulary refers to the words we use to communicate through writing and speaking. In order to communicate effectively using oral and print language, we must be able to flexibly use words that we recognize and understand.¹⁶
9. Language acquisition is a process when the learner picks up any component of a language in a natural setting. Second language acquisition occurs after the learners have acquired their mother tongue.¹⁷
10. Vocabulary acquisition is incremental in nature and this means that words are not learned instantaneously but they are learned over a period of time. The number of words learned depends on numerous exposures to a particular word.¹⁸
11. Quantitative research Inquiry employing operational definitions to generate numeric data to answer predetermined hypotheses or questions.¹⁹
12. Correlational research is Research that attempts to determine the extent and the direction of the relationship between two or more variables.²⁰

¹⁵Azadeh Asgari, Ghazali Bin Mustapha, *The Type of Vocabulary Learning Strategies Used by ESL Students in University Putra Malaysia*, 2010. P. 85

¹⁶Susan Hanson and Jennifer F.M. Padua, *Teaching Vocabulary Explicitly*, P. 5

¹⁷Brikena xhaferi, Gëzim xhaferi, *vocabulary learning strategies used by students at SEEU in terms of gender and teachers' attitudes toward teaching vocabulary*, 2008. P. 17

¹⁸Ibid. P. 19

¹⁹Donal Ary, *Introduction to Research in Education Eight Edition*. P.648.

²⁰Ibid. P.639.