

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Language is an important tool for human communication. English is the most popular international languages. Vocabulary is among the most important aspects of language learner. According to Astika (2016) one essential component in language learning is vocabulary knowledge. An interest in vocabulary acquisition has been increasing and language educators now have recognized the essential role of vocabulary in second language proficiency. In communication, it is the vocabulary knowledge that helps learners to convey meanings. The learners' awareness of the role of vocabulary in language learning is reflected in their learning behavior when they consult dictionaries for difficult vocabulary items. Studies on vocabulary learning in such an environment have been very rare. It is, therefore, necessary that such research be conducted to better assist teachers and students develop effective vocabulary teaching and learning strategies.

Vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to the typical language learner. Without enough vocabulary, learners cannot communicate understandably. Vocabulary plays a crucial part in the language learning process. In the process of language learning, the primary thing in learning a language is the acquisition of a vocabulary and practice in using it. Vocabulary is the basic factor necessary for mastering a language. The purpose that we learn second language is for communication. When we learn a language, we need to master four skills,

which are listening, reading, speaking and writing. Meanwhile, vocabulary knowledge is fundamental to them. One cannot understand a sentence without knowing what most of the words mean. The lack of vocabulary knowledge affects all the four language skills. As the matter of fact, English foreign learners in Indonesia are lacking of their own English vocabulary.

Based on the researcher's experience during the teaching training practice in SMA N 2 Lubuk Pakam, most of students got obstruction in learning English because the lack of vocabulary. For example the researcher ask one student to reading a text then translate it, but the student did know what the meaning of almost words in the text. Students did not know what to say and/ or to write as well as what they had read and/ or listened because of the difficult vocabulary. From the observation that the researcher has also done in class VIII-4 Mts. Hifzil Qur'an at Yayasan Islamic Centre SU, the researcher found that the students were hard to learn English because of the lack of vocabulary in speaking, listening, writing and reading.

In communication, it is the vocabulary knowledge that helps learners to convey meanings. Giving variation in the teaching learning process can help students more interesting rather than giving monotonous strategy that impact to the classroom situation where there is less active interaction between students and teacher. The teaching strategy in vocabulary also needs to be varied. It can help students to increase their vocabulary achievement which doesn't only help students to memorize but also to apply the vocabularies in expressing ideas. In learning vocabulary items, it is useful and necessary for language learners to be

taught vocabulary learning strategies in order that they can learn how to discover the meaning of new words, how to store them in their memory, and how to use them by practicing and expanding their vocabulary. Learners usually use one or more strategies for special reasons. For example, some learners may use the dictionary use strategy. Vocabulary learning strategies enhance learners' responsibility of their own learning process.

Considering the crucial role of vocabulary learning in second or foreign language learning contexts, one can make aware of the importance of vocabulary teaching as well. In the past, vocabulary teaching and learning were often given little priority in second language programs, but recently there has been a renewed interest in the nature of vocabulary and its role in learning and teaching (Richards & Renandya, 2002, cited in Soureshjani, 2011). Therefore, if language teachers know more about effective strategies that successful learners use, they may be able to teach these effective strategies to less proficient learners to enhance these learners' language skills. In addition, I wanted to study explores the students' vocabulary learning strategies and identifies what strategies they used in learning English vocabulary.

B. The Problems of the Study

The problems in this study are formulated as in the following:

1. What learning strategies do the students use in learning English vocabulary?
2. Why do they use those strategies?

C. The Objectives of the Study

In relation to the problem, the objectives of the study are:

1. To investigate learning strategies of students used in learning English vocabulary;
2. To elaborate the reasons for those strategies.

D. The Scope of the Study

There are various types of strategy used by different learners. The purpose of this study is to investigate students' strategies in learning English vocabulary. It also elaborates the students' reasons for those strategies in learning English vocabulary. The focuses of this study are second grade of Madrasah Tsanawiyah at Yayasan Islamic Centre SU and vocabulary learning strategies.

E. The Significance of the Study

The research findings are expected to be useful both in theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically, the research findings can be used to investigate the students' strategies in learning English vocabulary and to find out the dominant strategy that students' used in learning English vocabulary.
2. Practically, the research findings will hopefully contribute something useful to reader who wants to learn more about students' learning strategies, especially in vocabulary. These research findings can be used as a reference for the further research.