

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Vocabulary is the total stock of words in a given language (Jackson, 2000:11). Vocabulary as one of the important elements should be well mastered. It has a very important role in learning a language including English because vocabulary is the total number of words that make up a language. The total stock of English words enables learners to master English proficiency as in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills well. Those four skills will be effectively learned by learners if they have words bank or wide coverage vocabulary. Vocabulary knowledge is important because it encompasses all the words we must know to access our background knowledge, express our ideas and communicate effectively, and learn about new concepts. Students' word knowledge linked strongly to academic success because students who have large vocabularies can understand new ideas and concepts more quickly than students with limited vocabularies

Vocabulary experts agree that adequate reading comprehension depends on a person already knowing between 90 and 95 percent of the words in a text (Hirsch, 2003). Knowing at least 90 percent of the words enables the reader to get the main idea from the reading and guess correctly what many of the unfamiliar words mean, which will help them learn new words. Readers who do not recognize at least 90 percent of the words will not only have difficulty

comprehending the text, but they will miss out on the opportunity to learn new words.

In the ESL context, vocabulary not only supports the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but also mediates between ESL students and content-area classes in that these students often find that lack of vocabulary knowledge is an obstacle to learning. Therefore, it follows that ESL vocabulary teaching and learning are often emphasized. In a similar fashion, if ESL teachers are attuned to effective strategies for teaching vocabulary, they could facilitate students' proficiency in the four skills.

Lexical competence is a central part of communicative competence and is regarded as a key concept in teaching vocabulary Decarrico (2001). Richards and Renandya (2002) hold that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write is provided by vocabulary. One of the oldest findings in educational research is the strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Word knowledge is crucial to reading comprehension and determines how well students will be able to comprehend the texts they read in middle and high school. The high correlation in the research literature of word knowledge with reading comprehension indicates that if students do not adequately and steadily grow their vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension will be affected (Chall & Jacobs, 2003). Comprehension is far more than recognizing words and remembering their meanings. However, if a student does

not know the meanings of a sufficient proportion of the words in the text, comprehension is impossible.

At present, many students especially at great ten in Senior High School are still unable or difficult to understand the meaning of words in the text, they have limited vocabulary to comprehend the meaning and do not know the context of words which used in the text.

The researcher found the weakness of students' vocabulary mastery in reading text. We can see the fact data from 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 in MAN 1 Takengon below

Table 1.1 The Mean of Students' Vocabulary Mastery in MAN 1 Takengon

No	Academic Years	MMC	Grade X Students' Score		
			Lowest	Highest	Average
1	2015/2016	70	50	65	63
2	2016/1017	75	50	70	64

Table 1.1 shows that the students' vocabulary mastery does not reach the minimum mastery criteria (MMC) which is recommended should be 70 in 2015/2016 and 75 in 2016/2017 academic years.

Considering the important of vocabulary in mastering English communicatively, the researcher is interested in discusses this study in the effort of increasing students' vocabulary mastery by applying some appropriate strategies such as Lexical Strategies. In this research the researcher will applied two lexical strategies, Inferensing Strategies and Lexical Processing Strategies to increase students' vocabulary mastery.

Lexical strategy is a way of analyzing and teaching language based on the idea that it is made up of lexical units rather than grammatical structure or based on the idea that language is made up of other structural elements besides what we traditionally think of as grammar. In improving the students' reading skill, lexical strategies can be applied to find out what the students know, what they are thinking, stimulate them to think, and change their behavior. Lexical strategy can be made as the way of teaching to get some information from reading texts. Before the students read, they asks the students to find prior knowledge, make predictions, and wonder about big ideas that are not answered in the text. Lexical strategy can be a focusing and refining device for expanding vocabulary and for developing all level of comprehension, including critical and creative reading. Therefore, using this technique will help the students to enrich their thinking. In other word, lexical strategy make students to be good reader who can comprehend reading text easily.

Haastrups (1991) The present study focused on lexical inferencing, that is, making "informed guesses" about the meaning of unknown words based on the available linguistic and nonlinguistic cues in the text. Lexical inferencing also been found to be closely associated with incidental vocabulary learning, that is, learning vocabulary through reading natural texts (Huckin & Coady,1999; Nagy, 1997). Readers use a variety of Lexical Processing Strategies (LPSs) to deal with unknown words when reading, including ignoring and continuing to read, consulting a dictionary or another individual, and inferring their meaning from linguistic and contextual cues (Fraser, 1999).

Once learners know around two to three thousand words they can use the reading skills they have developed to infer the meanings of unknown words that they meet. Some readers can do this without any particular training, but those who cannot do it can easily be thought a strategy which will quickly enable them to guess most of unknown words they meet.

Based on these facts, the research is interested in conducting a research on the effect of Lexical Strategies and the vocabulary mastery on the students' vocabulary achievement. It means that the effect of implementing the two strategies in teaching vocabulary mastery should be proven whether they were effective or not on students' vocabulary achievement.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the previous explanation, the problems of this study are formulated as follows:

1. Are students' vocabulary mastery taught by Inferencing Strategy (IS) significantly higher than that taught by Lexical Processing Strategies (LPSs) in students' vocabulary achievement?
2. Are students' who have high vocabulary mastery is significantly higher than students' who have low vocabulary mastery in students' vocabulary achievement?
3. Is there any significant effect of applying both lexical strategies and vocabulary mastery simultaneously on the students' vocabulary achievement?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In line with the problems, the objectives of the study are to investigate

1. The Students' vocabulary mastery taught by Inferencing Strategy (IS) significantly higher than that taught by Lexical Processing Strategies (LPSs) in students' vocabulary achievement
2. The Students' who have high vocabulary mastery is significantly higher than students' who have low vocabulary mastery in students' vocabulary achievement
3. The effect of simultaneously applying both lexical strategies and vocabulary mastery on the students' vocabulary achievement

1.4 The Scope of the Study

Vocabulary is one of the basic elements in mastering language skills. It is almost impossible for students to understand what their teacher explains without having sufficient knowledge of vocabulary. There are a lot of strategies that can be used in enhancing students' vocabulary especially lexical strategy. The lexical strategies concentrates on developing learners' proficiency with lexis, or words and word combinations. The Lexical strategies focuses on the learning and teaching of vocabulary items.

This study has a specific intention to discover the students' vocabulary mastery. In teaching vocabulary mastery, there are some strategies including

Inferencing Strategies and Lexical Processing Strategies. Thus the two strategies will be implemented during the research. The research will be held at MAN 1 Takengon, Central Aceh district.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The findings of this study expected to be useful and relevant theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the findings can add more horizons on the areas of language learning. In addition the findings can be as reference for farther study. Practically, the findings of this study will give contributions to language learning activities of English as a foreign language in classroom. This study can raise teachers' awareness of their students' language learning strategies that finally will give effect to their teaching activities. It is also expected that the study will give more informations concerning the learners strategies in learning English as a foreign language. The findings are also expected, that this study will raise students' awareness of their learning strategies in learning English. Raising students' awareness of their language learning and strategies will make them not only more prepared for learning but also more analytic about their learning strategies they use. Reid (in Tabanlıoğlu, 2003:5) states that developing an understanding of learning environments and strategies will enable students to take control of their learning and to maximize their potential for learning.