

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

In learning a language, knowing and mastering the vocabulary of the language being studied is important because vocabulary is one of the areas of knowledge in a language that has a significant role for learners in acquiring language (Cameron in Alqahtani, 2015) including English.

In Indonesia, English is included in one of the subjects studied by students through formal education in schools, including at the Junior High School level. English subject at this level is focused on increasing students' competence to be able to use language in achieving communication goal, both oral and written. This is written in the syllabus document for English subject at the SMP/MTs level by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2017. Furthermore, Hari in Siswandi (2018) stated that English subject is aim to develop communication skills in English, where English language skills are include skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Those skills are supported by studying the elements in English, and one of them is vocabulary. It means that to improve their language skills, learners must master vocabulary. This proves that when learning a language, vocabulary mastery cannot be ignored. Therefore, mastering English vocabulary is very necessary. Mastering English vocabulary can help students to assist them in comprehending the language being learned.

Richard and Renandya (2002: 255) stated that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write. Therefore, in learning language, teaching vocabulary is an essential aspect (Thornbury, 2002). It is almost impossible to learn a language without words. The main objective of the English language teaching is to help students acquire a broad vocabulary. In each lesson, the teacher must introduce new words and demand students practice those words, and look for them in a clear sense (Cross, 1992:17). In the 2013 curriculum era, vocabulary learning and teaching are not given separately, but integrated with the basic competencies in the syllabus according to the each level (Harwandi, 2018). This can be seen in the syllabus of English subjects in seventh grade on each subject matter of the linguistic element, which is found in KD 3.5; 4.5, namely vocabulary related to the nature of people, animals, objects according to the context.

In the teaching and learning process, of course the role of the teacher is very necessary because the teacher is a professional educator who has the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating student learning outcomes (Banawi & Arifin, 2012:13). In addition, Kunandar (2017), stated that the teacher is a basic element in the teaching and learning process. So, in teaching vocabulary, teachers have an important role in helping students to gain knowledge of

students' vocabulary through the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

In introducing vocabulary through teaching vocabulary in the classroom, of course teaching strategies are needed. Teaching strategy is a way used by educators in the teaching and learning process. According to Kemp in Hamruni (2009:2), teaching strategy is teaching activities that must be carried out by teachers and students to achieve teaching goals effectively and efficiently. In addition, Kozma in Hamruni (2009:2) also defined teaching strategy as any selected activity that can provide facilities or assistance to students in achieving appropriate teaching goals.

When teaching English vocabulary, a teacher must decide which teaching strategy to use by involving careful design and planning (Orlich, et al., 2010). In this case, teachers do not just only give some vocabulary for students to remember, but teachers also need to choose and use appropriate teaching strategies to make them able to remember the vocabulary in long-term memory. Not only that, teachers also need to adjust interesting teaching strategies so that students are interested and enjoy the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Based on the preliminary observation conducted by the researcher in one of the seventh grade classroom at SMPN 41 Medan, the students' have limited vocabulary knowledge. It is proven by during the teaching and learning process, most students looked confused and had difficulty understanding when the teacher used full English in explaining the

material and when the teacher asked them to share their opinions and ideas on the meaning of words related to the learning material being taught, most of them did not understand what the teacher asked. They cannot share their opinions and ideas in English and just kept quiet. The limited vocabulary, according to Cahyono & Widiati (2004) has become a major problem for students in learning English in the context of English as Foreign Language (EFL). The problem of this limited vocabulary can be an obstacle for students in achieving the goal of their English learning at the junior high school level. In addition, the problem is of course also closely related to the activeness of students in using their vocabulary knowledge during the learning process. Based on students' scores on the subject matter 3.5, out of 28 students only 13 students that reached the standard of minimum completeness and 15 students had not reached the standard of minimum completeness. More detailed can be seen in the following table:

Table 1.1 Recapitulation of Students' Score Based on Students' Vocabulary Knowledge in Learning Process

Category	The number of students	Subject matter	Total of all students
Students who reached KKM	13	3.5	28
Students who didn't reached KKM	15	3.5	

To overcome the problem, it is important for the teacher to apply some appropriate strategies to help students acquire and enrich their English vocabulary through teaching. So that students can use their vocabulary knowledge to support the success of their learning process. Regarding the use of strategies, when conducted preliminary observation, the researcher found that the teacher used two strategies, namely using translation and encouraging students to look up the meaning of words using a dictionary.

Departing from the discussion above, it is assumed that the teachers through teaching English vocabulary using teaching strategies to seventh grade students in junior high school can be one way to help students to acquire their English vocabulary in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Hence, this study will investigate Teacher's Strategies in Teaching English Vocabulary to Seventh Grade Students of Junior High School, specifically at SMPN 41 Medan.

B. The Problems of the Study

Based on background of the study above, the problems of this study were formulated as follow:

1. What strategies did the teacher use in teaching English vocabulary to seventh grade students at SMPN 41 Medan?
2. Why did the teacher use the strategies in teaching English vocabulary to seventh grade students at SMPN 41 Medan?

C. The Objectives of the Study

In line with problems of the study, the objectives of this study were formulated as follow:

1. To investigate the strategies used by the teacher in teaching English vocabulary to seventh grade students at SMPN 41 Medan.
2. To investigate the teacher's reasons used the strategies in teaching English vocabulary to seventh grade students at SMPN 41 Medan.

D. The Scope of the Study

In order to make this research directed on the formulation of the research problems above, this research was focused only on the teacher's strategies in teaching English vocabulary in the classroom. This study was to investigate what strategies were used by teachers in teaching English vocabulary and the teacher's reasons used the strategies in teaching English vocabulary. However, the researcher limited this study only on what strategies were used by the teacher in teaching English vocabulary to seventh grade students at SMPN 41 Medan and the reasons why the teacher used the strategies in teaching English vocabulary to seventh grade students at SMPN 41 Medan.

E. The Significances of the Study

This study is expected to be useful both theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically, this study is expected to add insight and knowledge about teaching vocabulary and strategies that can be used in teaching English vocabulary to seventh grade students

because in seventh grade they begin to learn English more deeply.

2. Practically, this study is expected to be useful for:

a. For teachers.

This study hopefully can be used by teachers, especially English teachers, to determine, apply, and vary teaching strategies in teaching English vocabulary for the students being taught at the junior high school level. The results of this study are also expected to be useful for prospective teachers as a provision in teaching English vocabulary to students in the future.

b. For students.

The results of this study are expected to help students acquire vocabulary related to the material and learning objectives to be achieved as part of students' language acquisition of English.

c. For future researchers.

This research is expected can contribute to the development of theories regarding teaching vocabulary and teacher strategies in teaching English vocabulary to seventh grade students.