

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains about the research introduction. It consists of background of the study, problem identification, limitation of the research, problem statement, objectives of the study, and benefit of the research.

A. Background of the Study

Vocabulary is considered to be one of the most important elements in comprehending lesson materials, especially when learning a foreign language. Heidari et al. (2012) states that vocabulary is the core of language and the cornerstone of language learning. Through comprehending foreign words, students will understand the meaning of the words. Wessels (2011: 46) believes that knowledge of vocabulary is essential to students' academic success. "If students do not understand the meaning of the words in the text, they will have difficulty understanding the content". Therefore, comprehension of the meaning of words can help students understand the materials and the reading texts.

Vocabulary is clearly important for language learning as it underpins all other language skills, can be a stepping stone to high level language use and can help the student to achieve fluency faster. Some characteristics that distinguish vocabulary learning from other language skills include the fact that vocabulary learning is incremental, potentially limitless, and heavily constrained by the learners' experience (Swain & Carroll, 1987: 193). When it comes to learning a foreign language such as English, many students spend hours working through textbooks, doing grammar exercises and perhaps even watching the occasional Netflix show in their target language. A learner with insufficient vocabulary size will not perform well in every aspect of language itself. Yang (1997) pointed out that many college students still encountered difficulties in reading their English textbooks. The main reason for those college students who cannot read comprehensively is their limited vocabulary size. Students tend to become passive learner during English classes because they lack of vocabulary, which affect their

behaviour in learning English. In addition, Goulden as cited in Olmos (2009) explains that measurement of academic particular vocabulary size is an important indicator of the ability of second language learners to achieve academic success. Mc Carthy (1990: 265) stated 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 meaning, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way.

The language components involve vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. In fact, of all language components, the vocabulary holds the main core in language teaching. Richards and Renandya (2002:255) said that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write. It means that to improve their language skills, learners must master vocabulary. Vocabulary is the basic important things when people want to learn languages. Vocabulary will have an actual effect on students' language proficiency. Wilkins (1972: 9-10) stated that without grammar people understood the little message of communication, but without vocabulary people cannot understand it. Therefore, speaking, listening, reading and writing are the basic element to learn is vocabulary. By having the large size of vocabulary will help students to improve their language proficiency.

Learning language per say takes strategies, and according to Wenden and Rubin, learning strategies can be defined as actions, steps, plans or routines taken by the learners in processing the information they received (Hashim, 2018). There are many ways of students in learning second language. The use of the student's strategy of learning language contributes to language learning. Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs) have its roles in facilitating students' learning become more independent in learning language. Cameron (2001:92) defined vocabulary learning strategies as "Action that learners take to help them understand and remember vocabulary".

VLSs are important for junior high school students, because they help students to understand new words and increase their wealth of vocabulary, and encourage them to become independent learners. However, English lessons in

junior high school do not provide specific classes on technical vocabulary. As such, the students cannot always rely on their teachers. They need to master their own strategies of determining the meanings of unknown words independently so they can better understand their class materials. Vocabulary learning strategies have a prominent part in learning language successfully. They are resources that students employ them to improve their vocabulary knowledge to solve their problems in language learning. Gu (2010: 116) claimed that VLSs are an indispensable tool to describe and to explain the vocabulary development of a foreign language. VLSs are also a tool to empower learners to make a wise decision in terms of what to learn and how to learn.

Some previous study discovered that understanding the vocabulary learning strategies is a necessary. According to Alharthi (2014) VLS can supply many benefits such as to tackle a large number of unknown words, to ease and enhance vocabulary retention, to shape learners to be independent learners in expanding and meeting their own vocabulary, etc. Tacak (2008; 76) even proposes that VLS should be integrated in teaching vocabulary and encourage to the students to try the use of some VLSs. By implementing certain VLS, the students are expected to be independent learners to raise their vocabularies.

According to recent research studies, there were several factors that influence strategy choice; such as awareness, personality traits, stage of learning, task requirements, teacher expectations, age, general learning style, purpose for learning language, motivation level, nationality, gender, etc. There are very few studies on vocabulary learning strategies and gender preference. One of them is a study conducted on Chinese high school students by Na (61; 2016). The researcher found that there were differences between female and male female students that were triggered by their Chinese cultural background. Females are more circumspect when it comes to study planning and are more patient when it comes to repeating word pronunciations. As a result, female students are more familiar with metacognitive and cognitive strategies for vocabulary acquisition.

. Based on the explanation above, the attention is drawn up to make a study regarding to the case of the students' obstacles in learning vocabulary. Most of

students in SMP Negeri 4 Tengaran Kabupaten Semarang have practiced their English by mixing Indonesian accents and Indonesian grammatical. Students tend to become passive learner during English classes because they lack of vocabulary, which affect their behaviour in learning English. Students tend to the teacher in learning English especially for boys. Thus, the gender differences were also interested to investigate how the students use the vocabulary learning strategies.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher formulated the study entitled “A CASE STUDY: GENDER DIFFERENCE IN VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGY USED BY THE NINTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMP NEGERI 4 TENGARAN KABUPATEN SEMARANG (A Case Study: Gender Difference in Vocabulary Learning Strategy Used by the Ninth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 4 Tengaran Kabupaten Semarang).

B. Limitation of the Study

The researcher limits his study on the strategies of vocabulary learning. Different basic learning languages have been engaged by students. The object of the study is the male and female students.

Many aspects can trigger the students in choosing different strategies in their vocabulary learning. The researcher investigated the vocabulary learning strategy of the students of SMP Negeri 4 Tengaran Kabupaten Semarang academic year 2021/2022 based on gender differences.

C. Statements of the Problems

Based on the background of the study, the problem statements are formulated as follows:

1. What VLSs are used by male and female of ninth grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Tengaran Kabupaten Semarang?
2. What are the differences between male and female of ninth grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Tengaran Kabupaten Semarang in using VLSs?
3. What are the factors that influence the students in using VLSs?

D. Objective of the Study

Based on the statement of the problems, the objectives of the study are formulated as follows:

1. to explain the VLSs used by male and female of ninth grade students SMP Negeri 4 Tengaran Kabupaten Semarang.
2. to explain the differences of VLSs used by male and female of ninth grade students SMP Negeri 4 Tengaran Kab. Semarang.
3. to describe the factors that contribute to the VLSs used by male and female students.

E. Benefit of Study

In the benefit of study, the researcher proposes two benefits; theoretical and practical.

1. Theoretical benefits.

The researcher hopes that this research will enrich the existing theories about the vocabulary learning strategy varieties and theories about the gender differences in vocabulary learning strategies.

2. Practical benefits.

- a. The students

The researcher hopes that information about vocabulary learning strategies proposed by some experts will stimulate the students to take appropriate vocabulary learning strategies. With correct VLSs, they can get the best track in learning English.

- b. The lecturers

Hopefully, this research finding will inform lecturers about their students' vocabulary learning strategies, enabling lecturers to select teaching techniques and materials that are appropriate for their students' vocabulary learning strategies.

- c. The next researcher

This research becomes references for the next researcher.