

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the explanation of introduction of this research. It discusses the background of the study, limitation of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, benefit of the study and the definition of key terms.

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

For most foreign language learners, the crucial aim of language learning is to be able to use the language fluently and to communicate effectively. In learning a foreign language also, the vocabulary size or the number of known vocabularies is always critical in order to become a successful speaker (Cameron, 2002). Although, vocabulary knowledge is not prerequisite to language skills performance, knowing a large number of vocabularies surely help language learner to make a conversation more valuable and meaningful. Furthermore, vocabulary knowledge enables language use, while language use enables the increase of vocabulary knowledge, and so on (Nation, 2001). In essence, the more exposed a learner to new vocabularies, the faster the learner would gain the language.

According to Zimmermann (1997), native speakers of English can better understand ungrammatical utterances with accurate vocabulary than those with accurate grammar and inaccurate vocabulary. It is clear that actually both vocabulary and grammar are of great significance for successful communication. However, to compare between grammar and vocabulary, it can be explained that vocabulary is more central than grammar and more attention on vocabulary should be paid to vocabulary instruction. That is why Levelt (1989) also claimed in Gass and Selinker (2001: 373) that vocabulary errors tend to obstruct comprehension more than grammatical errors. In a simple case, students may expert in grammar, but if they are in the low size of vocabulary, some of their language skill might be interrupted. For example in writing an essay, a student may expert in composing the right order sentences, but he face difficulties in choosing the words that will be

composed in his essay because he has limited English vocabulary in his mind. It therefore, the vocabulary research has the same prominent position after the grammar case study. The case also supported with the idea that compared with the changes of grammar and pronunciation, the amount of vocabulary is also keeping on changing and enlarging, thus teachers should help students to adopt effective ways to learn vocabularies more efficiently.

To be added more, an adequate vocabulary is also essential for successful second or foreign language use. It is because without extensive vocabulary, people will be unable to use structures and functions which they have learned for comprehensible communication (Fauziati, 2015: 133). It describes that by mastering vocabulary people can express their ideas and understand the other basic competence well. However, it is difficult to master the other competences without understanding the vocabulary, because vocabulary is the basic competence that must be reached by students in order to obtain other competencies like reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In consequence, vocabulary is the aspect that is not to be left to be learned by the second or foreign language students.

Specifically, vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) plays its' roles in facilitating learners' vocabulary learning process and helps them to become more self-directed in vocabulary learning. Vocabulary learning strategies are also said to aid learners with their acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information. To have a reasonable level of understanding, an EFL learner should know around 5,000 word families (Nation, 2001). However, statistics have shown that lack of vocabulary knowledge presents for Indonesian EFL learners has been noted since the year of 1999 (Nurweni & Read, 1999 and Nur, 2004). Despite being important in the development of English proficiency too, very little studies have been done concerning vocabulary learning strategies and its relation to the vocabulary size employed by university students in Indonesia.

The preliminary facts supports that two key measures of foreign language learning includes vocabulary size and word knowledge quality. Since measuring

the growth of vocabulary size and word knowledge quality over time provides an important index for assessing foreign language proficiency.

It is beneficial to explore deeper their difficulties and offer some innovative ideas in order to improve the students learning vocabulary size. However, the first goal that is needed to explore is the strategies that the students use to learn new English words and make them aware that there are many vocabulary learning strategies that they could use in learning new words. The second goal, in order to increase the vocabulary size of the foreign language learners, it is also important to help their vocabulary development by introducing them a number of strategies and examining the how the strategies help them. It is also valuable in mentioning that strategies should be indispensable parts of vocabulary learning and teaching.

As the focus has shifted from language teaching to language learning, the independence of learning has come to the front. Elaborating on the independence of the students, it is not appropriate for the teacher to dictate everything to students, take all the important decisions about the language learning process since students have the potential and the skills to cope with all the challenges in the language classroom (Cook, 2008). Thus, students are needed to be forced as independent language learners who apply their known language learning strategy which focused in this case is vocabulary learning strategies.

Based on the explanation above, the attention is drawn up to make a study regarding to the case of Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Vocabulary Size of EFL learner. The case is decided due to the observation that the teachers infrequently monitor their student English vocabulary development. It is also because of the short interview with some of the English Department students in IAIN that they are not acknowledged enough about the VLS. That is why the study which is explored in the study entitled: "Vocabulary Learning Strategy and Its Relation to The Vocabulary Size of Male and Female Students: A Case Study of English Department of IAIN Salatiga."

## **1.2. Limitation of the Study**

In research, it is very important to limit the scope of analysis to get relevant data and to have a distinct focus. In this research, the study is limited on the Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Vocabulary Size of EFL learner who study in a university level. It is because of the Vocabulary Learning Strategies and the Vocabulary Size studies are the studies that support the research which purposed for the development of the EFL students' language skill. The Vocabulary Learning Strategies of the students and their Vocabulary size are investigated through the case study which is limited into the context of the place and time. The study is taken in the Islamic College in Salatiga (IAIN Salatiga) which involve thirty participants of the study. The participants are majored at the English Education Faculty at the fourth semester. They are engaged in the academic year of 2017/2018. The execution of the study also limited into the context of the time that is conducted in the November 2017.

## **1.3. Research Questions**

Based on the background of study, the researcher identifies the problem on the following lists. The problems of the research are drawn the researcher's attention.

1. What are the vocabulary learning strategies used by male students of English Department of IAIN Salatiga?
2. What are the vocabulary learning strategies used by female students of English Department of IAIN Salatiga?
3. What is the vocabulary size of English Department student of IAIN Salatiga?
4. Is there any gender difference in the pattern of vocabulary learning strategies used by English Department student of IAIN Salatiga?
5. What is the relation between vocabulary learning strategy used by English Department student at State Institute of Islamic Studies of Salatiga and vocabulary size?

#### **1.4. Objective of the Study**

Research question above is purposed to be answered by the researcher. Therefore, after understanding the research question above, the purposes of this research are listed as follows:

1. To describe the vocabulary learning strategies used by male students of English Department of IAIN Salatiga.
2. To describe the vocabulary learning strategies used by female students of English Department of IAIN Salatiga.
3. To explain what is the vocabulary size of English Department student of IAIN Salatiga.
4. To figure out whether there is gender difference in the pattern of vocabulary learning strategies used by English Department student of IAIN Salatiga or not.
5. To explore the relation between vocabulary learning strategy used by English Department student at State Institute of Islamic Studies of Salatiga and vocabulary size

#### **1.5. Benefit of the Study**

The result of this research is expected to give beneficial information in terms of practical benefits. The result of this research is not only projected in giving the input and contribution of thoughts in the knowledge on English vocabulary studies particularly in the stage of University level. This research is also projected to add the body of knowledge as well as the proper action that the readers take after reading about the contribution of vocabulary learning strategies toward the students' vocabulary size in descriptive. This study is not only intended to be additional reference for other researcher but also adding the suggestive respond for them, so that they could take the variant decision by conducting another type of vocabulary research. To make it more detail, the other benefits were described in the following descriptions.

1. For English teachers: this research can be beneficial for them to enrich their knowledge in the students' background knowledge of vocabulary learning strategies and size. The knowledge is expected to capture how to develop and enhance the students' vocabulary learning strategies to improve the students' vocabulary size.
2. For the education practitioner: this research can be beneficial to enrich their knowledge of EFL university school students' vocabulary learning strategy. Not only serve the knowledge on the exploration of the students' vocabulary learning strategy, but also serve the knowledge on the exploration of the vocabulary size.
3. For students: this research can be beneficial for them to know their degree of vocabulary competencies and the strategies that influence their English learning. The factor of learning strategy are the internal factors and this study acquired them know how to develop the vocabulary size.
4. For other researcher: this research can be additional references for them to conduct the research and developing this research, especially in vocabulary learning and its contribution to the vocabulary size development.

## **1.6. Research Paper Organization**

Considering the convenience steps to understand this thesis, the writer organized the research into five chapters. They are: introduction, review of related literature, research methodology, discussion and closure. All of these chapters is introduced in the following system.

Chapter one is introduction. It contains the background of the study about this research. It discusses the reason why the research about VLS (Vocabulary Learning Strategies) and perspectives is conducted. Below the background of study is the complete clarification of the general research. It consists of statement of the study, the objective of the research, the significance of the study, limitation of problem, definition of key term, and the outline of the thesis presentation.

Moving to second chapter is the review of related literature. It presents the theoretical review of the vocabulary learning strategies definition and vocabulary

learning strategies taxonomy. The review literature on this research starts from the definition and ends at the deep explanation. The deep explanation is made into sub point that can make the research well understandable. The deep explanation also supported by the conceptual framework of the research to understand how far the VLS (Vocabulary Learning Strategies) should be examined and its discussion about the Vocabulary Size.

Chapter three discusses about the research. It provides the comprehensive explanation of the research that is conducted in undergraduate institution. Research methodology covers the research type, research setting and respondent, data, data collection, validity of the research and data analysis.

Finding and discussion on this research is reported in the fourth chapter. All the collected data from questionnaire, observation and interview is discussed. This chapter is purposed to serve the detailed portraits on the usage of Vocabulary Learning Strategies used by undergraduate English department students. Not only the detailed portraits, but also the result of vocabulary size test and the result of VLS relation to the vocabulary size are presented in this chapter.

The fifth chapter, which is the last chapter, shows the closure of the research. Conclusion on the last chapter is completed by some suggestion and recommendation for of the research. Below is the detail of the outline of the research.