

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

English is the first foreign language studied in Indonesia. This language becomes a compulsory subject in junior high school. According to Frijuniarsi & Marlianingsih (2016), the main goals of teaching and learning English for this level are the mastery of listening and reading. Those skills become the priority that must be mastered by EFL students; students should be able to absorb oral and written information in English as well as possible. Accordingly, to be able to master those skills students must first master components of language among others are vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, and grammar. However, in this research, the researcher would like to focus on discussing one of the important components of language, namely vocabulary.

Vocabulary plays an essential role in learning English that EFL students must be mastered first. This is because vocabulary is generally recognized as the foundation of language that supports language development. Nie & Zhou (2017, p. 101) say that "vocabulary is known as the building blocks of language and no language acquisition can take place without the acquisition of vocabulary". It means that the acquisition of second or foreign languages is closely related to vocabulary study. It is almost impossible when EFL students want to master language skills without vocabulary knowledge. They need to have sufficient

vocabulary to express their thought, feeling or idea and to convey their message or information so that it is understood by other people.

Student's vocabulary size can also be an indicator that communication and interaction will be well understood. The more students' master vocabulary of target languages, the more they can be able to speak, write, read, and listen as they want (Rohmatillah, 2014). By having a wealth of words, in listening, students will be easy to understand what the speaker is saying. In reading, vocabulary mastery will influence how well they understand and comprehend a text. Likewise in speaking and writing students will fluently and accurately convey messages to others if they have good vocabulary knowledge. Yet learners without adequate vocabulary will have difficulty in conveying their own ideas both orally and in writing and difficulty in understanding written or spoken discourse.

Based on the researcher's experience as a student teacher at one of the junior high schools in Kota Jambi, the researcher found a case that students have some difficulties and problems in learning English. It was seen in the classroom learning process that students tend to be passive and give less feedback. From the interviews of several students, one of the reasons they are passive in learning English is because they are weak in terms of English vocabulary. With limited vocabulary, it is difficult for them to understand the material, to express their ideas, and to answer questions from the teacher. Many students also stated that they had difficulty mastering vocabulary. They get difficulty memorizing the form, meaning, and use of new words.

In this case, the researcher believes that vocabulary is a major aspect in learning English that should get more attention from teachers. Although there are no specific teaching materials that openly discussed vocabulary, teachers are required to cover it and link it with their teaching materials. Teachers should introduce new words and instruct the learner to practice those words. The researcher then thinks that teachers need to choose and use the right strategy to help students improve their vocabulary. According to Brown (2001), strategy is a specific method for approaching a problem or task, to achieve a specific goal. Through the use of appropriate strategies in teaching and learning English, it is hoped that students can easily and quickly receive and master vocabulary.

According to Nation (2001), the use of vocabulary learning strategies is considered effective to improve students' vocabulary. Every teacher also tends to have various strategies to help students improve their vocabulary (Schmitt, 2000). The strategies that can be used to improve students' vocabulary are classified into 2 categories. The former category is the discovery strategy used to determine the meaning of new words when students found them for the first time and the latter is a consolidation strategy used to consolidate the meaning of new words. The discovery strategy includes determination strategy and social strategy and consolidation strategy includes social strategy, cognitive strategy, and meta-cognitive strategy.

Thus, the researcher is interested in conducting survey research to investigate what strategies English teachers used to increase students' vocabulary in learning English. The results will then be examined to reach conclusions about

what types of strategies are predominantly used by English teachers at Junior high Schools, Kota Jambi to increase students' vocabulary in learning English.

1.2 Formulation of the Research

Based on the background exposure above, the researcher formulates the research questions as follow:

1. What strategies are used by the English teachers to increase students' vocabulary in learning English?
2. What strategies are dominantly used by the English teachers to increase students' vocabulary in learning English?

1.3 Purpose of the Research

The purposes of this research were:

1. To investigate the strategies used by English teachers to increase students' vocabulary in learning English.
2. To find out the dominant strategy used by the English teacher to increase students' vocabulary in learning English.

1.4 Limitation of the Research

In conducting this research, the researcher uses an online questionnaire as the main instrument to investigate the vocabulary learning strategies used by English teachers who are members of MGMP rayon 4 Kota Jambi to increase students' vocabulary. It is also to support social and physical distancing to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

1.5 Significance of the Research.

This research is important to do because it will provide information to the readers about the types of strategies used among the English language teachers in junior high school, Kota Jambi to increase students' vocabulary in learning English. Theoretically, the findings are expected to find out the dominant strategy used among English teachers in junior high school Kota Jambi to increase students' vocabulary in learning English. Then practically the findings of this research are expected to help English teachers determine the best strategies that can be used to increase students' vocabulary.

1.6 Definition of the Key Terms

Strategy: Strategy is series of activities or techniques that can be used to help students improve or enhance their target language ability (Horwitz, 2013).

Vocabulary: Vocabulary is a collection of words owned by a particular language. "All languages have words, a vocabulary or lexicon" (Foley and Thompson, 2003, p. 10).