

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

English, as a foreign language in Indonesia, has played an important role in student learning. It can be found in most schools in Indonesia that have taught English in their schools. Some of them may only serve as local content. However, others have made English one of the most important lessons (Erlina et al., 2019; Mukminin et al., 2018). One component of language that is very important for every language learner is vocabulary. Inadequate vocabulary knowledge can make it challenging to successfully speak, read, write, or even understand a language as vocabulary, which includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills is declared as the basis of all skills in learning a language, including English as a foreign language (EFL) for Indonesians.

Scientific endeavors in the field of language learning strategies (LLSs) (see, for example, Cohen, 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990) have been the basis for the development of vocabulary learning strategy inventories (VLSs).

Vocabulary learning strategies refer to “a wide spectrum of strategies used as part of an ongoing process of vocabulary learning” (Gu & Johnson, 1996, p. 669), suggesting that every language learner should learn vocabulary as a process of internalization by using a variety of ways or strategies. Through using the VLS inventory, scholars have discovered a variety of issues, including what VLS is adopted by successful and unsuccessful language learners. (Fan, 2003; Gu, 2003;

Gu & Johnson, 1996; Lawson & Hogben, 1998; Lessard-Clouston, 1996), what factors may influence the use of VLSs (Catalán, 2003; Gu, 2002), and how this use relates to the breadth of vocabulary knowledge (VK) (Gu & Johnson, 1996; KojicSabo & Lightbown, 1999) and its depth (e.g., Nassaji, 2006; Zhang & Lu, 2015). Those studies have documented various issues in learning vocabulary in various cultures, contexts, and countries.

In the Indonesian context, the importance of learning strategies in learning English has become the focus of several previous studies. For example, Nazurty et al. (2019) focused on learning strategies in the reading of Indonesian language education student teachers, while Maimunah et al. (2019) studied listening strategies used by Arabic education student teachers. Moreover, studies on vocabulary learning strategies have been conducted by several researchers. For example, Munandar, Nurweni, and Mahpul (2015), who studied the Indonesian senior high students' vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary size found that there was a significant correlation between students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary size. Additionally, Shadikah, Fauziati, and Supriyadi (2017) focused on the effect of vocabulary learning strategies on vocabulary mastery based on gender differences, and their findings revealed that female learners tended to use more vocabulary learning strategies than males did while the more vocabulary learning strategies applied, the better effect they got in vocabulary mastery. Also, recent research conducted by Oktaviani and Wahyudin (2022) indicated that the metacognitive method was shown as the most frequently used strategy in acquiring

English vocabulary. Meanwhile, the memory strategy was found to be the least frequently employed.

However, although several studies have been done related to the importance of vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) in learning English as a foreign language, studies on vocabulary learning strategies for EFL student teachers are few; particularly English education student teachers at non-English speaking universities in Indonesia. The lack of literature and information on vocabulary learning strategies for the EFL student teachers might obscure our understanding of the unique and individual nature of the EFL student teachers' vocabulary learning strategies. Therefore, the researcher intended to conduct research entitled **"Vocabulary Learning Strategies: An Inquiry of the EFL Student Teachers"**.

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this survey research were:

1. To investigate the types of vocabulary learning strategies of the EFL student teachers in six English Departments in Jambi, namely Universitas Jambi, Universitas Muhammadiyah Bungo, IAIN Kerinci, Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, Universitas Batanghari, and Universitas Merangin.
2. To investigate the most and least frequently used of vocabulary learning strategies types of the EFL student teachers in six English Departments in Jambi.
3. To reveal whether the use of VLSs differ among the EFL student teachers of the six English Departments in Jambi.

1.3 Research Questions

To achieve the purpose of the research, this research endeavors to answer the following research questions:

1. What types of vocabulary learning strategies do the EFL student teachers in six English Departments in Jambi use?
2. What are the vocabulary learning strategies that the EFL student teachers in six English Departments in Jambi use most and least frequently?
3. Does the use of VLSs differ among the EFL student teachers of the six English Departments in Jambi?

1.4 Significance of the Study

There are several significances of this research which are shown below:

1. The results of this research may be useful for English teachers to use research as a reference in teaching and to help students who have difficulty understanding vocabulary
2. The results of this research may be useful for students who have difficulty understanding vocabulary and help students find vocabulary learning strategies that can improve their vocabulary.
3. The results of this research may be useful for future researchers as a research reference

Although there is substantial literature on the issues of vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) in learning English as a foreign language, it is somewhat surprising and regrettable that, to my knowledge, not much research effort has

focused on the importance of vocabulary learning strategies for the EFL student teachers from six English Departments in Jambi, namely Universitas Jambi, Universitas Muhammadiyah Bungo, IAIN Kerinci, Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, Universitas Batanghari, Universitas Merangin. Therefore, this research is expected to fill the gaps that exist in previous research.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

The focus of the research was limited to the EFL student teachers from six English Departments in Jambi, namely Universitas Jambi, Universitas Muhammadiyah Bungo, IAIN Kerinci, Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, Universitas Batanghari, Universitas Merangin. The EFL student teachers who were the samples were year 1, 2 and 3, who were enrolled at the English Departments in Universitas Jambi, Universitas Muhammadiyah Bungo, IAIN Kerinci, Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, Universitas Batanghari, Universitas Merangin. The researcher excluded the year 4 EFL student teachers as I had limited access to them. The next limitation is related to the strategies that the researcher plans to use and adopt. In this research, the researcher used CREAM strategies for learning vocabulary (Cottrell, 2008), namely Creative Learning Strategy, Reflective Learning Strategy, Effective Learning Strategy, Active Learning Strategy, and Motivated Learning Strategy. Each strategy consists of 25 statements.

1.6 Definition of the Key Terms

To avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations, the researcher clarifies every phrase used in this study, which are as follows:

1. *Vocabulary learning strategies* refer to "a wide spectrum of strategies used as part of an ongoing process of vocabulary learning" (Gu and Johnson, 1996, p. 669).
2. *Learning Strategies* are defined as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self- directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990: 8).
3. *EFL (English Foreign Language)* in Indonesia means that English is just learnt at school as a compulsory subject (Setiyadi, 2006). Students seldom use English in society because they usually use a language based on their mother tongue, Indonesian.