

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

According to Cook & Seidlhofer in Atkinson (2011:1), language is a social fact, an expression of individual identity, an outcome of dialogic interaction, or a social semiotic. They also add that language could be all of these things at once. It means language could include many things. It could be defined depending on the situation and the necessity how language is used.

English is one of languages in this world. With its spreading around the world, English becomes a global language and a means of international communication. It is used by people in the whole world to communicate to other people from different places and countries (Sharifian, 2009:1; Crystal, 2003:2). Therefore, with the development of English as a global language, it is a necessity for students to learn English early in the school.

There are differences between English as a foreign language and English as a second language. According to Oxford (1990:6), “a foreign language does not have immediate social and communicative functions within the community where it is learned; it is employed mostly to communicate everywhere”. It could be noted that a foreign language could only be applied by particular people who equally understand the language. A second language itself is distinct from a foreign language. It has social and communicative functions within the community where it is learned (*ibid*). It means that a second language has been adopted as a daily language where in that place there are many people who used

the language and necessitate the one to learn it in order to communicate properly with others (for example, a Javanese needs to learn Bahasa Indonesia for social reason in Indonesia). English is considered as a foreign language for Indonesian because it is from abroad; and only used by particular people because there are many foreigners that live in Indonesia.

English becomes a challenge for students because it is different from their mother tongue that they are accustomed to applying in spoken language every day. Schmitt (2000:4) states that “language learning is probably the most cognitive (mentally) challenging task a person goes through”. Because of that, English is probably hard to be learnt, especially for students in the lower level that is elementary school students. The students often face difficulties in learning English, mainly in understanding the meaning of certain vocabulary.

Wilkins in Thornbury (2002:13) explains about the importance of vocabulary learning. He states that without grammar very little can be conveyed but without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. From this statement, it could be known that vocabulary learning is very important. Without vocabulary, people cannot communicate properly because there is nothing that needs to express their feelings to other.

Based on the theory above, the first thing that must be first learnt for lower level students in language learning is vocabulary. Lacking vocabulary, students cannot tell anything that existed in their mind. And the result is they tend to be bored and make a noise in the process of learning. Therefore, it requires some strategies for students in language learning in order to master it, especially in learning vocabulary.

Language learning strategies require steps that are applied in gaining knowledge of language. Oxford (1990:8) states that “learning strategies are specific actions taken by learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more affective, and more transferable to new situations”. The definition of learning itself, according to Brown (2007:7), is “acquiring of knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience, or instruction”. Meanwhile strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem (*ibid*, 119). It could be noted that language learning strategies are specific steps that are taken by students to cope with their problems in acquiring the knowledge of the language.

Since language learning strategies involve four skills in language learning (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), it makes the area of language learning strategies is wide. There is a particular strategy that is needed by students in improving vocabulary which is called vocabulary learning strategies or VLS. Nation (2001:217) describes that “vocabulary learning strategies as a part of language learning strategies which in turn are a part of general learning strategies”. It means vocabulary learning strategies actually concern some strategies that are existed in language learning strategies despite there are some additions in the list of strategies. Therefore, the suitable strategies that are needed by students in improving vocabulary are vocabulary learning strategies which known as VLS.

In assisting the understanding of vocabulary learning strategies, there are some classifications that are proposed by researchers. One of them is Schmitt's. Schmitt in Schmitt (2000:134) divides vocabulary learning strategies into two main groups. The first is strategy for the discovery of a new word's meaning that

consists of determination strategies and social strategies. And the second is strategy for consolidating a word once it has been encountered that consists of social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and metacognitive strategies. Both of the main groups of vocabulary learning strategies relate because the strategies support each other. Therefore, these strategies are employed by students in acquiring and improving vocabulary.

Those strategies would seem appropriate to be applied in the following schools since they have uniqueness in the learning process such as SDN Kebraon II Surabaya. SDN Kebraon II Surabaya is a state elementary school that is placed in the Kebraon Surabaya area. The location which is near from main road making the school is well-known by society in that place. The implementation of learning and teaching process that is shown in the school is also interesting by providing kinds of display items in each classroom to support the students in gaining the knowledge of language learning. Therefore, the students of SDN Kebraon II Surabaya felt comfortable in learning process in the classroom, including English subject. It was proven by the fact that the score of their examinations in the first semester was categorized great, especially in the fifth grade.

By the existence of the great score in the examination, it shows that the fifth grade students in the school have experienced improvement in vocabulary learning. Based on the fact, the researcher is attracted to find out what kinds of strategies that are used by the fifth grade students of SDN Kebraon II Surabaya in English subject, mainly in improving their vocabulary. And then, she also wants to describe how the students employ the strategies in improving their vocabulary.

1.2 Statements of the Problems

Based on background of the research, it is defined the problems as follows.

- 1.2.1** What kinds of learning strategies are used by the fifth grade students at SDN Kebraon II Surabaya in improving vocabulary?
- 1.2.2** How do the students use the strategies in improving vocabulary?

1.3 Objective of the Research

Based on the statements of the problems, the aims of this research are as follows.

- 1.3.1** To find out the kinds of learning strategies used by the fifth grade students at SDN Kebraon II Surabaya in improving vocabulary.
- 1.3.2** To find out the application of learning strategies that is used by the fifth grade students at SDN Kebraon II Surabaya in improving vocabulary.

1.4 Significance of the Research

This research contributes information to the development of learning strategies. It is hoped that the result of this research could assist the readers to gain knowledge about learning strategies; and help the teachers to make their students more interested in learning English. It is also expected to help other students of English Department analyze other studies by using the concepts that are applied in this thesis.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this research is on the language learning strategies theory such as “language learning strategies as the techniques or devices which a learner

may use to acquire knowledge” (Rubin, 1975 in Griffith, 2008:83) and vocabulary learning strategies theory such as “vocabulary learning strategies are a part of language learning strategies which in turn are a part of general strategies” (Nation, 2001:217) that are used by the fifth grade students at SDN Kebraon II Surabaya.

According to Creswell (1994:110), limitations are provided to identify potential weakness of the study. Thus, the limitation of this research is the result of this research cannot be generalized to other students in the different classes and different schools.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1.6.1 Language Learning Strategies (LLS):

Rubin (1975) in Griffith (2008:83) states that language learning strategies are the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge. Thus, language learning strategies in this research is the specific steps that are used by the students to cope with their problems in acquiring the knowledge of language.

1.6.2 Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS):

According to Nation (2001:217), vocabulary learning strategies are part of language learning strategies which in turn are a part of general learning strategies. Therefore, the definition of vocabulary learning strategies in this research is specific steps that are used by students to improve their vocabularies in English subject.

1.6.3 Improving Vocabulary:

Cameron (2001:72) states that building up a useful vocabulary is central to the learning of a foreign language at primary level. Because building up is central, improving is part of instruments that function to increase the central. Hence, improving vocabulary in this research is increasing vocabulary by using some ways to achieve maximal.