CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes the background of the study, the research questions, the research objectives, the theoretical framework, the significance of the Study, the definition of key terms, the scope and limitations of the study, and the organization of the proposal.

1.1   Background of the study

The most important aspect of language proficiency development is vocabulary. Schmitt (2000) asserts that expanding one's vocabulary entails not just learning new terms but also properly integrating and using them in speech. To move from passive recognition to active use, learners must interact with words repeatedly and in a variety of situations. To help students find, remember, and utilize language effectively, Schmitt suggests classifying vocabulary acquisition techniques into determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. Although vocabulary acquisition is widely acknowledged to be crucial, little research has been done on how Indonesian EFL students, especially those enrolled in university, employ these techniques in real-world academic contexts. Based on Schmitt's (2000) theoretical framework, this study intends to investigate the particular methods students employ to acquire new vocabulary, consolidate the terms they have come across, and actively use them in communication.

Vocabulary is a basic ability that language learners must possess when learning another language. Richards and Renandya (2002) state that vocabulary is a cornerstone for learners to gain proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing English. Bai (2018) also recognizes vocabulary as the first pillar of a language.

Vocabulary is a crucial component of language proficiency. Understanding how students acquire and retain vocabulary can help improve learning outcomes. Language learners employ diverse techniques or strategies in learning vocabulary.

Oxford (1990: 39) argues that language learning strategies are essential as they support students in developing communicative competency.

Many studies have been conducted on the vocabulary learning strategies employed by English learners. Yang and Dai (2021), who conducted such a study on students, found that rote repetition was typically used as a strategy for vocabulary learning. Similarly, Zarin and Khan (2014), in their research, revealed that students chose direct memorizing methods. Next, in his research, Al-Khresheh and Al-Ruwaii (2020) looked at the various vocabulary learning strategies used by Saudi students learning English as a second language and discovered that these students used simple vocabulary learning strategies such as repetition and rote memorization.

So far, as many of these studies explored the vocabulary-learning strategies used, there is still a lack of thorough studies on how Indonesian students apply when learning vocabulary in academic contexts still a lack

of thorough studies on how Indonesian university students apply when learning vocabulary strategy in authentic academic contexts, despite the fact that many studies have looked at these strategies. This gap in the literature highlights the need for more research on the particular vocabulary learning strategies used by university students, particularly when it comes to English language instruction at institutions such as a private university in Surabaya.

As vocabulary learning strategies employed by students when learning English have not been thoroughly researched, this study explores the vocabulary learning strategies used by students at a private university in Surabaya and evaluates their effectiveness. This study aims to identify the most effective strategies, provide insights into best practices for language learning, and contribute to the development of more effective teaching methods.

1.2   Research Questions

In line with the background of the study, the research problem is formulated as follows:

- What strategies do university students use to discover the meaning of new English vocabulary?
- What strategies do university students apply to consolidating the new vocabulary after it has been encountered?
- What strategies do university students use to actively apply the new vocabulary in communication contexts?

1.3   Research Objectives

The research objectives are as follows:

- To identify the strategies used by students to discover the meaning of new English vocabulary.

- To explore the strategies employed by students to consolidate the new vocabulary after it has been encountered.

- To examine the strategies used by students to actively use the newly learned vocabulary in communication contexts.

1.4.   Theoretical framework

Vocabulary is essential for effective communication in any language. Since learning new words can be challenging, using effective vocabulary learning strategies is crucial for improving comprehension and language production.

According to Schmitt (1997) and Nation (2001), for the majority of students, vocabulary learning strategies are the main means to understand and use language. These include methods like learning from context and repetition, which strengthen the connection between word forms and meanings.

1.5   Significance of the Study

The purpose of the current study is to provide an in-depth examination of how students use vocabulary learning strategies. It is expected to offer valuable insights for teachers, language instructors, and students to enhance vocabulary acquisition and overall language proficiency.

1.6   Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding in reading and interpreting this study, several key terms are defined as follows:

- Vocabulary

  Richards and Renandya (2002) state that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write.

  In this study, vocabulary refers to the collection of English words that the students understand and can use in communication. It includes both individual words and word combinations or phrases that carry specific meanings.

- Strategies

  According to Schmitt (1997), vocabulary learning strategies are techniques that learners use to acquire, store, and retrieve new words.

  In this study, strategies refer to the systematic methods employed by the students to enhance their vocabulary acquisition. These strategies include understanding word meanings through context, repeating words to support memorization, and applying vocabulary in speaking or writing. They serve as structured tools that help them achieve specific language learning goals effectively.

1.7   Scope and Limitations of the Study

The goal of this study is to find out how university students at Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya who are enrolled in the English Education Study Program learn vocabulary. Students from the 2023 batch who have finished the Basic Vocabulary course are specifically the study's participants. The study's focus is

restricted to analyzing Schmitt's (2000) journal's three main categories of vocabulary learning strategies:

(1) Strategies for discovering the meaning of a word,

(2) Strategies for consolidating a word once it has been encountered, and

(3) Strategies for using a word in communication contexts.

This study's methodology and participant selection are its main limitations. The results might not apply to students from other schools or academic levels because they only include one batch of students (Batch 2023) from a particular university program. Additionally, the study used a qualitative approach using a self-report questionnaire, which records learners' impressions but could not accurately represent their internal cognitive processes or real vocabulary acquisition activity. The lack of more thorough techniques, such think-aloud procedures or interviews, restricts the breadth of interpretation. Furthermore, other learning techniques that can also have an impact on vocabulary acquisition—like affective or metacognitive strategies—are not included in this study.

1.8 Organization of the study

This research consists of five chapters. Chapter I presents the background of the study, research questions, research objectives, theoretical framework, significance of the study, definition of key terms, scope and limitations of the study, and organization of the study. Chapter II is the review of related literature, which consists of theories of podcasts, theories of speaking, and a review of the previous study. Chapter III describes a method that contains the research design, site and contexts, participants, data and data sources, instruments, data collection procedure, and data analysis procedure. Chapter IV provides the findings and discussions. Chapter V presents the conclusions and suggestions of the research.