Chapter I

Introduction

Background of the Study

Language is used to communicate among human beings in order to establish social relation. By using language, people are able to convey their message to express ideas in oral and written form. English is an effective language to communicate with other people around the world who have different languages. In order to be able to speak English we should know English vocabulary so that we can understand what people say and we can respond to it well. Nowadays, most people perceive English vocabulary as the crucial element so that it plays an important role in communication. When people learn a foreign language, most people have feelings toward words. Words are very important in learning a foreign language. According to Katamba (1994: 2) "An understanding of words gives students a panoramic view of the entire field of linguistics because they impinged on every aspect of language structure". It means that people can not speak the language as they do not know vocabulary. The people may not use the language to communicate successfully if they lack lexical knowledge. In order to communicate effectively, people should learn language appropriately.

Learning a second language involves four skills, they are: speaking, listening, reading and writing which lead to effective communication. In this case, learning a second language needs some strategies to help learners learn easily. Chamot (1987), Cohen (1998), and Oxford (1990) conducted studies in language

learning strategies. In language learning, the students are asked to acquire some vocabularies which is one part of language learning. One crucial factor is the amount of vocabulary one possesses as vocabulary forms the biggest part of the meaning of any language (McCarthy, 1990). In this case, vocabulary acquisition is receiving attention in second language pedagogy and research. Vocabulary is a vital component in the process of language learning. Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read and write. If we know a lot of words, so we will be able to hear and to read, and we will be able to say what we want to when we are speaking and writing. When we are studying English there are many new English words. We also find those words in the dictionary when we are translating to our language. In learning English as a foreign language, the important role of vocabulary is inevitable. It means that without vocabulary mastery we can not communicate effectively.

According to Celce-Murcia (1985) "Vocabulary learning is central to language acquisition, whether the language is first, second or foreign." It means that vocabulary is one of the important factors to acquire the language especially English whether it is first, second or foreign language. Vocabulary has always been a crucial part of language learning and communication, it is said that vocabulary has not fully recognised the great communicative advantage to develop an extensive vocabulary (McCarthy 1990, p. 45). It means that vocabulary often seems to be the least systematised and the least well-catered for

all the aspects of learning language, such as; listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, or even pronunciation.

Since vocabulary learning is a part of language learning and teaching, it is important to investigate vocabulary learning strategies which are suitable with the students' capability and learning situation in the classroom. In learning vocabulary items, it is useful and necessary for language learners to be taught vocabulary learning strategies in order that they can learn how to discover the meaning of new words, how to store them in their memory, and how to use them by practising and expanding their vocabulary. In addition, to know the meaning of new word in a new language, the learners need to use their own learning strategies to acquire vocabulary.

Most researchers have specified a large number of vocabulary learning strategies used by the learners. A vocabulary strategy is a special instructional tool and way of going about directly or explicitly as well as the independent word learning skills required to learn words independently. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary learning strategies make learners able to take more responsibility for their own learning. He believes that a large amount of vocabulary can be acquired by using vocabulary learning strategies. Fan (2003) suggests that all vocabulary learning strategies are more or less connected to the following five steps of learning vocabulary in a foreign language which have been identified by Brown and Payne (1994), they are (a) having sources for encountering new words, (b) getting an obvious image, either visual or auditory, the forms of the new words,

(c) learning the meaning of the words, (d) making a strong memory connection between the forms and the meanings of the words, and (e) using the words.

Some of the studies have investigated how learners use vocabulary learning strategies. The previous study was done by Gu and Johnson (1996). They used a long questionnaire to specify which strategies Chinese university learners use to learn English vocabulary. After correlating the results with measures of vocabulary size and language proficiency, they found that the use of strategies for retention was correlated with higher vocabulary size but not language proficiency.

A similar study was done by Schmitt (1997). He investigated the use of vocabulary learning strategies, usefulness of these strategies and specification of the most useful ones on 600 Japanese EFL students. Using a bilingual dictionary, written repetition, verbal repetition, saying a new word aloud, studying spelling of a word, and taking notes in class were found as most used and most helpful ones. The results showed that dictionary strategies and repetitions were used more by Japanese learners while imagery and semantic grouping strategies were used fewer by the learners. Furthermore, word forms and mechanical memory strategies were emphasized by the learners of this study. There was also some evidence that more advanced learners tended to use more complex and meaning-focus strategies than less advanced learner.

Nation (2001) proposes that a large number of vocabulary learning strategies are helpful at all steps of vocabulary learning and can be used to an extensive range of vocabulary. He points to the fact that language learners by help of these strategies can control their own learning without the presence of a

teacher. In addition, Nation, in his research, reveals that learners are very different in the proficiency that they apply strategies with. Thus, language learners should be instructed to use of vocabulary learning strategies.

Cusen (2005) in his study conducted exploratory study. He used diary to identify and classify vocabulary learning strategies of Romanian English major and minor undergraduates at university of Brasov. He used Oxford learning strategies classification as the analytical framework of his study. He found that advanced learners with a professional interest in the study of English seem to use almost all the types of strategies from Oxford analytical framework. The learners appeared to use other strategies which are related to the context of his study and/or to each individual.

A more recent study is a qualitative study which is conducted by Lo (2007). He specified the perceptions of low achieving Chinese EFL students about the use of vocabulary learning strategies and their usefulness in a high school located in Hong Kong. In this study, the vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire (adopted from Cheung, 2004) involved a list of 19 VLS which indicated the frequency (never=1 to always=5) and usefulness (not useful=1 to extremely useful=5) using 5-point Likert scales. Finally, the study showed repeatedly spelling the words, taking notes in vocabulary textbooks, repeating and reviewing strategies, and analyzing strategies as the most useful and the most frequently used strategies by students.

Finally, the most recent study found by the researcher on vocabulary learning strategies was done by Wu (2008). He explored vocabulary learning

strategies used by 10 vocational Chinese ESL learners in a vocational institute located in Hong Kong. The learners were randomly selected from 16 classes. He took 22 students from each class. He interviewed each of the 10 learners on a one to one basis and their responses were recorded with a tape recorder and transcribed by the researcher. The results showed that the learners applied the following strategies to identify the meaning of the words: mental rehearsal (e.g. saying the word in the mind before speaking the word), imagery (use of pictures to remember new words), auditory representation (e.g. dividing the sound segments of the word to learn pronunciation), selective attention (e.g. paying attention to keywords in spoken English), checking the dictionary to find out the meaning of words and co-operation (e.g. working with peers).

Regarding vocabulary learning, it is not easy for all language learners to learn and acquire the meaning of new words, to store them in their memory and recall them at will to use them in appropriate situations or to expand their vocabulary size. Therefore, in order to help learners to learn vocabulary successfully and become self-directed learners of vocabulary, they must be taught and appropriately trained various kinds of vocabulary learning strategies. They must learn different appropriate strategies for coping with unknown or unfamiliar words.

However, English has thousands of words to learn and learning vocabulary turns out to be a suffering process to English learners. This is not an exception for the student officers who are called "pasis" or "perwira siswa" at Surabaya Merchant Marine Polytechnic and who study English for specific purposes (ESP)

especially in maritime English. Maritime English is one of the applications of ESP. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 19) "ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as well as the content and method are based on the learners' reason for learning". In this case, English is needed to be used for specific purposes that have advantages in the future especially on board ship. Today, shipping industry communicates through maritime English as the language of the sea. Communication at sea which is called "seaspeak" or maritime communication involves communication between ship and coast station, inter ship communication, and intra ship communication, such as internal communication when the ship is berthing, leaving berth or loading and unloading. Vessel and coast station can communicate by means of radio telephone and satellite. In order to know and understand communication at sea, seafarers should have proficiency in using and understanding maritime English which influence the safety life at sea, ship property, pollution prevention, etc. Maritime English knowledge and skills can ensure the effectiveness of communication. Most of the maritime institutes realize that mastering communication skills is one of the important components which ensure the safety at sea. To help seafarers to achieve high quality performance, they should focus on vocabulary learning especially terminology in maritime English study. This is the reason why maritime English as one of the compulsory subjects which is learned by the students in Surabaya Merchant Marine Polytechnic (POLTEKPEL).

Maritime English is taught for those who learn in maritime training institution both nautical and technical department, and Surabaya Merchant Marine

Polytechnic (POLTEKPEL) is one of the maritime institution. Maritime English is based on the International Convention on Standards of Trainning Certification and Watch keeping for Seafarer, 1978 (IMO Model Course 3.17, 2000). In the curriculum of IMO Model course 3.17, Maritime English learning activities involve some competence of the communication skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In this case, the seafarers are expected to know some terms in maritime study that can be applied to communicate on board ship. If the seafarers learn more words in English, they will be able to speak effectively. On the other hand, vocabulary is mentioned as one of main problems connected with learning and teaching ESP especially in maritime English.

The study of vocabulary learning especially in maritime English is challenging since several problems still exist. The first problem is the seafarers lack motivation to learn maritime English because they do not have enough vocabulary knowledge, so that it makes them quite difficult to know the meaning of some words in English. Some of them are not aware how important it is to use maritime English in their future either because they are not sure if they will pursue careers in this field. In addition, maritime English is important for them if they work in passenger ship or cruise ship that demands them to speak English.

The second problem is the seafarers get difficulty in knowing new words especially in technical vocabulary which is related to the nautical terminology which is always used on board ship by the crew especially in the deck department. For example, in "the steering commands" case, if the crews get command from the captain "let go forward" it means that they should go to the forecastle and

release the rope. Another example which is related to the safety equipment on board is when the captain asked the crews to take lifejackets and blankets because of smoke formation in the engine room. In this case, the crews must know what *lifejackets* and *blankets* are. Another example which takes place in the engine room is if someone asks them to take him "adjustable wrench" which means a tool used for tightening or loosening the bolt or nut. If they do not know hand tools terminology, they may not be able to respond to what someone asks for to them.

The third problem is the seafarers get difficulty in memoring maritime vocabulary when they do not know the meaning of the words in their native language. For example, the phrase "king post" a technical term relating to part of ship which means "mast" which is located in the afterward of the ship. It could be understood in a mistaken way if the students do not have enough knowledge of vessel part. They may think that "king post" is a term which is related to the letter's delivery or postman. The fourth problem is the low frequency words. The seafarers may lack opportunity to use English at home and learn vocabulary outside of the classroom because they spent their time for working on board. It is clear that as the teacher should help learners to learn the meaning of new words by giving some strategies appropriately because it is better to spend time on the strategies dealing with some words than to spend time on repeating words.

Gap between Expectation and Reality in the Present Study

One of the important things in communication is vocabulary mastery. Maritime English vocabulary consists of specialized words and terminology which are related to the safety of life at sea, ship property, pollution prevention,

etc. There are many words and terminology in maritime English which have different meaning in general English such as *port* – left, *starboard* – right, hull – body of ship, *stern* – after part of vessel, *galley* – kitchen and so on. In this case, the seafarers are expected to master Maritime English especially for those who work in deck department on board ship. But many seafarers still encounter the problem of understanding written instruction on everyday activities on board ship. There are several types of vocabulary which are related to the words frequency in the Maritime Navigational English Material Corpus (MNEMC) such as high frequency words, academic words, technical words, and low frequency words (Jean, 2010). In this case, all seafarers should master all types of those vocabularies which have great influence in using language properly. In facts, few of seafarers were able to master academic words, some of them had mastery on technical words, and some others had mastery on high frequency words. Moreover many of them had not mastered four types of those vocabularies. Regarding the problems which still exist in vocabulary learning and the number of vocabulary recognition, the researcher aims to follow Schmitt's (1997) suggestion by identifying what learning strategies employed by the learners in learning English vocabulary and their tendencies to use strategies. The present study is focused on exploration of vocabulary learning strategies used by the seafarers who study in maritime institution especially in Surabaya Merchant Marine Polytechnic (POLTEKPEL) which is related to the vocabulary type mastery. In addition, the researcher also expects the student officers are able to increase their vocabulary especially words frequency mastery since most of the students have some

problems which related to the English vocabulary in maritime field. It is supposed that the use of vocabulary learning strategies will influence the students' vocabulary mastery. If the students use a large number and a wider range of vocabulary learning strategies, they will be able to enrich a large vocabulary. On the other hand, if the students use fewer vocabulary learning strategies, they will be able to master less vocabulary.

Vocabulary can be defined as a number of vocabulary (words) in a language which contains information about its meaning, form, and usage in context of communication. It is the basic knowledge that students should master first before mastering English. There are four types of English vocabulary, they are: high frequency words, academic words, technical words, and low frequency words. However, in this study, the researcher only focuses on two types of English vocabulary, they are: academic and technical words although the test given based on four types of vocabulary because high and low frequency words are belong to word frequency which are used in general English. The vocabulary types were taken from analysis of Maritime Navigational English Materials Corpus (MNEMC) by Jean (2010). After knowing how the students learn English vocabulary, it will be useful to encourage them to learn English inside and outside effectively. For those reasons, the researcher is interested in the study of student officers' vocabulary learning strategies used and their vocabulary type, whether the students have some strategies for learning English vocabulary and what strategies they used frequently. Furthermore, whether the strategies they use can influence their vocabulary type mastery or not.

Background of the Student Officers

Surabaya Merchant Marine Polytechnic (POLTEKPEL) is one of maritime institutions in Indonesia. There are two kinds of department in this institution, they are: nautical and technical department. In nautical department, the students learn maritime English which is related to the navigational terms on board ship, such as navigational equipment, safety equipment, steering commands, and etc. On the other hand, in technical department, the students learn maritime English which is related to the marine engineering, part of marine engines, hand tools, and etc. The seafarers who take a short course program around three months to upgrade their proficiency certificate are called student officer (perwira siswa or pasis). The education level in this course can be divided into 3 levels, they are: DP (diklat penjenjangan) – III, IV, and V. One of requirements to register in this institution is the registrant must have sailing experience for at least two years. The learning and teaching process in this program is around three months. Most of the student officers of DP – V graduated from senior high school or vocational high school. In nautical department, the student officers of DP – V are called "the deck crew" and their rank position as able bodied seaman who are responsible to steer the ship during voyage. While, in technical department, the student officers of DP – V are called "the engine room crew" and their rank position as oiler who are responsible to change the engine oil. In this study, the researcher delimited the subjects by choosing the student officer of DP – V nautical randomly among three classes as the subjects.

Statement of the Problems

According to Laufer (2003), many learners match English words with their equivalents in the first language. They also concentrate on literal meaning of single words and do not learn the meaning of the words in context. In this case, in learning maritime English vocabulary, most of seafarers get difficulty to find the meaning of new words. It happens because they are not familiar with the terminology especially in maritime English study. In order to know the meaning of new words, they usually use strategy to help them especially in using dictionary. Moreover, some of them not only use one strategy in learning vocabulary but also more than one strategy. In addition, they have problems which are related to the vocabulary learning strategies use which can influence their vocabulary knowledge.

Based on the background of the study above, this study aims at analyzing the student officers' vocabulary learning strategies used and their vocabulary type. Thus, the study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are the vocabulary learning strategies used by the student officers of Surabaya Merchant Marine Polytechnic (POLTEKPEL)?

2. What vocabulary types have the student officers mastered in learning maritime English vocabulary?

3. What are the student officers' tendencies in using vocabulary learning strategies to master vocabulary types?

The Objectives of the Study

The study aims:

1.   To explore the vocabulary learning strategies used by the student officers of Surabaya Merchant Marine Polytechnic (POLTEKPEL).

2.   To find out the vocabulary types that student officers mastered.

3.   To know the student officers' tendencies in using vocabulary learning strategies to master vocabulary types.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation in this study is based on Schmitt's (1997) vocabulary learning strategies taxonomy. According to Schmitt's taxonomy (1997), there are two main categories. The first is strategies for the discovery of the meaning of a new word. The second is strategies for consolidating a word. The discovery strategies consist of Determination and Social strategies. Determination strategies refer to strategies that the learners try to discover a word's meaning by using dictionaries, guessing from textual context or analyzing word part of speech, etc. Social strategies help the learners to discover meaning by asking other people such as teachers or friends who know the meaning of a word. The consolidation strategies are Social, Memory, Cognitive, and Metacognitive strategies.

Social strategies refer to strategies that the learners use to learn and practice vocabulary through group activities or interaction with native speakers. Memory strategies refer to the strategies that the learners try to remember word meanings by connecting or grouping word meanings with the learner's knowledge

or experiences. For example, a learner tries to remember a word which can be related to personal experience or group synonym and antonym words. Cognitive strategies refer to strategies that the learners try to remember a word and its meaning, for example using verbal or written repetition of a word and taking notes. Metacognitive strategies refer to strategies that the learners try to plan, control and evaluate their own vocabulary learning. For example, the students may continue to study word meaning over time using a variety of strategies.

The Significance of the Study

The result of this study hopefully can benefit the field of vocabulary teaching especially in the process of teaching and learning maritime English vocabulary, practical use of strategies, and further research.

1. For the field of vocabulary teaching

The result of this study is expected to be able to encourage the learners in learning maritime English vocabulary by knowing the vocabulary learning strategies used and their influence toward vocabulary type mastery, so that they can take the suitable strategies to learn maritime English. Moreover, it will be used to give information to the teachers about how the learners use strategies which affect their vocabulary mastery, so that it will develop the learners' understanding of different kinds of learning strategies used.

2. For further research

       The result of this study is also expected to be guidelines for further research in vocabulary learning strategies as well as related topics. In addition, it will be used to give contribution to other researchers who are interested in language learning research concerning ESP.

The Scope and Limitation of the Study

       Based on theoretical framework, the study focused on five categories of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) based on Schmitt's (1997: 207) taxonomy. The vocabulary learning strategies taxonomy consisted of determination strategies, social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and metacognitive strategies. In vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire (VLSQ), the researcher eliminated some items in the questionnaire which was adapted from Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy in order to help the students to be more familiar and understand the strategies they used. The students were asked to rate each strategy on six rating scale in terms of their frequency of using the strategies.

       Besides, the researcher used maritime English vocabulary test which was taken from corpus – based lexical study of maritime navigational English materials by Jean (2010) to collect the data in order to found out the student officers' vocabulary type which was categorized into two types, they are: academic words and technical words. The test consists of vocabulary items to test the knowledge of the student officers. The subjects were the student officers of DP-V nautical class batch 16 in Surabaya Merchant Marine Polytechnic (POLTEKPEL) which was chosen randomly.

Concerning the purpose of the study, this study focused on the student officers' vocabulary learning strategies used including most frequently used strategies and least frequently used strategies, vocabulary type which had been mastered, and the students' tendencies in using vocabulary learning strategies to master vocabulary type.

The Assumption

This study is based on the following assumptions:

1. The students who graduated from senior high school are supposed to know general English.

2. The suitable vocabulary learning strategies can enhance the students' ability to use the target vocabulary with confidence and expand their vocabulary

Definition of Key Terms:

1. *Learning strategies* are 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).

2. *Vocabulary learning strategies* are any set of techniques or learning behaviours, which language learners reported using in order to discover the meaning of a new word, to retain the knowledge of newly-learned words, and to expand one' knowledge of vocabulary (Intraprasert 2004, p. 53).

3. *Determination strategies* are strategies that the learners use to try to discover a word's meaning by using dictionaries, guessing from textual context or analyzing word part of speech (Schmitt, 1997)

4. *Social strategies* are strategies that the learners use to learn and practice vocabulary through group activities or interaction with native speakers (Schmitt, 1997).

5. *Memory strategies* are strategies that the learners try to remember word meanings through mental processing by connecting or grouping word meanings with the learner's knowledge or experiences (Schmitt, 1997).

6. *Cognitive strategies* are strategies that the learners use to try to remember a word and its meaning (Schmitt, 1997).

7. *Metacognitive strategies* are strategies that the learners use to try to plan, control and evaluate their own vocabulary learning (Schmitt, 1997).

8. *Maritime English* is English subject learning that is taught and learned at the maritime institution based on IMO Model Course 3.17, 2000.

9. *Student officers* are the seafarers who take a short course program around three months to upgrade their proficiency certificate.