

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter concerns with the introduction of the research which deals with several points consisting of the background of the problems, identification of the problems, limitation of the problems, research questions, objectives of the research, uses, scope and definition of terms. The contents of the chapter will be explained briefly below.

### **1.1. Background of the problems**

In Indonesia, English has been taught to the students as a foreign language for some decades. Learning English as a foreign language is not as simple as we think of. In the purpose of mastery English as a foreign language, learners need to pay attention to many aspects of language knowledge such as grammatical structure, vocabulary, and so on in order to reach a high degree of competence in English. One of the important aspects of language learning is vocabulary. It is obvious that vocabulary takes a crucial role in the language learning process because vocabulary can support all of the four skills in language learning, such as: speaking, listening, reading and writing. It usually serves as useful and fundamental tool for communicating and acquiring knowledge. Tarigan (1986) states that the quality of one's language depends upon the quantity of his or her knowledge of vocabulary, the richer one's vocabulary is the more one master a language.

Based on the interview with the teacher of SMAN 1 Bandar Lampung, the students had difficulties in learning English. Firstly, the teacher said that the students still had many problems to comprehend teacher's instructions during teaching learning process, therefore the condition of the classroom was passive and only some students took part actively in the learning process. Secondly, when the teacher asks them to read the English text and asks them with some questions, the students may not answer the questions because they do not understand the text. Then, the students had difficulties in guessing difficult words. The researcher assumes that vocabulary mastery of students have not reached maximum level because the students do not know the meaning of the difficult words. Consequently, students just read a text without getting some information; they found difficulty in guessing some information in a text. The researcher assumed so because the students have lack of vocabulary.

The students who sit on second grade of Senior High School are supposed to master vocabulary in order to be able to communicate whether in spoken or written form. In learning English as a foreign language, learners must have an enormous of vocabulary knowledge on their mind. By having a lot of vocabulary the learner will be more successful in learning foreign language (FL) without mastering vocabulary, learner will face difficulties in developing the ability of communication with others both in written and spoken communication. Unluckily, vocabulary is a difficult aspect that must be mastered by the students. The fact shows that there are many students who still have limited vocabulary knowledge. They still have difficulties in understanding and using vocabulary in learning

English. Some students claim that their fundamental problem in acquiring English is lack of vocabulary; this is the one of students' problem in learning English.

The pre-observation activity, found that there were so many steps used by foreign language learner such as: taking a note, looking up in dictionary, using picture etc. In the context of learning English as foreign language the way they learn new vocabulary is called as vocabulary learning strategies (VLS). This vocabulary learning strategy helps them to learn vocabulary. For instance, some students learn and memorize a new word once that has been indirectly taught. While, others learner may look up the meaning of new words in a bilingual dictionary. Moreover, some students use both. Nation (2001) has stated that a large and rich vocabulary can be acquired with the help of vocabulary learning strategies . In fact, most of the learners do not know about the vocabulary learning strategy even though they have been using it unconsciously. In addition, some learners do not aware about their own learning strategy in learning vocabulary, those learners do not know whether their strategy is good or not. As the result they still have lack of vocabulary although they have learned hardly.

In creating a good learning process we also should notice that each individual has different way and technique to comprehend the knowledge and information that they get. What works for one learner might not work for others. This fact is called individual differences that influence language acquisition in various instructional contexts (Gage and Berliner, 1984). Individual differences such as interest, self-concept, age, motivation, and gender hold very essential role in supporting

someone's success in learning a foreign language that similarly contribute whether language learning will be picked up quickly or not. One aspect of such differences considered to be necessary for further discussion is gender.

Considering the individual differences, female and male students might use different learning strategies. The appropriate vocabulary learning strategy selection will affect the learning process to be acquired effectively. The effective strategy will have an important role to make the learners get better achievement and better understanding about vocabulary itself. In reference to the explanation above, it will be very important to find the strategies to make the learning process more effective especially in vocabulary mastery. The researcher also found the fact that learners' vocabulary size is also different one another even though they learn at the same level and also with the same teacher but the results will be dissimilar. The researcher assumes that different learners may employ different techniques or strategies in acquiring vocabulary. The difference of strategies might influence their vocabulary size.

Based on the statements above, the researcher is encouraged to investigate whether there is significant difference in the vocabulary learning strategy preference between male and female students in vocabulary learning. This research may give the information for teacher and also the learners about the type of vocabulary learning strategy that is truly useful to assist vocabulary learning in order to find the most effective vocabulary learning strategy for the learners. In this study, the researcher decides to design a problem to be researched with the

title: The Comparison of Vocabulary Learning Strategies Used by the Second Grade Students at SMAN 1 Bandar Lampung Based on Gender and Vocabulary size.

## **1.2. Identification of the Problems**

Based on the background discussed above, the researcher would like to identify the following problems:

1. Vocabulary is a difficult aspect to be understood in learning English as a foreign language.
2. Many students still lack of vocabulary in English.
3. Both teachers and the learners do not aware about the vocabulary learning strategies.
4. Individual differences (gender) might affect learners' strategy preferences in learning a language.
5. Vocabulary size of the learners' are different one another though they learn at the same level.

## **1.3. Limitation of the problems**

In line with identification of problems, the researcher limited the problems into, students':

- 1) Gender
- 2) Vocabulary learning strategy
- 3) Vocabulary size

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

Based on the background above, the problem arose were:

- 1) Is there any significant difference of vocabulary learning strategy preferences between males and females of the second grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung in the 2014/2015 academic year?
- 2) What are the most frequently-used and the least frequently-used of vocabulary learning strategies which the second grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung in the 2014/2015 academic year employ in learning new vocabulary items?

#### **1.5 Objectives of the research**

Formulated from the research question above, the objectives of this research were :

- 1) To find out that there is any significant difference of vocabulary learning strategy preferences between males and females of the second grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung in the 2014/2015 academic year.
- 2) To investigate the most frequently-used and the least frequently-used of vocabulary learning strategies which the second grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung in the 2014/2015 academic year employ in learning new vocabulary items.

## **1.6. Uses**

The researcher hopes that this research can be used theoretically and practically. in the field of :

Theoretically, the significances of the research are :

- 1) To strengthen and verify the previous theory dealing with vocabulary learning strategy and gender.
- 2) To be used as a reference for further research in relation to the relationship between vocabulary learning strategy preferences and gender.

Practically, the significances of the research are :

- 1) As information for the English teachers to raise their awareness concerning with their own learning and teaching strategies.
- 2) As the guidance to the students to maximize the language mastery especially in vocabulary by using the appropriate strategy. In addition, by realizing the differences between students in using language learning strategies, they can accelerate English learning accomplishment and assist each other by recognizing their traits in learning English.
- 3) As information for the other researchers who are interested in the research related to this topic.

## **1.7. Scope**

The problem of this research is particularly focused on investigating the difference of vocabulary learning strategy preferences between males and females students at SMA Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung. The participants of this study will be the second grade students of SMAN 1 Bandar Lampung in the 2014/2015 academic year.

They are males and females students. The total sample of students involved in the study are 40 students which consists of 20 male students and 20 female students.

### **1.8. Definition of terms**

In order to specify the topic of the research, the researcher provide some definition of terms related to the research. These are the definition of some terms which are related to the research :

- 1) **Vocabulary** is one of basic term to understand every language skills in English. It is a set of lexeme including a single word, compound word, and idiom that can be arranged for making up the language.
- 2) **Vocabulary size** is a number of words that a person knows.
- 3) **Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS)** is any set of techniques; including actions or mental processes that learner use in order to facilitate their English vocabulary learning with the purpose of enhancing their vocabulary knowledge.
- 4) **Gender** is the sex of a person or animal' biological characteristics of being a male or female

That is the introduction of this research. In this chapter, several points have been discussed consisting of the background of the problems, identification of the problems, limitation of the problems, research questions, objectives of the research, uses, scope and definition of terms. Then the next chapter will be discussed about the literature review of this research.