I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with the backgrounds of the study. It also includes the research question, the objective of the research, the significances of the research, the scope of the research, and the definition of terms as elaborated in the following sections.

1.1. Backgrounds

To master English, students should pay attention to many aspects of language (grammatical structure, vocabulary, and so on) in order to achieve a high degree of competence in English. Vocabulary is one of the most important aspects. McCarthy (1990) emphasizes that communication just cannot happen in any meaningful way if students do not know enough words to express the meaning, yet their grammar and pronunciation are good. This indicates that vocabulary size is fundamental in communication in both spoken and written.

Students are likely to have problem in their communication unless their vocabulary size is adequate. Moreover, they cannot write when they want to convey their opinions or ideas. Nation (2001) states that language learners need to
know very large number of words. Thus, it is important to find out ways that will be useful to help the students increasing their vocabulary size.

A common belief within foreign language pedagogy is the notion that some foreign language learners are more successful than others. One of the reasons may be the fact that successful learners tend to approach the task of language learning with different, sometimes more effective strategies (Anderson, 2005). Successful foreign language learners know that to learn the form and meaning of a large number of foreign language words, to be able to store them in their memory and recall them at will, and to learn how to use them appropriately in a variety of contexts and situations, they should be aware of wide ranges of learning strategies. Considering the fact above, this current study is about to find out the answer.

Catalán (2003) proposed the following working definition for vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) in her study of VLS among foreign language learners:

Knowledge about the mechanisms (processes, strategies) used in order to learn vocabulary as well as steps or actions taken by students (a) to find out the meaning of unknown words, (b) to retain them in long-term memory, (c) to recall them at will, and (d) to use them in oral or written mode.

A number of studies (Barcroft, 2009; Borer, 2007; Catalán, 2003; Fan, 2003; Gu, 2002; Gu & Johnson, 1996; Schmitt, 1997; Tseng & Schmitt, 2008) showed that more proficient foreign language learners successfully used a variety of VLS
significantly more often than less proficient students, and used learning strategies that require more cognitive effort. In fact, it has been suggested that foreign language learners can be categorized on the basis of their learning strategies (Ahmed, 1989; Lawson & Hogben, 1996). Successful foreign language learners, according to Ahmed (1989), are able to use wider variety of demanding strategies, while less successful learners generally use fewer strategies and tend to use them inadequately. Ahmed’s conclusion is an important factor to consider since research in cognitive psychology has shown that the more cognitive effort is invested in learning a word, the easier it becomes to recall that word at a later time.

Based on the researcher’s pre-observation while having PPL in SMP N 2 Pematang Sawa, it was found that students had their own way to deal with a new word 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. Those vocabulary learning strategies help them to learn vocabulary. For example, some students learn and memorize a new word once that has been indirectly taught. While, other learners may look up the meaning of new words in a bilingual dictionary. In reality, some students are not aware of their learning strategy. In addition, there are students who do not know about learning strategy even though they are using it unconsciously. Those students do not know whether their strategy is good or not, as the result their vocabulary size is still poor. Different students may employ different strategies to learn vocabulary. The difference of strategies might affect
their vocabulary size itself. Concerning the problem above, this current study will classify the vocabulary learning strategy used by students of the second year academic in MAN 1 Bandar Lampung and analyse its correlation with their vocabulary size.

On the basis of the idea above, as teachers, it is crucial to be aware of the basic of vocabulary learning strategies. Moreover, teachers also should know how students adopt the strategies effectively. Thus the principal focus of this study was to examine which vocabulary learning strategies that the students use are effective and useful so that it will help teachers to design lesson plans and to construct practical instructions in order to effectively support students’ competence in English language.

1.2. Research Questions
Dealing with the issues presented in the background, the research question in this research was:

1. Is there any correlation between the use of vocabulary learning strategies and students’ vocabulary size?

1.3. Objectives of the Research
1. To find out whether there is correlation between the use of vocabulary learning strategies and students’ vocabulary size.
1.4. Significances of the Research

The significances of this research were as follows:

Theoretically:
1. Verify and contribute the previous studies.
2. Be used as a reference for further research.

Practically:
1. The result of this research can be used as information for those who want to learn English as foreign language by considering their vocabulary learning strategies.
2. The result of this research can be used as reference for language teacher to assess the vocabulary learning strategy of their students and adapt their classroom method to best fit each student’s learning strategy.

1.5. Scope of the Research

This research investigated and elaborated about the correlation between vocabulary size and the use of vocabulary learning strategies used by the eleventh year students of MAN 1 Bandar Lampung in the academic year 2015/2016. This current study used 3 classes of the second year which approximately consist of 40 students in each class. So, the total number of the subjects was approximately 120 students. After conducting this research, it was expected that the result would be a valuable contribution to the readers.
1.6. Definition of Terms

In order to specify the topic of the research, it provides some definition of terms related to the research. There were some terms used by the researcher and to make them clear and to avoid misunderstanding, they were clarified as follows:

1. *Learning strategy*: is any set of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate their learning.

2. *Language learning strategies (LLS)*: Language learning strategies generally known as techniques or learning process that students use to support their language learning.

3. *Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS)*: is a technique or steps that used by learner to help them in vocabulary learning.

4. *Vocabulary*: is a set of words within a language that are familiar to that person or the user of a language.

5. *Vocabulary size*: is degree of learner’s vocabulary. There are two types of vocabulary that is receptive vocabulary size and productive vocabulary size. Receptive vocabulary size is words that recognized when the meaning of the target words are given. While, productive vocabulary size refers to the number of words that can be memorize by seeing the context.

These are the explanation about backgrounds, research questions, objectives, significances, scope, and definition of terms. The explanation would be used by the researcher as the main problem why this current study was conducted.