I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the problems, research problems, objective of the research, uses of the research, scope of the research and definition of terms.

1.1 Background of the Problems

Since English has been chosen as the first and foreign language which is taught in all schools in Indonesia, it makes English as one of the most important subjects that must be mastered well by students. It, then, becomes a compulsory subject for most students in school. According to the 2006 School-Based Curriculum (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan/KTSP*), the goals of teaching English stated in the Curriculum for English subject are that students are projected to master and use the language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) for any relevant needs and situations they would encounter in their real life. It means that the students should be able to do oral or written communication in many situations. In order to master those four language skills, students should have a good number of words and should know how to use them well. It affirms that vocabulary is one of the important parts in learning English.

As Thornburry (2002:13) stated that if you spend most of your time studying grammar, your English will not improve very much. You will see most improvement if you learn more words and expressions. You can say very little with grammar, but you can say almost anything with word.. It means that in learning vocabulary we have to know the meaning of it and also understand and can use it in sentence context because the more vocabulary students have, the easier the students develop the sentences.

As the researcher observed students English ability during her teacher training program (PPL) in SMA N 1 Sumberjaya Lampung Barat, it was found that many students were poor in vocabulary mastery; they had problem to understand the reading text, the sentences, and the meaning of the words. It was also difficult for them either to use English in communication, understand spoken language or to express their idea in written text.

It means that mastering vocabulary gives contribution for learners to perform their skill better. It is impossible for students to perform their English appropriately if their vocabulary is very poor. Therefore vocabulary must be on the first priority in English language learning.

Furthermore, it becomes a great problem for students of Senior High school to master approximately 1500 to 2500 words according to guidelines of School-based curriculum (KTSP) for English. In fact, the students' vocabulary mastery does not reach this expectation.

Naturally, vocabulary is considered as the most difficult language aspect to study. Therefore students need strategies to achieve the target words. Graves (1987:177) suggested that, because students actually do most of their learning of new words independently, it makes sense to encourage them 'to adopt personal plans to expand their vocabularies over time'. Many factors were correlated with language achievement, but only two of them: aptitude and strategy uses were significant in predicting performance (Setiyadi, 2014:360).

In addition, Wenden and Rubin (1987:17) stated that learners bring a various repertoire of learning skills in the process of language learning. It means that the learners should master some learning strategies to make their foreign language learning more effective.

According to Dóczi (2011), vocabulary learning strategies are significant because the acquisition of vocabulary is a never-ending process and can solve insurmountable difficulties for language learners. It can be said that through the use of vocabulary learning strategies, learners may be able to maximize the effectiveness of their English language learning. On this basis, it is crucial to be aware of the basics of vocabulary learning strategies and how students adopt the strategies effectively. That is to say, it is vital to gain more insights into how Indonesia learners perceive the use of vocabulary learning strategies to help them learn vocabulary

Based on the explanation above, the researcher used instrument for measuring students' vocabulary learning strategies. The researcher used a subset of language learning strategies, called vocabulary learning strategies, which was proposed by

Schmitt (1997). The strategies were namely *determination*, *social*, *memory*, *cognitive*, and *metacognitive*. That basic scheme was used to identify the strategies implemented by successful and poor students in learning English vocabulary that was correlated to students' vocabulary mastery.

1.2 Research Problems

Based on the background which is discussed above, the formulation of the problems in this research were:

1. What strategies are successful and poor students used in learning English vocabulary?
2. Is there any relationship between English vocabulary mastery and the use of vocabulary learning strategies in terms of content words?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The objectives of this research were

1. To explore the strategies used by successful and poor students in learning English vocabulary.
2. To find out whether there was any relationship between vocabulary mastery and the use of vocabulary learning strategies in terms of content words.

1.4 Uses of the Research

The findings of the research were expected to be beneficial theoretically and practically.

1. **Theoretically**

   Theoretically, it may be a reference for those who will conduct further research in the same field.

2. **Practically**

   a. For the Students

   This research may provide information of strategies in learning vocabulary. The information will show them what strategies are beneficial for vocabulary learning and they may follow or change their strategies to improve their vocabulary mastery.

   b. For English Teachers

   This research may be the consideration for the English teacher in selecting materials which is in accordance with the most and proper vocabulary language learning strategy used by the students.

1.5 Scope of the Research

The research was quantitative one. It was conducted at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Bandar Lampung. In this research, the researcher focused on the vocabulary learning strategies used by successful and poor students and the relationship between vocabulary mastery and their vocabulary learning strategies. In order to know the strategy usage, the writer used questionnaire. While obtaining the data

about the students' vocabulary mastery she gave a test. The test was objective test and the materials were based on student's handbook. It was multiple choice tests which the items consisted of four options (*a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*), since it was easy to correct and to give score. The researcher used 50 items for trying out test and 40 items for vocabulary test. This research focused on vocabulary of content words including (1) noun, (2) verb, (3) adjective and (5) adverb.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Some terms are defined in order to give basic understanding of the related variables and concepts. These are stated below:

1. Vocabulary is a set of lexemes including single word, compound word, and idioms.
2. Content words are the list of words that involves nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.
3. Noun is the name of the thing; it functions as the subject or the object of the sentence.
4. Verb is the name of the action or movement that is done by someone or something.
5. Adjective is the name of the quality of the things that can function to explain or modify noun.
6. Adverb is the way how the action is done by someone (human) or something (other alive creatures).

7. Learning strategy is an observable action done by the learners, consciously or subconsciously, in participating in a formal classroom interaction (Basthomi, 2002).

8. Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs) are knowledge about students to find out the meaning of unknown words, to retain them in long-term memory, to recall them at will, and to use them in oral or written mode (Schmitt, 1997).