

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with the explanation of the Background of this Study. Then, it presents the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, Significance of the Problem, Limitation of the Study and Organization of the Study respectively.

1.1 Background of the Study

It is important for every English language learners to master English vocabulary. McCarthy (1990) states that, "No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way" (p. 8). Therefore, they need to know about vocabulary learning strategies (VLS). Their lack of VLS in class may cause difficulty in mastering English vocabulary. In order to be able to master many new words, students need some effective vocabulary learning strategies.

Indonesian students learn English from kindergarten to university. However, the difficulty in vocabulary mastery is still a problem in Indonesia.

Previous studies show that the students can only master limited vocabulary because they forget most of the words that have been shown to them (Nurweni, 1997 as cited in Hermagustiana, Hamra, Rahman, and Salija, 2017, p. 36). The study of Munandar, Nurweni and Mahpul (2015) shows that the vocabulary mastery for some students in SMPN 2, Pematang Sawa is still limited (p. 3). The researchers found some of the students are lack of awareness about vocabulary learning strategies, some of them have no knowledge about that and some of them also do not realize that they actually use vocabulary learning strategies when learning vocabulary (Munandar et al., 2015, p. 3). This means that their teacher does not provide them the knowledge about vocabulary learning strategies and does not provide strategies that suit the students the most when learning vocabulary. Therefore, the poor awareness of vocabulary learning strategies causes students' low vocabulary mastery (Munandar et al., 2015, p. 3). Another study by Novianti (2016) which has investigated university students in Indonesia revealed that Indonesian university students still know limited vocabulary (p. 187).

It is also necessary to know the factors that influence teachers in using VLS in class. The study of Hermagustiana et al. (2017) has mentioned that teachers' ideas are greatly influenced by their cognitions (p. 34). It means teachers' ideas such as vocabulary learning strategies used in class is possibly influenced by teachers' cognition such as what teachers know, think and believe. As stated by S. Borg (2003), the concept of teachers' cognition involves what teachers know, think and believe (p. 81). In other words, the use of vocabulary learning strategies in class is influenced by teachers' beliefs. Then, what factors

influence teachers' beliefs? Some previous studies have revealed that teachers' beliefs in teaching practice especially in teaching vocabulary may be influenced by their experience in learning language, one of the examples is the study of Hermagustiana et al. (2017). This is also reinforced by the opinion of S. Borg (2011) which mentions that, "... through teacher education [,] teachers' beliefs can be strengthened and extended..." and that "Teacher education can of course also be the source of new beliefs for teachers." (p. 378). In other words, one of the factors that can influence teachers' beliefs is the teachers' education experiences.

Therefore, as suggested by the study of Astika (2016), it will be interesting to know the way teachers teach vocabulary in class and how they help students learn, use and memorize vocabulary (p. 12). Considering that vocabulary mastery in Indonesia is still relatively low, this study investigates primary teachers' beliefs about vocabulary learning strategies in Indonesian context. This study is important to be conducted in order to find out how Indonesian teachers teach vocabulary and what beliefs they have regarding vocabulary learning strategies which may be resulted from teachers' beliefs.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study aims to answer two research questions as follows;

1. What beliefs do two EFL teachers at X elementary school hold about vocabulary learning strategies in their classrooms?
2. What vocabulary learning strategies do the teachers use in their teaching practices?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate two primary teachers' beliefs on vocabulary learning strategies in an elementary school. Specifically, it aims to know about teachers' beliefs regarding vocabulary learning strategies and to find out what vocabulary learning strategies do teachers use in their teaching practices.

1.4 Significance of the Problem

The study is significant for two reasons. First, there is little research about teachers' beliefs especially on vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) in Indonesian context. Thus, the study can fill the gap in the area of VLS in Indonesia. Second, this study can give benefits for teachers. It can be used as a reference to build teachers' awareness about VLS in Indonesia. If teachers are aware of the importance of VLS role in learning vocabulary, they can facilitate students' learning to increase the number of their new vocabulary. In short, it is important to conduct this study under consideration that Indonesian students still find difficulty in mastering vocabulary. The findings of this study can inform what beliefs that the EFL teachers hold about vocabulary learning strategies in the classrooms and what vocabulary learning strategies do teachers use in their teaching practices.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

This study has two limitations. First, the limitation is related to the number and level of participants. Due to limitation of time, the researcher only included two participants to investigate teachers' belief on VLS. Both participants are two

primary English teachers. Sargeant (2012) explains “In qualitative research... the sample size is not generally predetermined. The number of participants depends upon the number required to inform fully all important elements of the phenomenon being studied.” (p. 1). Second, the limitation is that the study only used interview and observation as a tool for data collection.

1.6 Organization of the Study

Regarding to the organization of this study, it contains five chapters. This chapter explains the background until organization of this study. This chapter is followed by Chapter Two which contains Theoretical Foundation of this study. Then, Chapter Three explains about the research design of this study, setting and participants, instrument and data collection techniques, and then data analysis. Chapter four is Findings and Discussion. The last chapter is Chapter Five which consists of Conclusion and Recommendation. The Bibliography of this study can be found after Chapter Five then followed by Appendices at the end of this paper.