

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives information about the phenomenon that inspired the researcher to conduct this research. This chapter consists of five parts; the first one is background. The background explains the problem and why the researcher chose this topic and conducted this research. The second is the problem formulation; it contains the research question, which will later be answered in chapter four of this thesis. The third part is the operational definition, which explains some terms found in this thesis that correlate with the topic and help avoid term misinterpretation in this research. The fourth is the research aim that will be achieved when the problem formulation is answered. Then, the last part discusses the study's significance, which explains the research's practicality.

1.1 Background of the Study

Teaching and learning English vocabulary can be challenging for both teachers and students. According to Mumary (2017), students may need help to participate actively in class because they have a limited vocabulary, while teachers also face the challenge of finding effective strategies to teach vocabulary. In this research, the researcher focused on students at the age of thirteen, also known as young learners. According to Nunan (2016), adds that young learners are those from five to fifteen years of age. The quantity of words that students must learn might cause them to feel overwhelmed. According to Susanto (2021), vocabulary is an essential component of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students need to be familiar with a few English vocabulary terms before they can master the four competencies. In addition, communication will be ineffective if the students lack vocabulary knowledge. Based on the result of the preliminary study, students in grade seven struggled to articulate their viewpoints effectively due to a lack of vocabulary when the teacher asked several questions on certain topics of discussion in English. Moreover, they needed help pronouncing new words correctly. Besides that,

English pronunciation can be challenging due to spelling and pronunciation differences and irregularities, which could cause misunderstanding and reduce confidence. Learning English vocabulary can be demotivating because it can occasionally be viewed as boring. Additionally, the teacher also had a problem managing the classroom because each student had different characteristics. Therefore, teachers should find appropriate strategies for teaching English vocabulary, and students should have proper strategies for learning vocabulary that meets their needs. Richards (1986) defines a strategy as a plan, steps, or conscious action taken by a learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to a new context and situation.

Some relevant studies have emphasized the importance of strategies in teaching vocabulary. First, a study about teachers' perception toward vocabulary strategies from Deni (2020) mentioned that the importance of finding appropriate teaching vocabulary strategies to young learners is basically aimed in gaining the optimal result for students learning. They will be able to understand the vocabulary as well as they are interested in the topic presented through the exciting strategy. Additionally, the exciting strategy has a correlation to the young learners' characteristics which is easily distracted and bored. A research from Sitompul (2020) highlighted the uneasy situation while teaching vocabulary to first-grade of junior high school which is still categorized as young learners. Due to their characteristics, certain strategies are needed to be applied to overcome the vocabulary learning problems.

There are also previous studies on teaching English vocabulary to young learners. Santosa et al. (2020) conducted a study on vocabulary teaching strategies. However, he only focused on a single strategy called the picture strategy as a medium in teaching English vocabulary. Similarly, Wulandari et al. (2020) conducted a study to identify the teaching English strategies in learning vocabulary. The settings and participants were at SD Suta Dharma Denpasar Bali focusing on observing the strategies used by fifth grade English teacher. A research by Ramadhan (2021) was also concerning about the

teaching strategies but it was in the Star English Pare. The tutor or teachers' preparation was being observe started from the pre-teaching activity, main teaching activity, and post-teaching activity. The students being observed was also at the age of elementary school but it is called as Beginner II in the course. However, since the previous research mostly focused in a single strategy with the context of elementary students, this study attempts to explore various teachers' strategies in teaching English vocabulary to young learners in the context of junior high school to fill the gap.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background above, the research questions are formulated as follows: What are the teachers' strategies in teaching English vocabulary to young learners in the first grade of junior high school?

1.3 Operational Definition

To avoid misinterpretation of this research, the researcher provided three definitions related to this study as follows:

- 1.3.1 Teaching Strategies :** The arrangements employed by teachers to support and facilitate effective teaching and learning of vocabulary to optimize young learners' engagement, understanding, and achievement through activities like vocabulary games.
- 1.3.2 Vocabulary :** Vocabulary is a list of English words about many things such as: colors, school subject and classroom items that are being important components in building words or sentences that will be studied by young learners.
- 1.3.3 Young Learners :** Students who learn English in the first grade of junior high school at the age of 13.

1.4 Aim of the Research

The research aims to explore teachers' strategies for teaching English vocabulary to young learners.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Use

This research expanded on teachers' strategies for teaching English vocabulary to young learners.

1.5.2 Practical Use

As a practical contribution, this research can be used as a reference for teachers to find out the best strategies for teaching English vocabulary to young learners.

1.5.3 Empirical Use

This research aimed to provide empirical insights into how the best teachers' strategies in teaching English can help students enhance their vocabulary.