A. Background of the Research

One important objective of studies into language learning strategies is often to determine effective ways of learning a new language (O’Malley &Chamot, 1990). The field of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) is no exception as the effectiveness of strategies for learning new words has been under scrutiny for decades (Cohen &Aphek, 1981; Gu&Johnson, 1996; and Ahmad Azman et al., 2009).

Contextual guessing, memorizing, and repeating of new English words are the VLS commonly used. Schmitt (2000) compiled a list of VLS categorized according to the following two purposes: 1) strategies that discover a new word’s meaning; and 2) strategies that consolidate a word once it has been encountered. Each strategy comprises of important skills that learners use in the process of acquiring new English words.

It has been observed by many language researchers that the ability to guess or comprehend the meaning of words is the most practical way to increase vocabulary and reading comprehension. Therefore, the skill to discover the actual meaning of new words with the help of context clues really needed because it seems inefficient for students to always consult a bilingual dictionary or the teacher for the definition of every new word in the passage. Furthermore, Wallace (1982: 34) stresses that too much dictionary work can kill all interest in reading and even interfere reading comprehension.
The basic thing when we want to master the four skills in English (reading, writing, speaking and listening) is vocabulary knowledge. River in Nunan (1991: 117) states that acquisition of adequate vocabulary is essential for successful foreign language use because without extensive vocabulary, we will be unable to use the structure and function we may have learned for comprehensible communication. Words can be combined into sentences, and can be used to communicate with other. If students have a rich vocabulary they will not get difficulties in combining words into sentences. Without vocabulary knowledge, it will be difficult for learner to comprehend oral and written forms. Vocabulary knowledge is really needed by English learner because it is one of the important elements in English.

Certainly, second and foreign language learners have strategies how to learn vocabulary. Every student has different strategies to learn and increase their vocabulary. One of approaches of facilitating vocabulary learning that his attracted in increasing, attention is Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS). Learning vocabulary is important part of learning a language. Interest in VLS has parallel a movement away from a predominantly teaching oriented perspective to one that includes interest in how the actions of learner might affect their acquisition of language (Schmitt, 2000: 132).

Based on some reasons above, the writer is interested in conducting a research with the title, “Students’ Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Their Vocabulary Knowledge (A Descriptive Study at the Fifth Semester Students of English Department of Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto)”. 
B. **Reasons for Choosing the Topic**

The important role of vocabulary knowledge plays in students’ reading comprehension, and therefore in their school success. Also, having limited vocabulary knowledge, students are not able to express and communicate well, Granowsky (2002).

The purpose of this research is to generally explore students’ vocabulary learning strategies and to know which effective vocabulary learning strategies are used by students in Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto especially in fifth semester students.

C. **Problems of the Research**

The problems of this research are:

1. What is the dominant strategy used by the students?
2. What are the correlation between students’ vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary knowledge of the fifth semester students of English department of Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto?

D. **Aims of the Research**

Considering the problems the research, the aims of this research are:

1. to know the dominant strategy used by the students.
2. to find out the correlation between students’ vocabulary learning strategies and their passive vocabulary knowledge of the fifth semester students.
E. Contributions of the Research

The contributions of this research are as follows:

1. Students

The students can use various strategies to help them in learning vocabulary with their own strategies.

2. Teacher

The result of this research will be meaningful information to know the students’ problem so that the teacher can choose the strategies to deliver material for students especially in learning vocabulary. In other side give the advantage for teachers to develop effective vocabulary teaching and to provide students with successful vocabulary learning strategies.

3. Other Researchers

It can give essential information about the student preferred in vocabulary learning strategies. Therefore other researcher can observe the topic to get better solution and this research can a reference for other researchers when they take the same topic.

F. Clarification of the Terms

1. Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)

Concerning vocabulary learning, Nation develops a general classification of vocabulary learning strategies (Nation, 2001: 218-222). The first one is planning vocabulary learning, i.e. to choose words. Learners should know what their vocabulary goals are and choose what vocabulary to focus on in terms of their selected goals. The second
vocabulary learning strategy is sources. In order to cope with new vocabulary when it occurs and to learn unfamiliar vocabulary, learners have to be able to get information about the words. The third vocabulary learning strategy is processes, which is establishing vocabulary knowledge. It involves ways of remembering vocabulary and making it available for use.

2. Vocabulary Knowledge

The total number of word with rules from combining them to make a language; words known to a person or used in a particular books, subject, etc. lexis, list or word with their meaning especially are which accompanies a text book in foreign language (Oxford, 1989: 1425). According to Lado (1977: 182) Vocabulary is word as units that were part of grammatical patterns. Vocabulary knowledge is the knowledge of translating and interpreting the words meaning, as well as, the ability to use words.