

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

A student has been taking English classes since elementary school. English is a subject that requires a wide range of abilities. English is made up of four skills and three components. Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are examples of these abilities. Vocabulary, Grammar, and Pronunciation are the three components. It said by Rubin and Thompson (1994) vocabulary learning is the heart of mastering a foreign language, since one cannot speak, understand, read or write a foreign language without knowing a lot of words. It means that one of the most important aspects is vocabulary, because the quality of a person's language skills is dependent on the quality of the vocabulary.

Students who have limited in their vocabulary will remain silent in the discussion. They tend not to know what to say because of their limited vocabulary. Meanwhile, students who realize how important it is to improving vocabulary will consider study vocabulary more deeply. Those who have an interest in improving vocabulary have learning strategy to improve their vocabulary.

Vocabulary related to words and meanings. Mastery itself means the comprehensive knowledge. Vocabulary mastery is comprehensive knowledge to recognize, understand, and expand words and theirs meanings. In line with this, Lado (1964: 117) argues that to clarify the idea

of vocabulary, three levels of vocabulary are distinguished, namely: (1) vocabulary to operate the patterns and illustrate pronunciation of the language, (2) vocabulary for communication in areas of wide currency, (3) aesthetic and technical vocabularies.

In addition, to help students do well in language learning, they need to know strategies that can help them acquire vocabulary. The vocabulary learning strategy refers to what students did to achieve their learning tasks during COVID-19. This strategy is used by them when they learn grammar, literature, vocabulary and others. There are still many students who have problems in their communication and cannot write when they want to express their opinions or ideas unless their vocabulary size is adequate.

Students' vocabulary learning achievement can be improved in several ways. It can use methods or strategies. Vocabulary teaching can be done when the teacher teaches about four skills in English. Students must have a strategy used to make it easier to remember the word. There are many strategies and methods students can use to memorize and maintain vocabulary. Students can use their smartphones to watch their favourite movies, read novels or even listen to music to increase student vocabulary.

In this study, the researcher was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Randudongkal. This school is located in Gembyang Street, Randudongkal, Pemalang. English is one of a subject which is emphasized. This is intended so that students can master several languages, including English.

The researcher wants to conduct research on the strategies carried out by students in learning English, especially learning to improve their English vocabulary.

In Indonesia, there are still many teaching and learning activities that prioritize face-to-face meetings in class. Now the student is challenging to find the appropriate strategy for self-study at home. Since the end of 2019, the world has been rocked with a *coronavirus* or COVID-19. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic widespread in Indonesia, all activities must be carried out from home. This virus was first discovered in Wuhan, Hubei, China at the end of December 2019 and began to plague in Indonesia in early March 2020. Directorate General of Disease Prevention and Control (2020:11) stated that Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) is a new type of virus that has never been identified in humans. Coronavirus is a zoonosis, it means can be transmitted between animals or humans.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire system that runs like a government, the economy, including education in Indonesia is disrupted. As of March 11, 2020, the President of the Republic Indonesia, Ir. H. Joko Widodo, adopted a policy of temporarily closing the teaching and learning process at schools and universities urged them to study at home, and replacing them with online learning to break the chain viruses.

This is challenge for all of the students, especially students at SMPN 3 Randudongkal because they should learn English at home by finding their own strategies for improving their vocabulary. Takac (2008) explained

that the benefit of strategy training in the fact that most of vocabulary learning strategy can be applied in all learning stages. The diversity of learning strategies can cause different result of the students' vocabulary mastery. Different students' character, motivation and intention make they choose different learning strategy to be used.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in observing and finding what strategies used by students' in learning vocabulary in a research entitled **“STUDENT’S STRATEGIES IN IMPROVING VOCABULARY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC”** *(A Study on the Ninth Grade of SMP Negeri 3 Randudongkal in Academic Year 2020/2021).*

B. Reason for Choosing the Topic

There are 2 reasons why this study is interesting to conduct. They are:

1. Vocabulary is central to English language teaching because without inadequate vocabulary, students cannot understand or express their ideas to others. Based on my experience in learning language, even without grammar, with a few words and expressions, I can often manage to communicate even if not quite well. Particularly when students develop better fluency and expressions in English, it is important for them to acquire more productive vocabulary knowledge and to develop their own personal vocabulary learning strategies.
2. Students who struggle to acquire new vocabulary may have generalized linguistics deficiencies, memory deficits, poor word

learning strategies, or any combination of the three (Baker, Simmons, and Kameenui, 1995). These students usually need hands-on instruction and intensive practice to improving their vocabulary. Strategies for improving vocabulary help students understand and learn new words, make sense of new vocabulary by integrating it with what they already know, and remember the meaning of it.

C. The Problem of the Research

The problem of the research can be formulated in the following research question:

What are the strategies used by the students in improving their vocabulary during the COVID-19 pandemic?

D. Aim of the Research

The aim of this research is to describe the strategies that the students use in improving vocabulary during COVID-19 Pandemic.

E. Contribution of the Research

1. Practical

The researcher hopes that the result of her research will be valuable for:

a. The Student

By finding the right strategy, the researcher hopes that students

will have fun in learning to improve vocabulary. That way student will not feel forced to learn English but they will feel comfortable in learning because they choose their own strategy that feels fun.

b. The Teacher

For the teacher, it is to provide information about the strategies that students use. These enable them to understand the core of learning English vocabulary, know factors that cause the difficulties in learning vocabulary, and determine appropriate steps to overcome the problems.

c. The School

After conducting this research, it is expected that the school will be interested to conduct this research in his department in order to improve student's quality.

d. The other research

The researcher hopes that this research will be a beneficial reference for other researchers. They also can improve their knowledge about the suitable theory in teaching English especially about student strategy.

2. Theoretical

This result of this research is intended to enrich the student's strategy of improving vocabulary.