INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool for communication and vocabulary is the most important part of it. “It is an aspect that binds the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing all together” (Nguyen & Khuat, 2003). When people want to learn language, the first thing to learn is definitely vocabulary and later on, grammar. Thornbury (2002) concluded that “Without grammar a language can be conveyed a little, but without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.” Based on Thornbury’s statement, it proves that vocabulary plays the most important role in learning a language and without vocabulary learning it is impossible to acquire a language. Based on Press (2008) the meaning of vocabulary is “All the words that a person knows or uses.”

In Indonesia, the need to learn English as the first foreign language is huge, but in my experience when I was at school, teachers usually put more emphasis on grammar rather than vocabulary while it is necessary to develop both of them all together. In junior high school level the vocabulary learning is definitely different compared with elementary level. In junior high school level, students have already known basic vocabulary therefore teachers should take their students to intermediate level where there is more difficult vocabulary. It is teachers’ job to transfer their knowledge, ability and make sure that their students have a lot of vocabulary to be able to move into advanced level. However, teachers should remember that their students come from different background in learning English. Take for example some students have already learnt English since they were in the kindergarten, while others have began to learn English when they entered elementary school. This is a challenge for English teacher because after elementary level it becomes increasingly difficult for the teachers to select the vocabulary that will be equally useful to all his students due to their students learning backgrounds. That is the reason why teachers should find appropriate
teaching techniques to teach their students considering their students’ need and their students’ background.

**Relevant studies**

A study was conducted by Sembiring in 2011 to identify the strategies of Satya Wacana Elementary School English teachers in helping their students master vocabulary words. Sembiring used in depth individual interviews and she revealed two main findings. The first finding was that six teachers from Satya Wacana Elementary School believed that vocabulary was important to be taught in elementary school in order to develop all language skills. The second finding was that strategies such as pictures, games, realia, and songs played a major role in teaching vocabulary. Almost all teachers of Satya Wacana Elementary School used pictures to teach vocabulary.

Another study was conducted by Melissa A. Facella, Kristen M. Rampino, and Elizabeth K. Shea from Lesley University in 2005 to provide effective strategies for early childhood teachers to use with children who were English language learners. They interviewed twenty early childhood educators from two culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Massachusetts. Here were their findings: gesture and visual cues, repetition and opportunities for practicing skills, use of objects, real props, hands-on materials, multisensory approaches.

Compared with both studies study above, the aimed of this study was to know the techniques that junior high school English teachers at Salatiga used when they taught vocabulary to their students. The writer hoped this study would help other English teachers in other junior high schools to improve the way they taught vocabulary to their students.
Aim and significance of the study

The aim of this study was to reveal the kind of techniques that junior high school English teachers at Salatiga used to help their students master vocabulary because after elementary level it becomes increasingly difficult for the teachers to select the vocabulary that will be equally useful to all his students. The findings of this study could give information about teaching vocabulary techniques to teachers’ candidate who wish to teach at junior high school level.

Research Question

The purpose of this study was to answer this following question: “What are the techniques that English teachers at Salatiga used to teach vocabulary to their students?”