

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter discusses about the background of the problem, the problem statement, the objective of the study, theoretical framework, hypothesis, the significance of the study, definition of key terms, scope and limitations, and organization of the study.

1. 1. Background of the Problem

Language is a tool for humans to communicate with each other. Without language, humans cannot express their desires and emotions. It is unknown when language is created, however, researchers have found that language started in 1800. Language can be written, spoken and also gestured. Currently, there are 7,111 spoken languages in the world, however, not all of them have written forms. At present, researchers have found that there are 3, 995 languages that have developed a writing system, and more than 200 sign languages in the world.

According to Britannica (2019), English is a West Germanic language of the Indo-European language family that is closely related to Frisian, German, and Dutch languages. There are two types of English language, formal and informal. Formal English is a language used in education, economics, business, commerce, technology, science, and mass media, while informal English is a language used every day in term of slang and dialect usage (Shelby, 2015).

Humans are born with the ability to comprehend language. First, when a baby was able to produce sound, he/she started to speak in a bewildering language which we call as "babbling". After that, he/she will be able to speak in syllables, like "Ba", and "Ma". Then, the baby will be able to produce words by imitating his parents, for example like "Papa", "Nyam-nyam", etc. Those words would be understood by his/ her parents, even if the baby does not communicate his/her wants in full sentences. Therefore, it can be concluded that vocabulary is the foundation to communicate. According to Steven Stahl (2005), "Vocabulary knowledge is knowledge; the knowledge of a word is not only a definition but also implies how that word fits into the world."

Indonesian students are familiar with the English language because one of the national exams is an English exam, and Indonesian students learn it in school. However, learning a language is not easy. Starting from the different pronunciations, words, and the structure. Even though both Indonesian and English languages use the same alphabets, the alphabets are pronounced differently. Moreover, there are some words in English that are pronounced in a specific way, like some of the alphabets are silent. The difference in the structure of the sentence also adds to the difficulties of learning English for Indonesian people.

Unfortunately, vocabulary is not often taught as diligently as grammar in English classes in Indonesia. Indonesian English teachers tend to be more focused on teaching grammar than vocabulary in class. Even

though vocabulary is important in acquiring a language, a lot of students do not understand the lesson because the teacher assumes that the students have already acquired the vocabularies. With the lack of vocabularies, the student will likely have a problem in learning English and eventually they will lose their motivation to learn English. Those students who do not have it will only come to class without any desire to gain knowledge. To improve students' motivation to learn English, it is important to search for a method on how to increase it. Even though teachers have given students the knowledge about vocabulary, students will not be able to learn it still because they are not interested in it. For a child to be able to learn efficiently, she or he needs to be interested by the method of learning first. Therefore, teachers need to find effective ways to teach vocabulary.

One way to do it is by playing a game. According to Federation American Scientists (2006), “People acquire new knowledge and complex skills from game play, suggesting gaming could help address one of the nation’s most pressing needs – strengthening the system of educational and preparing workers for 21th century job.” Moreover, according to Nadolny and Halabi (2015), they found that game-based learning maintain high participation and persistence. In Indonesia, students are obliged to learn many subjects at the same time, which makes many students encounter many difficulties in learning. If a teacher teaches using games, it will make students more motivated to play and learn at the same time.

If students learn by their own motivation, the learning process will be more effective. They will study new things faster but will still be having fun when doing it. Learning does not need to be always ~~be~~ boring and flat. Learning by playing games is one of the solutions to add the fun in it.

If teacher combines games and English language vocabulary, students will learn vocabulary in a fun way. Kuzu and Ural claim that (as cited in Donmus, (2010:1499)) "When games and education are combined, it can be educative and education environments can be entertaining. The learners who learn with the use of games, gain positive attitudes and can be more motivated while learning". Games help and motivate students to acquire the language faster, easier, and in a fun way.

By using games, students also learn other skills beside the language itself. Skills such as teamwork, creativity, leadership, and many more can be acquired during the games. Games also motivate the students to learn because they increase their competitiveness in a friendly competition. After learning and practicing new vocabulary through games, students have the opportunity to use language in a non-stressful way (Uberman, 1998). Agoestyowati (2007:38) says that the usage of games in a learning environment will not only change the dynamic of the class, but also rejuvenate students and help the brain learn more effectively.

Therefore, it will be more effective to learn vocabulary through educational games so the students will learn both soft and hard skills at the same time. It is said that not only one's knowledge is important, but a

person's character is even more important. Young students need to develop their characters from now so they can be a better person in the future. All of this can be achieved by slowly teaching them soft skills and life skills through educational game.

1. 2. The Problem Statement

In line with the background of the study, and to answer the writer's curiosity about the vocabulary ability of 8th-grade students at junior high school, the question formulated is as follow:

What is the effect of Charades and Pictionary on noun attainment of the 8th graders?

1. 3. The Objective of the Study

With the background and the question that arises from the problem, the objective of this study is:

- To identify whether by playing Charades and Pictionary students can acquire nouns better.
- To measure how far games can improve students' noun attainment

1. 4. Theoretical Framework

1. Theory of Vocabulary

"Vocabulary learning is at the heart of language learning and language use. In fact, it is what makes the essence of a language. Without vocabularies, speakers cannot convey the meaning and communicate with each other in a particular language." as stated by Laufer, (1997:54). Without sufficient number of vocabularies of the target language, in this context the English language, the learner could not learn the language. Before learning speaking, writing, listening and reading, the learner should learn the vocabulary first to move on. It will be impossible for someone to learn the language without ever learning the vocabulary, because it is the very first step of learning a language.

2. Theory of Games

A game is a fun activity which brings entertainment and pleasure to the player. "Games are effective tools for learning to offer students a hypothetical environment in which they can explore alternative decisions without the risk of failure. Thought and action are combined into purposeful behavior to accomplish a goal. Playing games teaches us how to strategize, to consider alternatives, and to think flexibly." (Martinson and Chu 2008: 478)

The two games used for this study are Charades and Pictionary.

1. 5. Alternative and Null Hypotheses

There are 2 hypotheses for this study:

- H_0 = There is a significant difference between students' real object nouns attainment before and after they learnt vocabulary using games.
- H_a = There is no significant difference between students' real object nouns attainment before and after they learnt vocabulary using games.

1. 6. Definition of Terms

- Vocabulary is all the language and words either used or understood by a person or a group of people. (Your dictionary, 2018)
- Game is an entertaining activity or sport, especially one played by children, or the equipment needed for such an activity. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019)
- The guessing game is a game in which the player has to correctly guess the answer. (Merriam-Webster, 2019)
- Charades is a game in which players guess a word or phrase from pantomimed clues. (Lexico, 2019)
- Pictionary is a guessing game in which players attempt to identify words from pictures drawn by other players. (Your Dictionary, 2019)

1. 7. Significance of the Study

This study informs the teachers that there are many ways of teaching vocabulary. Teacher is expected to know alternative ways to teach vocabulary. Out the opposite, students made aware that when they play games, they will also learn vocabulary. The last one is to give information about the use of Charades and Pictionary to teach nouns to other researchers with the same topic.

1. 8. Scope and Limitations

The study was conducted to improve 8th grade students' vocabulary achievements by using games. The games that have been chosen for this research are Charades, and Pictionary. The researcher believes that by using games, the students would be more engaged in class and thus acquire the vocabulary faster than before. The instrument to collect the data was a vocabulary test. The questions of the test were all about nouns. The nouns were taken from Life English textbook Intermediate level by National Geographic which became the compulsory textbook for the students.

1. 9. Organization of the Study

In this study, the researcher discusses about the background of the study, the related review of literature, methodology, research findings and conclusion and suggestion,