

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, and definition of key terms.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

English is the most widely spoken language all over the world. Therefore, English has become an essential means of communication. By understanding English, people will find it easier to access any kind of information. As we know, most information is presented in English in the printed media, such as magazines, newspapers, or books; broadcasted by radio and TV station; or posted on the Internet. Therefore, learning English is undoubtedly important in this globalization era.

In line with the necessity of learning English, the *Kurikulum 2013* (Standar Kompetensi Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris Sekolah Menengah Atas dan Madrasah Tsanawiyah, Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2013) states that the objective of teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia, particularly at the junior high school level, is to develop both oral and written communication competence in order to achieve informational literacy level. It is an elaboration of the recent Indonesian curriculum that is based on language pedagogy, which states that language is a means of communication rather than a set of rules.

Vocabulary as one of the linguistic competences should be mastered well. The language learners' vocabulary mastery can be seen from their ability in using the correct words accurately or identifying the meaning of a word. Therefore, a good knowledge of English vocabulary is required of anyone who wants to use the language. Ghazal (2002) states that vocabulary learning is one of the major challenges for foreign language learners.

Vocabulary is central to a language and has great significance to language learners. Words are the building blocks of a language since they label objects, actions and ideas without which people cannot convey the intended meaning.

As stated by Huyen and Nga (2003), In the process of learning a foreign language, vocabulary plays an important role since it is an element that links the four language skills, listening, reading, speaking and writing, altogether. The acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second language use because without an extensive vocabulary we will be unable to use the structure and functions that we have learned for comprehensible communication. Moras (2001) states that foreign language learners need to broaden their vocabulary to express themselves more clearly and appropriately in a wide range of situations. Therefore, in order to communicate well in a foreign language, students should acquire an adequate number of words and should know how to use them accurately.

In fact, vocabulary remains one of the problems in English communication. The result of the observation on the seventh graders of SMP Terpadu Al-Anwar, revealed several facts about the teaching and learning process. First, the observation done on March 2, 2019 in class VII-D, which had the lowest average score revealed that the teacher tends to use grammar-translation method in teaching vocabulary. The teacher used the grammar-translation method by giving a list of English words, the Indonesian equivalents, and then asks students to memorize them. The teacher employed conventional ways, such as memorization, question-answer, or explanation. Moreover, the teacher did not explore many words in classroom activities. As a result, the students forgot the words easily. As suggested by Brown (2001), grammar-translation method does not enhance the students' communicative ability and use the language in a real community. Secondly, from the vocabulary oral test on March 23, 2019. The oral test is conducted before the written middle test is held. From the result of the oral test, the researcher found that most of them, especially class VII-D, were not good at

English. They found difficulty in expressing their idea, identifying English words that they hear in listening, comprehending a text and constructing writing. This was due to their limited vocabulary, that was indicated by the low score in the vocabulary test.

Of all these problems, low mastery of vocabularies turned out to be one of the most serious ones. This was indicated by the average score of their vocabulary test, that was below the school's *KKM (Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal )* of 68. This problem made it difficult for them to write and speak English, as well as comprehend spoken and written text.

Considering the importance of mastery of vocabulary, teaching techniques are needed to maintain the interest of students. Kasbolah (1995, as quoted by Andrian, 2004) suggests the use of demonstrating, playing games, singing songs, telling stories, repeating, listening, working in pairs or groups, asking and answering question. Huyen and Nga (2003) conducted research about the effectiveness of learning vocabulary through games and concluded that games offer an effective and interesting way in learning vocabulary in any classroom. The results of this research suggest that games are used not only for mere fun, but more importantly, for the useful practice and review of language lessons, thus leading toward the goal of improving learners' communicative competence.

In this study, the researcher attempted to use Pictorial Board Game, a modification of a Snake and Ladder to improve students' mastery of vocabulary. The researcher chose the game because it is one of the popular games played by many people of all ages all around the world. Chang and Cogswell ( in Adrian, 2004) states that board games can be adapted for all age groups, proficiency levels, and contents. According to the research conducted by Andrian (2004), Pictorial Board Game can attract students' interest. Another research on vocabulary learning was conducted by Aryanta (2006); the researcher employed Pictorial Word Puzzle presented in a board game form for students' vocabulary learning. This research shows that Pictorial Word Puzzle can improve students' mastery of vocabulary. The result showed that

most of the students (89.58%) were of the high level. However, teachers should check the vocabulary use and keep it at the level that the students are suitable with.

The researcher adopted Pictorial Board Game as the technique to improve the mastery of vocabulary of the seventh graders of SMP Terpadu Al-Anwar Trenggalek. The Pictorial Board Games is expected to help students to achieve new vocabularies not through memorization, but they learn in meaningful context so that they will not forget the new words easily. Moreover, the use of pictures plays a great part in affecting students and helps them to draw information.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Based on the background of the study, the research problem is formulated as follows:  
*How can Pictorial Board Games improve the students` vocabulary mastery of the seventh graders of SMP Terpadu Al-Anwar Trenggalek?*

## **1.3 Purpose of Study**

In line with the problem above, the purpose of the study is to know how A Pictorial Board Games be implemented to improve the vocabulary mastery of the seventh graders of SMP Terpadu Al Anwar.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The result of this study is expected to give contribution to the teaching of English, especially the English vocabulary. It is meant to benefit English teachers of *SMP Terpadu Al-Anwar Trenggalek*, , students, and other researchers.

1. For English teacher of *SMP Terpadu Al-Anwar Trenggalek*, the result of this study offers new alternative media or strategy in teaching vocabulary at junior high school to improve the learning outcome. Moreover, this study is also expected to be beneficial for other

English teachers that face the same problem with their students' vocabulary and students' participation at classes.

2. For students, Pictorial Board Games are alternative media to learn vocabulary and improve their grade on vocabulary.
3. For other researchers, the result of this study provides a basis to conduct further researches on different aspects of study.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on the use of Pictorial Board Games in the teaching of vocabulary to *SMP Terpadu Al-Anwar Trenggalek*, especially to the seventh graders. Therefore, the result is limited to the students of *SMP Terpadu Al-Anwar Trenggalek* and may not be generalized to larger population. Of all the seventh graders, class VII-D was chosen because the average score of vocabulary test was the lowest. This study is limited to the teaching vocabulary through reading because most lessons taught in this classroom is reading and students usually learn vocabulary as a part of a reading session.

The selection of vocabularies was based on the topics presented in the English Textbook that was currently used, i.e. is *It's a beautiful day !* The vocabulary was limited to Nouns and Adjectives considering that they are frequently used in ask for and give information related to the qualities, things and animals.

### **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

There are two key terms of this study, i.e. Pictorial Board Game and mastery of vocabulary. To avoid misinterpretation, they are defined as follows:

- 1 *Pictorial Board Game* is a game that is used as an instructional aid for teaching English and played by moving pieces of markers on a pictorial board and guessing the suitable words for those pictures.
- 2 Mastery of vocabulary is the achievement of “Nouns” and “Adjectives” related to the topic presented as indicated by the students’ score in the vocabulary test. The mastery of vocabulary is showed by the score of the students’ achievement on the vocabulary test and quizzes.