CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This chapter included Background of The Research, Formulation of Research Problem, Objectives of The Research, Significance of The Research, Scope and Limitation of The Research and Definition of Key Terms.

A. Background of The Research

English language learning in Indonesia in the 4.0 era demands significant changes in the approaches and strategies used by teachers to improve students' competencies. Along with technological developments and increased access to global information, students are expected not only to be able to understand English theoretically, but also to be able to use it in various contexts, both academic and professional. However, according to Sulistiyo (2016), English language teaching in Indonesia faces several challenges in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, including low teacher competence, weak student learning motivation, and suboptimal teaching approaches. To overcome these problems, one effective approach in learning English is game-based learning. This approach not only makes learning fun, but also helps improve students' communication, collaboration and critical thinking skills. Therefore, integrating innovative methods and technologies in English learning is expected to encourage students to be more interested and actively involved in the learning process, preparing them to face future challenges and opportunities.

The government's initiative to improve English proficiency in Indonesia is an important step in addressing the challenges. Several programs have been launched, such as training for English teachers, providing more relevant teaching materials, and integrating technology in teaching. However, challenges still exist, especially related to teachers' competencies and qualifications, which are key factors in the success of English language teaching. Sulistiyo (2016) underlines that low teacher competence can have a significant impact on student motivation and learning effectiveness. Therefore, to achieve optimal results, it is important for the government to not only focus

on providing infrastructure and materials, but also ensure that teachers have adequate training and ongoing support. Thus, improving teacher competency will be a fundamental step in creating a generation that is able to communicate well in English, ready to compete in the 4.0 era.

English learning is an important foundation in shaping students' language skills for their future. However, in order to improve the effectiveness of learning, observation of the teaching and learning process is a must. In this context, observation of English language learning at SMPN 2 Ngantru Tulungagung has provided an interesting picture to conduct research.

Observations conducted by the researcher in November 2023 at SMPN 2 Ngantru Tulungagung revealed striking patterns of student behavior during English lessons. One of the striking findings was the tendency of students who did not pay attention to the lesson properly. Many of them seemed more interested in playing by themselves or even talking to their peers rather than focusing on the material presented by the teacher. This reflects a lack of a sense of responsibility towards learning, as well as a lack of awareness of the importance of the English learning process for their future development. In addition, there is also a lack of interest in English learning. The low level of participation and lack of concentration during the lesson indicate that English learning is not a top priority for most students. This could be an indication of a mismatch between the teaching methods applied and students' interests and needs in understanding and mastering English.

The behavior of students who tend to prefer talking to their classmates rather than paying attention to the lesson is also a concern. Social interaction is important in learning, but when it disrupts students' focus and concentration in the learning process, it becomes a challenge that needs to be overcome. In addition, many students were observed engaging in attention-seeking behaviors, such as making noises, calling out to the teacher without raising their hands, or performing actions that distract others. While it is normal for students to seek attention in a classroom setting, when it becomes a habit, it indicates a lack of engagement with the subject matter. This phenomenon

indicates deficiencies in the English learning system at SMPN 2 Ngantru Tulungagung. Therefore, in-depth research is urgently needed to increase students' interest and engagement in English learning, as well as the efforts that can be made to improve the effectiveness of learning in the future.

Interest is a crucial psychological factor that significantly impacts students' learning processes and outcomes. According to Slameto (2010), interest influences how students engage with learning materials, enhancing their focus, persistence, and overall performance. When students are interested, they are more likely to invest effort and time in learning, even when encountering challenges. Conversely, a lack of interest can lead to disengagement and reduced motivation, ultimately affecting academic achievements. Therefore, fostering students' interest is essential for achieving positive learning outcomes.

Moreover, interest is not only driven by intrinsic factors but also by external stimuli, such as engaging teaching methods, interactive classroom environments, and relevant learning materials. Abdul Hadith (2006) highlights that interest acts as a driving force, making students more enthusiastic and willing to participate actively in class. Teachers can enhance students' interest by creating an interactive and dynamic classroom atmosphere. This can be achieved by using creative teaching strategies, incorporating multimedia, games, and offering real-world examples that resonate with students' experiences. When interest is nurtured, students are more likely to be engaged and motivated to learn.

One proven strategy to foster interest is through fun learning. By applying fun learning methods, students experience pleasure and reduced pressure, which encourages active participation and sustained focus (Maslichah Asy'ari, 2006). Dwi Sunar Prasetyono (2005) emphasizes that enjoyable learning experiences can spark students' curiosity, making them more receptive to acquiring new knowledge. Fun learning methods, such as incorporating games and interactive activities, can help students connect with the material in a meaningful way, making learning both enjoyable and effective.

Games, in particular, have proven to be a highly effective learning strategy across a variety of educational contexts. In the field of language education, games not only maintain students' motivation but also create a more interesting and effective learning atmosphere (Birova, 2013). By engaging students in games, they can learn while having fun, thus improving memory and concept understanding. Games can also create a relaxed and enjoyable environment that encourages active participation, allowing students to practice language skills in a non-threatening setting.

Game-based learning (GBL) is a learning method that utilizes games as a medium to deliver educational materials in an interactive and engaging manner. In English language learning, GBL has been proven effective in improving students' interest and learning outcomes. By presenting a more fun and less formal learning atmosphere, GBL allows students to learn without feeling burdened, so they are more active and motivated in the learning process. Game-based learning (GBL) has shown significant potential in improving English language acquisition. Research shows that GBL can improve students' academic performance, motivation, and willingness to communicate in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context (Yi-Ting Yeh et al., 2017).

This research aims to improve the learning process and solve students' problems by applying game-based learning in the English learning process at SMPN 2 Ngantru Tulungagung. Game-based learning will be applied as a learning approach that offers a different learning experience from conventional methods. Through the use of games specifically designed for learning purposes, it is expected that students can be actively involved in the learning process, increase their motivation to deepen their understanding of English, as well as develop better language skills.

B. Formulation of the Research Problem

Based on the background above, the Researcher formulates a research question as follows: *"How backs to the board game can improve the interest of 7th-grade students at SMPN 2 Ngantru Tulungagung in learning English?"*.

C. Objectives of The Research

In accordance with the formulation of Research Problems above The Researcher asserts that backs to the board game can improve the interest of 7th-grade students at SMPN 2 Ngantru Tulungagung in learning English.

D. Significance of The Research

This research is expected to practically provide useful information and relevant recommendations to the public, namely:

a. For SMPN 2 Ngantru Tulungagung teachers, the results of this research are expected to provide valuable guidance in using Game-Based Learning Backs to the Board to increase students' interest in learning English.

b. For researchers, this research is expected to enrich the understanding of the use of Game-Based Learning Backs to the Board in increasing students' interest in learning English as well as more in-depth knowledge about this learning approach.

c. For future researchers, hopefully this research can add new insights and knowledge for readers and become a valuable reference for similar studies in the future.

E. Scope and Limitation of The Research

This research will focus on the implementation of game-based learning as a teaching method for 7th grade students at SMPN 2 Ngantru Tulungagung, with particular emphasis on the implementation of the "Backs to the Board" game in the context of language learning. This research will be conducted during four meetings

F. Definition of Key Terms

In this section, there are several explanations regarding the tittle mentioned in previous section. The title is "Improving Students' Learning Interest by Using Back to The Board Game at the 7th Grade Student of SMPN 2 Ngantru Tulungagung" To avoid misunderstandings from readers, it is important to define the following key terms:

1. Learning Interest: Learning interest is a person's tendency or interest in a subject matter or learning activity. High interest in learning can increase student motivation and involvement in the learning process.

2. Game-Based Learning: Game-Based Learning is a learning approach that uses game elements in the learning process. In game-based learning, students learn through games or activities that are challenging, interactive, and exciting. The main goal of this approach is to increase student motivation and involvement in learning.

3. Backs to the Board: Backs to the Board is one of the learning methods where students stand in front of the blackboard with their backs facing the other students. The purpose of this method is to engage the whole class in discussion or problem solving, while promoting cooperation and interaction between students.