

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, formulation of research problem, purpose of the study, formulation hypothesis, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of Study

Language plays a crucial role as a social phenomenon. Language is essential for individuals to interact and communicate effectively, allowing them to connect with and adapt to their surroundings. Through language, a person can express their desires, hopes, and ideas. In addition, language also functions as a tool to meet various human communication needs in various sectors, such as industry, trade, tourism, international relations, and most importantly in education.

In education, English has become the primary language of communication. It is spoken by millions of people all over the world. Essentially, learning English can improve the ability of Indonesian people to compete at the international level, develop intelligence, and strengthen their communication skills, which will ultimately have an impact on improving the quality of life. In Indonesia, English introduced as a foreign language and is taught from kindergarten to university level, either as a compulsory and local subject.¹

Vocabulary is a key element in learning a language and interacting with others. It is one of the most important components that students need to master,

¹ A. Rahimi, *Discourse and Language Learning* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016).

besides pronunciation and grammar, in the process of learning English. Vocabulary is not categorized as a language skill, vocabulary is the most important one that should be noticed. Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, students will struggle to comprehend words or construct meaningful sentences. Vocabulary includes all words in a language, a collection of words mastered by a speaker or writer, terms in a particular field, and a list of words arranged like a complete dictionary with brief and applicable explanations. In essence, vocabulary supports the development of English proficiency and expands one's perspective.

Using new vocabulary is not only enjoyable but also one of the most effective ways to retain it. Making an effort to apply at least three new words each day in daily conversations can significantly enhance vocabulary mastery, even if at first the usage is hesitant or the grammar is not entirely correct.

Although vocabulary is easy to be mastered, but still there are many students who are lack of understanding words. Students often come across unfamiliar words in a text or passage but tend to ignore them. While they might grasp the overall meaning of the sentence, they do not fully understand each individual word. To overcome this problem, teachers need to apply the right strategies or techniques in teaching vocabulary. That way, students' motivation, learning effectiveness, and academic performance can be improved.

Many scholars were looking on how to improve learner's vocabulary. Schmitt stated a set of principles starting with the presentation of common

vocabulary and then the limitation of new vocabulary amount in a given text².

For that reason, finding the most effective approach to reinforce learners' vocabulary knowledge remains a major focus of attention.

Based on the preliminary observation conducted by the researcher on March 26th 2024 in the first grade of SMKN 1 Bandung Tulungagung, it was found that the students' English vocabulary was still low and need to be improved. This was identified during the researcher's internship observation in the English learning process of the class. When students asked to translate a descriptive text, many students had difficulty understanding and interpreting the vocabulary used in the text. It can happen because the students have limited of English vocabulary mastery. The lack of vocabulary mastery is one of the main factors that hinder students from comprehending the learning materials. This conditions affect their language skill. Therefore, it is necessary to implement more creative and engaging teaching strategies to help students improve their English vocabulary mastery.

Based on that observation, the researcher is interested to increase students' vocabulary mastery. In this study, games have been selected as a vocabulary-teaching. The name of the game is Antonym Matching Game. The purpose of the game is to help students' overcome their learning challenges by making learning enjoyable and fun. Games allow students to work cooperatively, compete with each other, strategize, think differently, compare and share

² N. Schmitt, *Vocabulary in Language Teaching* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

knowledge, learn from others, learn from mistakes, and work in a less stressful and more productive environment while also having fun.³

Research conducted by Dr. Amaal Al Masri and Mrs. Majeda Al Najar highlights that incorporating games into vocabulary teaching can significantly enhance students' vocabulary acquisition.⁴ Games are effective tools to engage students and help them maintain focus during the learning process. There are several benefits to incorporating games into classroom activities. First, games create a fun and relaxed atmosphere, making it easier for students to remember new vocabulary. Second, games encourage friendly competition, which helps sustain students' interest. Third, games make English lessons more dynamic by integrating real world vocabulary into the classroom. Fourth, they provide students with opportunities to express their opinions and serve as a strong source of motivation. Lastly, games introduce fresh activities while simultaneously helping students acquire new vocabulary.

Game is a fun and engaging method of teaching that helps reduce boredom. Using games, students can understand the material more easily while having fun. They will stay focused on the lesson and gain new knowledge in the process. There are various games that can improve students' skills in English, especially in improving vocabulary mastery. One of those games is Antonym Matching Game.

³ R. N. Agoestiyowati, 'The Use of Games as a Strategy to Teach English Vocabulary to the Third Grade of SDN Mojo 2 Blitar' (Universitas Negeri Malang, 2007).

⁴ M. Al Masri, A., & Al Najar, 'The Effect of Using Word Games on Primary Stage Students Achievement in English Vocabulary in Jordan', *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 4.9 (2014), pp. 144–52.

These were supported by some previous studies. The first previous study was conducted by Eviyana, (2020) which focused on junior high school at the eighth grade of SMPN 35 Bandar Lampung. This research used classroom action research and found that the students' vocabulary mastery was improved from 43.3% of students passed the first cycle to 83.3% of students passed in the second cycle. It meant that antonym matching game was a good game in the learning process⁵. The second study using word square game was conducted by Maria Ode Berta et al., (2020) which focused on junior high school at eighth grade of SMP Dwijendra Denpasar. This research used classroom action research and with the findings that apply game was able to solve the problem in vocabulary mastery. The use of word square game in teaching vocabulary, students could easily understand and memorize new vocabulary⁶. The third study was conducted by Siti Nuraeni et al., (2020) which focused on seventh-grade students of SMP Muslimin Sililin. This research use pre-experimental as a research design and found that the students' vocabulary mastery was improved from mean score of pre-test 41.53 to 77.50 in mean score of post-test. The data show that the use of word games have contributed to the improvement of performance since at the pretest and the word game is able to enhance the students' vocabulary. Based on the result the researchers concluded that the use

⁵ F. Eviyana, 'The Use of Word Game to Improve Students' Vocabulary Mastery at the Eighth Grade of SMPN 35 Bandar Lampung' (UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2020).

⁶ N. K. Berta, M. O., Widiastuti, I. A. M. S., & Suarni, 'The Effect of Word Square Game on Students' Vocabulary Mastery of the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Dwijendra Denpasar in Academic Year 2019/2020', *Urnal Santiaji Pendidikan (JSP)*, 10.2 (2020), pp. 90–94, doi:2088-5108.

of word game is effective to enhance students' vocabulary in seventh-grade of SMP Muslimin Cililin⁷.

Among various types of word games, Antonym Matching Game is one that focuses on matching words that have opposite meaning, such as "small and big" This type of game allows students to expand their vocabulary in a fun and interactive way, as they can more easily recognize and remember new words through the relationship of opposite meanings. Antonym Matching Game is one of the alternative games that can be used in teaching English, especially in teaching vocabulary. The gap between this research and previous studies was the subject and technique used to collect the data. This research focused to know the effectiveness of using antonym matching game of the first graders vocabulary mastery used pre-experimental method.

Based on the potential benefits and findings from several previous studies, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "The Effectiveness of Antonym Matching Game on the first grade students' vocabulary Mastery at SMKN 1 Bandung".

B. Formulation of Research Problem

The formulated of the research problem is "Is there any significant difference score of first grade students' vocabulary mastery at SMKN 1 Bandung before and after taught by antonym matching games?"

⁷ L. Nuraeni, S., Faridah, D., & Marlina, 'The Use of Word Square Technique to Improve Students' Vocabulary Mastery', *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 3.2 (2020), pp. 154–160, doi:<https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v3i2.p154-160>.

C. Purpose of the Study

Based on the research question, the aim of this study is to find whether on the formulation of research problem above, the purpose of this study is to know is there any significant difference score of first grade students' vocabulary mastery at SMKN 1 Bandung before and after taught by antonym matching games.

D. Formulation Hypothesis

Before deciding the result of hypothesis the researcher proposed interpretation toward (the observation) with procedure as follows:

1. Formulating null hypothesis (H_0) there is no any significant difference score of first grade students' vocabulary mastery at SMKN 1 Bandung before and after taught by antonym matching games.
2. Formulating alternative hypothesis (H_a) there is any significant difference score of first grade students' vocabulary mastery at SMKN 1 Bandung before and after taught by antonym matching games.

E. Significance of the Study

1. For the teacher

The teacher can use the Antonym Matching Games to improve their teaching method. This study can be effective way to learn new words using antonym matching games.

2. For the students'

The students will benefit from this study because it introduces a fun way to learn new vocabulary. This method can help students improve their vocabulary.

3. For the researcher

It is hoped that this research can provide useful input and can be a reference for learning to increase the ability in teaching as the good teacher in the future.

F. Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope describe the extent of the area to be explored in the study and determines the parameter within the research is conducted. The researcher makes the scope of this study to measure the effectiveness of using antonym matching game on the first grade students' vocabulary mastery at SMKN 1 Bandung. The researcher focuses on measuring aspects of word meaning, especially in verbs and adjectives.

The limitation is flaw or shortcoming which could be caused by the insufficient number of samples, unavailability of resources, deformed methodology, etc. One limitation of the study is that researchers may only involve a limited number of first-grade students at SMKN 1 Bandung. So as a result, this study cannot be applied to all student populations in the school.

G. Definition of Key Term

To prevent misunderstanding regarding the subject terminology and content of this study, researchers should define key terms used in this study

1. Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery refers to the ability to understand the meaning of words, know when to use them appropriately, and pronounce them correctly. It includes both active and passive vocabulary knowledge. Active vocabulary involves using words in context and expressing their meanings accurately, while passive vocabulary refers to recognizing word forms and their meanings during reading or listening.⁸

2. Antonym Matching Game

Antonym matching game is one solution to teach students how to learn English in a fun way. The goal of the game is to match pairs of words with opposite meanings by flipping over cards. Antonyms refer to words that express contrasting meanings.

⁸ M. L. Hiebert, E. H., & Kamil, *No Title, Teaching and Learning Vocabulary: Bringing Research to Practice* (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005).