

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on the influence of “Slap the Word” game on students’ vocabulary mastery at SMPN 2 Jatirejo, Mojokerto. This part discusses the background of the study, the research question of the study, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, and the definition of key terms.

### A. Background of the Study

Vocabulary is one of the most essential parts of mastering a language. According to Murokoli’s statement, vocabulary learning is an important and indispensable part of any language learning process<sup>1</sup>. In language learning process, vocabulary has effect. If the students master a lot of vocabulary, they will be able to express what they are thinking. That is why, language learning should start from the vocabulary. Therefore, students with a limited vocabulary will be difficult in their educational progress. In a journal reviewed by the researcher from Pikulski and Templeton stated that language skills and word

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Murokoli, *Effective Vocabulary Teaching Strategies for the English for Academic Purposes Esl Classroom* (Vermont : SIT Graduate Institute, 2011).4

knowledge affect the ability in social and economic<sup>2</sup>. Students' vocabulary mastery can be known when they communicate with others

Students sometimes have difficulties in learning vocabulary. The difficulties are how to spell, how to pronounce, grammar, meaning, etc. Learning new word means that students should learn new kind of vocabulary. These difficulties often make learner feels that English is a scary thing. Thornburry mentions some difficulties in learning vocabulary, namely:

1. Pronunciation: research shows words that are difficult to pronounce are more difficult to learn.
2. Spelling: this is one of difficulty that is faced by the learners about how to spell right words.
3. Length and complexity: learner oftens meet long and complex words, then they may get difficulty in learning new language.
4. Grammar: the differences grammar between the first and second language makes the learner feel that grammar is very difficult. It can be solved through practice.
5. Meaning: when learners understand the meaning of a word it may be able to make them learning fluently. In contrast, if learners do not understand the meaning it makes a word difficult to learn.

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<sup>2</sup> John J. Pikulski and Shane Templeton , *Teaching and Developing Vocabulary*.1

6. Range, connotation and idiomatic: some words have a lot of and similar meaning; it will make the learners confuse<sup>3</sup>.

Those problems appear in many times as people learn vocabulary. Usually the problems of EFL students are lack of vocabulary<sup>4</sup>. The difficulties of young learners' in Indonesia, where the student seems difficult to translate the difficult English word.

Most students have found difficulties in understanding meaning of word. It is because they may not know it when they are learning. It is so hard for them can understand the lesson well and it also might make them disappointed and unmotivated. Besides that, they try to translate it into Indonesian language, so that they attempt look up it in the dictionary.

Students will be difficult to catch the lesson of new language when they are learning new language without knowing the meaning of that new language. Having a low vocabulary can trap students in a bad condition and also less successful in using strategies for vocabulary learning.<sup>5</sup> This problem becomes one of obstacles in learning process. Sometimes it may decrease learners' spirit to learn vocabulary.

Commonly, the problem is faced by the students because the teacher mostly teaches vocabulary through traditional method. It seems monotonous

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<sup>3</sup> Scott Thornbury, *How To Teach Vocabulary* (England: Longman, 2002) p.29

<sup>4</sup> Hong-Fa Ho and Chen Huong, *A Multiple Aspects Quantitative Indicator for Ability of English Vocabulary: Vocabulary Quotient* ( Journal of Educational Technology Development and Exchange 4,2011).23 .

<sup>5</sup> Fisher and Blachnowicz in Sue Hackman, *Teaching Effective Vocabulary* (Nottingham: Department for Children, Schools and Families,2008). 5.

method, vocabulary is usually taught through memorizing word and drilling patterns so that it might make students bored and lazy in teaching and learning process. According to Slameto, variation is required for effective teaching method. It would be boring if the teacher uses only one method. That is the cause of teaching and learning in the classroom become boring<sup>6</sup>. If this problem comes, the teacher should be creative to teach this subject in various ways and to stimulate learners in order to feel comfortable in teaching learning process, especially understanding the material it self.

The teacher should not only use text-based method in teaching vocabulary. It is required to get students' engagement. The teacher needs to build students' engagement because it is one of three steps to teach successfully. According to Harmer, the three necessary steps in language learning which can help students learn effectively are:

1. Engage: the students' interest which should be built by the teacher to get their engagement. Such as using game.
2. Study: students' focus on the explanation of the material which is explained by the teacher.
3. Activate: students' activities related to the material that has been submitted by a teacher<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Slameto, *Belajar dan Faktor-Faktor yang Mempengaruhi*, (Jakarta : Rineka Cipta, 2010)p.96

<sup>7</sup> Jeremy Harmer, *How to Teach English* (England : Longman, 1998) . 25.

Engagement is the first point in teaching sequence. The teacher should get the class interested and engaged to increase student's interest in learning vocabulary. It means that the teacher cannot build students' engagement; it can be a problem to get students' attention. It will make students feel so bored when they are learning in the formal class.

A strategy is needed to get students' engagement in learning vocabulary. McCarten said that the teacher can help the learners learn vocabulary by using strategy in class.<sup>8</sup> The teacher needs to apply a strategy to make the class will be more enjoy and the students will not get bored. It is supported by Jones in his journal that one way to build students' engagement is the strategy in teaching<sup>9</sup>. It means students' engagement is really needed in teaching learning process. Hopefully, after the teacher get the students' engagement, it can make easier for students to master and increase their vocabulary.

One of strategy to build students' engagement is game. According to Harmer, there are many activities which usually engage student, they are: games, music, discussion, stimulating pictures, dramatic stories, amusing anecdote, etc.<sup>10</sup> The researcher chooses game as a strategy to build students' engagement because Margaret described, teaching through games which make students learn

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<sup>8</sup> Jeanne McCarten, *Teaching Vocabulary: Lessons from the Corpus, Lessons for the Classroom* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). 23.

<sup>9</sup> Richard D. Jones, *Strengthening Student Engagement*. (2008).1

<sup>10</sup> Jeremy Harmer, *How to Teach English*.25.

while playing can be used as a strategy for teaching<sup>11</sup>. When the students learn while playing, they will be more interested in learning vocabulary. Wright stated that:

“Game is useful to stimulate the brain before get the materials. Games are essentially engaging and their language concerns can easily be substituted for English in many, though not all, cases”<sup>12</sup>

The game is a strategy which is expected to build students’ engagement to learn vocabulary before they get the material. This is supported by the study that has been conducted by Huyen, she stated that game is effective for learning vocabulary.<sup>13</sup> Game makes the students learn vocabulary easily and can build the class more active. The use of games in a learning environment will not only change the condition of the class, but it will also refresh students and stimulate the brain to learn more effective.<sup>14</sup> Those are many advantages of using game as a strategy in teaching. Because of this, the researcher wants to know the influence of game as a strategy to teach vocabulary that is usually done through memorizing vocabulary at home as homework which must be memorized in class in the next meeting.

The researcher will use “Slap the Word” game. “Slap the Word” is a fun game which the teacher can play with students. This method has function to

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<sup>11</sup> Margaret Chen, *Using Vocabulary Games to Increase the Use of Language Learning Strategy* (Institute of Foreign Languages Education and Cultural Industries) .22.

<sup>12</sup> Andrew Wright, et all, *Games for Language Learning* (United Kingdom : Cambridge University Press, 2008) .xii.

<sup>13</sup> Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen and Khuat Thi Thu Nga, *the Effectiveness of Learning Vocabulary Through Games*

<sup>14</sup> Redjeki Agoestyowati. *102 English Games* (Jakarta : Gramedia Pustaka Utama. 2009)

improve student's vocabulary. This game is easy to be applied and does not require a lot of equipment.

In language teaching process SMPN 2 Jatirejo has same problem. Based on the interview with Mrs. Nisfu Lailati, students only get vocabulary through the lessons in the classroom. Moreover they seldom bring a dictionary when come to the class. This cause their vocabulary is limited. In teaching learning process, the teacher usually uses simple vocabulary as an introduction to learn materials in the classroom. However, students often can not understand what is conveyed by the teacher. It is because most students do not understand a lot of vocabulary. So, they seem less enthusiastic in learning<sup>15</sup>. In this case, the students have limited vocabulary. One of the reasons is the students are lazy to bring a dictionary. They will be unmotivated when the students don't know the meaning of new words, so that it can be an obstacle in their progress to learn new language.

The researcher comes to the class to observe the reality. The researcher wants to analyze why students are uninterested in learning language. The researcher observed the teaching learning in the class and conducted interview with one of seventh grade students in that school. Based on the interview with Zulfa, the English teacher cannot build students' interest in English lesson because of her teacher lack of variety in teaching. The English teacher usually

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Mrs. Nisfu Lailati as the English teacher in VIIA class, December 16, 2012.

uses text-based method when she teaches English without any variation. This method can make the students to get bored easily. Students feel that this method is very monotonous<sup>16</sup>. Text-based teaching method is less attractive to build the enthusiastic. So, they feel difficult to learn English.

The researcher tries the “Slap the Word” game as an alternative to raise students' interest in learning vocabulary. The researcher uses the game which is held before the material is given and also the researcher will use textbook because textbook is a tool for teaching and learning<sup>17</sup>. The researcher will take some difficult words from their material on that day from textbook.

This research is conducted in seventh grade. The reason is because the English teacher in seventh grade cannot build students' engagement with her monotonous strategy which is always use text-based method to translate the meaning of new words. It makes the students be uninterested in learning English, because they have limited vocabulary. Moreover, vocabulary lesson should be applied early as a basis for studying other skills.

Based on the problem above the researcher wants to apply this game to know whether “Slap the Word” game influence students' vocabulary mastery.

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Niela Zulfa as a student in VIIA class, December 12, 2012

<sup>17</sup> Kathleen Graves, *Designing Language Course: A Guide for Teacher* (Boston: Heinle&Heinle Publisher.2000). 175.

## **B. Research Question of the Study**

From the background above, the research question of this study are:

1. Does “Slap the Word” game influence students’ vocabulary mastery at SMPN 2 Jatirejo, Mojokerto?
2. What are the students’ responses after the implementation of “Slap the Word” game?

## **C. Objective of the Study**

According to the research question above, the objective of the study are:

1. To know the influence of “Slap the Word” game on students’ vocabulary mastery at SMPN 2 Jatirejo, Mojokerto.
2. To know the students’ response after applied “Slap the Word” game.

## **D. Significance of the Study**

For researcher the result of the research is expected to give benefit that “Slap the Word” game has positive influence to teach vocabulary. For teacher, the result of this research can be used as a reference that “Slap the Word” game is one alternative strategy to teach vocabulary. For reader, the result of this

research can enrich knowledge about the influence of “Slap the Word” game on students’ vocabulary mastery.

#### **E. Scope and Limitation of the Study**

In this research, researcher only focuses in the influence of “Slap the Word” game on students’ vocabulary master. It will be conducted for seventh grade of SMPN 2 Jatirejo, Mojokerto. It is because vocabulary lesson should be taught as early as possible.

#### **F. Definition of keys term**

In order to avoid misunderstanding, the researcher defines the key terms as follow:

##### **1. Influence**

Influence is the thing’s capability to affect someone or something by the effect.<sup>18</sup> In this study, the influence is when the students’ vocabulary mastery is better after get the “Slap the word” game as a strategy to learn vocabulary.

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<sup>18</sup> David A. Herzog, *Webster’s New World: Essential Vocabulary* (Canada: Wiley, Hoboken, NJ, 2005) 136.

## 2. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is collection of words or phrases and a list of words in language textbook, usually alphabetically and explained or defined.<sup>19</sup> It can be concluded that vocabulary usually arranged alphabetically and it also part of language component. The vocabulary that will be used in this research is about procedure text. Procedure text is a text that gives information for doing something.<sup>20</sup> The researcher will take the difficult word from this text. In the implementation of “Slap the Word” game, the researcher emphasizes the meaning of vocabulary only.

## 3. “Slap the Word” Game

“Slap the Word” game is a vocabulary game which students play in small groups. Cards are laid on the desks in front of students. Teacher says a vocabulary word and students must slap the correct card.<sup>21</sup> In this study, the difficult vocabulary is written on the board. When the student hears the word from the teacher, they have to look for the word on the wall and then slap it as fast as they can with their hand.

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<sup>19</sup> AS. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary Of Current English* (New York: Oxford University, 1995).495.

<sup>20</sup> Th. Kumalarini, et all. *Contextual Teaching and Learning Bahasa Inggris: Sekolah Menengah Pertama /Madrasah Tsanawiyah Kelas VII Edisi 4/Th*, (Jakarta: Pusat Perbukuan, Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2008.).200

<sup>21</sup> Jeffrey Walter, *Games for the Elementary EFL Classroom*, Intensive English Teacher Training Program Korea National University of Education

#### 4. Response

Response is answer or giving reaction to something.<sup>22</sup> In this study, response is the students' opinion to the application of "Slap the Word" game. This response will be taken by the researcher using questionnaire and interviewing some students.

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<sup>22</sup> AS. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*,...367.