

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, identification of the problem, limitations of the problem, problem of the study, objective of the study, and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Learning is a process of changing the behavior and knowledge of an individual permanently through experience and process. In learning, someone will explore and find new things that are unknown. One of the lessons that is very necessary in education today is a language lesson. Language is used as a tool that human use in communicating, including in learning and teaching activities. Basically, in education, learning a language is also important because it plays a main role as a conductor and mediator in learning & teaching activities (Hornberger, 2018). One of the language lessons that must be taught in the class is English because it is an international language that it is the official language of instruction used by people from different countries to facilitate communication.

According to Kartika et al (2015), not only as an international language, English has a very important role in the educational aspect. Firstly, by learning English, students can get to know a new culture and gain learning experience with rules and views that are different from their country (Alptekin, 2002). Secondly, according to Singh & Maheshwari (2019), learning English can open up opportunities for fluent people to work in global companies where English is the language of instruction. Based on those reasons, English must be taught from elementary to university level. In learning English as a foreign language, there are several basic skills and components that must be mastered first. The skills are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Meanwhile the language components that the basis for learning English is vocabulary mastery, which is a guide and indicator of a person's level for developing listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills (Milton et al., 2010).

Vocabulary is a fundamental component in learning a language. It is also defined as every word that is contained in a sentence and that is mastered by someone in explaining something or used to communicate with other people. Vocabulary mastery is very necessary in everyday human life, and it greatly influences various aspects of life, especially aspects of education. In the world of education, vocabulary is usually taught in language lessons such as English. Vocabulary plays an important role that affecting skills in a foreign language. At the level of education, especially for junior high school as young learners, they are learning vocabulary to improve their language skills. Vocabulary is very important in a language because it can be said that vocabulary is also a foundation for constructing a sentence or paragraph. Learning vocabulary can also help students to more easily express something they want to convey when English learning is taking place. According to Thornbury & Scott (2002:13), words will be difficult to express when someone has only a small amount of vocabulary. So, without mastering vocabulary, we will not be able to show and express our feelings, and when that happens, it will be impossible to establish communication between students and teachers. To more easily master vocabulary in English, repetition is very necessary. Especially considering that vocabulary mastery greatly influences the four basic skills in English.

Studying English as a foreign language at the junior high school level is not easy. Students who are undergoing a learning transition period from elementary to middle school certainly experience a lot of familiarization, including learning English, which was not previously studied in all elementary schools in Indonesia. Some elementary schools may teach English, but at that level, English is only introduced as a foreign language, and the learning is focused on introducing vocabulary only. However, at junior school level, English lessons are taught more intensively, especially in terms of mastering vocabulary, as basic skills in speaking, writing, listening, and reading. At this junior high school level, students also learn that the way English is pronounced and written is different. As mentioned earlier, in learning English as a foreign language, the first thing to master is the 4 basic skills and also their main component, namely vocabulary. Without mastery of

vocabulary, students cannot express and convey anything. That is why this component of language is very important.

Even so, it turns out that there are still many English vocabulary mastery problems that occur in schools. One of them is happen in SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja. Many students, especially grade 7 have lack mastery of English vocabulary. This happened because there were significant differences between the English lessons they received at elementary school and junior high school. If previously they only knew some vocabulary at elementary school, now they are required to be able to use English vocabulary in the classroom. This ultimately caused students to feel difficulty in English lessons, so that the learning process in the classroom didn't run effectively. Based on that problem, a teacher must try to improve the learning process. For creating effective learning activities in teaching English, teachers have to use appropriate techniques and methods so that students can easily memorize vocabulary that they didn't know. The significant differences in English language learning between elementary and middle school make teachers should be innovative and creative in teaching English vocabulary that is still unfamiliar to middle school students, so that learning becomes more interesting. In other words, teachers must prepare interesting media by paying attention to the needs of their students (Gaynor, 2018). Previously, teachers had tried various ways to teach vocabulary in English. According to Susanto (2017), several ways that are commonly used by teachers in teaching vocabulary are by using media such as books, cards, slideshows, and learning strategies such as spelling, using expressions, and body movements.

Even though the teacher has tried various ways of teaching vocabulary, it turns out that these methods are not effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery as young learners. Teachers find out that students still have difficulty mastering English vocabulary, because most students never studied it at the elementary school level, so it is very difficult for them to pronounce vocabulary that they had not learned before (Ratminingsih, 2017). When students did not have a lot of vocabulary mastery, what happens next is discomfort when learning English. Students will be afraid when asked to speak English in the classroom. In the end, they didn't enjoy their study time. Student not only didn't study much vocabulary in elementary school, they also difficult to master vocabulary because

the use of learning media does not suit on students' needs. If previously learning vocabulary used media, such as books, cards, a slideshow, now teachers have to change the teaching media for the junior high school level. This is because vocabulary learning at the junior high school level has more complex vocabulary, such as prepositions, conjunctions, nouns, verbs, and others that require them to apply them according to the learning context (Krashen, 1982). With these needs in students' vocabulary mastery, teachers must have interesting learning media that help students improve their vocabulary mastery.

Media in learning English are very important, considering that English is taught to all ages. As a foreign language, English has levels in it. a lower level of English is usually owned by children, and a higher level is usually owned by adults. Therefore, it is necessary to adapt learning media that will be used for the levels. Adults may learn English vocabulary by reading or memorizing, but for children, it will be boring. Adults usually tend to learn English through books, songs, or films that they watch. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for adults to learn English by speaking directly to their interlocutor in English through conversation (Paul, 2016). However, for young learners, especially in junior high school, this may be too difficult, considering their English language skills are still at a basic level. Therefore, in learning vocabulary in English, it will be better if children use fun media such as games.

A game will create a learning atmosphere that is more cheerful for students. Learning English using games will reduce pressure in learning and help students to learn cooperatively with their peers (Donmus, 2010). In teaching vocabulary for young learners, teachers can create a game as a learning media that prioritizes the brain's memory skills so it does not feel boring. These games can be crossword puzzles, flash cards, puzzles, or stick figures. These types of games are quite interesting for students, but for teaching vocabulary in the classroom, several previous studies have suggested using crossword games. According to Mursilah (2017), a crossword puzzle is an interesting game in the educational aspect because this game emphasizes a person's way of thinking in identifying words as well as their definitions, spellings, and synonyms, so that students become enthusiastic in learning. Crossword is a word game that is played by filling in empty boxes

horizontally and descending. Crossword games are usually played on paper, but since there are technological advances, various crossword puzzles have emerged that use technology, such as digital crosswords. The existence of digital crosswords not only helps students to improve their vocabulary mastery, but also helps students to become more aware of technological advances. According to Davis et al. (2009), using a crossword game in learning languages can increase students' curiosity and memory abilities. Crossword games can make students more confident when they can complete vocabulary with the correct alphabet. Not only that, but crosswords can also help students focus on learning vocabulary. According to Weinstein (2004:3), in crossword games, there are many challenges from the start to the end of the game. The challenge consists of matching the number of words to the available crossword puzzle boxes. With this challenge, students are accustomed to focusing on completing the crossword game by answering the questions in the puzzle.

Several previous studies have discussed the influence of crossword games in improving students' comprehension abilities. One of them is written by Madura, (2018). Researcher used crossword puzzles to teach student's students at MTs Miftahul Ulum Palengaan Pamekasan. The researcher wanted to investigate how far students had achieved in mastering comprehension by using crossword puzzles in teaching. The researcher gave several treatments to students during the teaching and learning process by holding pre-tests and post-tests. By conducting this research, the researcher found that the use of crossword puzzles to teach comprehension was effective and beneficial for students at the MTs/secondary school level. The use of crossword puzzles in teaching English is also said to be a fun and interesting medium.

Based on previous research, the reason why the researcher conducted this research is to investigate whether the use of digital crossword as a learning media can have a significant difference between the class that are taught by using digital crossword and those who are taught with conventional learning or not and to find out the perception from students in the process of learning English vocabulary, so that in the end digital crossword can be used as an effective learning media to improve student's vocabulary mastery at SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja. The difference

between this study and previous studies was that in this study, the researcher used a digital crossword as a research variable because the researcher wanted to investigate the effectiveness of using this technology media in students' vocabulary mastery. Researcher want to see whether the digital crossword, as a technology media, can be an effective media to improve students' vocabulary or not, while previous studies only used traditional crosswords, which are paper-based crosswords that discussed the effectiveness of using crossword games in students' vocabulary mastery. in this study, the researcher also discussed students' perceptions after using crossword media in learning English vocabulary. In this research, the design of the study used is a sequential explanatory mixed methods. The researcher collected data through post-test, analyzed data using descriptive statistics, and followed up by giving the questionnaire and interview at the end of the post-test to students in the experimental group.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

In learning English, several components must be mastered, one of which is vocabulary. In learning English vocabulary, there is an obstacle that is faced by students, especially 7th-grade students at junior high school. Students have a lack of vocabulary in English because they didn't learn a lot of vocabulary in elementary school. To help students master vocabulary, teachers need learning media that are fun for students. This fun and interesting learning media can be in the form of a game. Learning using games can increase students' enthusiasm. One example of a game that maybe can increase the enthusiasm is the digital crossword game.

Based on several previous studies, crosswords are effective in increasing students' vocabulary mastery. However, previous studies have only examined paper-based crossword games, and there has never been research that discussed digital crosswords in students' vocabulary mastery. Previous studies only discussed the effectiveness of using crosswords, but did not explore students' perceptions after using the media.

Therefore, by using digital crossword media, the researcher wants to investigate the difference in students' vocabulary mastery between those who are taught by using digital crosswords and those who are with conventional learning by using small group discussions that occur after learning vocabulary using digital

crosswords. In this study, the researcher also wants to explore students' perceptions regarding the use of digital crosswords in vocabulary learning in the classroom. Researcher expected that a digital crossword would be effective in increasing students' vocabulary mastery and produce good perceptions from students.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

This study focuses on a significant difference on students' vocabulary mastery between those who are taught using digital crosswords and those who are with conventional learning by using small group discussion, and students' perceptions after the used of digital crossword in English vocabulary learning.

1.4 Problem of the Study

Based on the background that has been previously described, the problems that were found in this research are:

- 1) Is there any significant difference on students' vocabulary mastery between those who are taught by using digital crossword and those who are with conventional learning in SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja?
- 2) How is student's perception while using digital crossword in learning vocabulary in SMP N 1 Singaraja?

1.5 Objective of the Study

The aims of this research were in this below:

- 1) Investigate the significant difference on student's vocabulary mastery between those who are taught by using digital crossword and those who are with conventional learning in SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja.
- 2) Explore the perception of the students after the use of the learning media.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research provides theoretical and practical benefits, which can be seen as:

- 1) Theoretical significance

The expected benefits of the research are to increase knowledge in vocabulary mastery and to obtain information about the use of digital crossword in learning English, as well as to provide a positive influence and

information on other research related to the development of the world of education.

2) Practical significance

The result of this study is expected to give a positive contribution to the teachers, students, and other researchers.

a) For Teacher

This study is hoped can help teachers use creative & interesting learning media such as Crossword so that later it can help learning effectively.

b) For Students

Research expected to help students master English vocabulary by using Crossword media and also build their good perception through fun and interesting learning media.

c) For others

The results of research can be used as a source of information or reference for other researchers who want to conduct research on the same topic.

