

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

In English learning there are many components that need to be learned. One of important component that need to be learn in English is vocabulary. To be able use English language, students taught to grasp English vocabulary before they are introduced to another English aspects like grammar and pronunciation. Only with sufficient vocabulary one can express his ideas effectively, can understand the language task and foreign language conversation. With the limited vocabulary the students will have the difficulties in learning and understanding the foreign language. Consequently, learning English vocabulary has become the most important for English students (Rohmawati 2015).

Vocabulary is one of the most important components of English. It is considered as the most important one for students in learning English as a foreign language. Vocabulary mastery must be acquired by students in order to get other competencies such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In other words, vocabulary mastery takes an important role in mastering the basic four skills of English. The teacher take an important role to improve students vocabulary. The teacher has to choose an appropriate method because it can be an effective way of teaching the English language in the classroom. The method used is a communicative language teaching that focuses on the aspect of performing language game in order to make students understand the vocabulary.

The problems found in the observation showed that they had lack vocabulary, they cannot memorize the alphabet in English and did not know how to write a word correctly. Based on the explanation above, teacher must take more attention for the students. The students have to be active, and the teacher to be creative. There are many ways to learn and remember vocabulary and one of them is using game. In Jill Hadfield (2003) said that a game is an activity with a rule, a goal, and the element of fun activity. Besides, Andrew Wright (1983) says that performing language game has a benefit for students. The benefit of the game is to encourage the students and help the teacher creates language context well.

By researching the case above, the researcher wants to apply game as the way of teaching vocabulary. The game that the researcher tries to offer is spelling bee game. By

spelling bee games, the students can be more active in participating in the classroom activities. They can also try to spell correctly and fluently. Mcmillan (2012) claimed that a spelling bee game is a competition that asked students to spell the words as well as the sounds of a buzz. This game asks students to spell orally, and it looks at contests of accuracy rather than speed. On the other hand, the pronouncer should allow students to ask for repetition, sample sentence, and the meaning of the word itself in order to help students in difficult of homophones in English. Spelling Bee game can be used as an alternative activity in teaching vocabulary. Besides, it is a good alternative game to practice students' spelling skill. Sebba (2011) defined Spelling Bee as a competition which requires the contestant to spell words (see Maybin and Swann, 2011). Students will get some advantages from this game. One of the advantages of Spelling Bee game is helping students to memorize the correct spelling words (McPherson, 1984).

Relating to the background above and based on the researcher teaching experience when participating in the PLP program at SMPN 16 Kota Jambi, the researcher interests to conduct the research title "The Effect of Spelling Bee Game to Enrich Students Vocabulary at SMPN 16 Kota Jambi."

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the background presented, several problems have been identified in relation to vocabulary instruction in the classroom, particularly within the context of junior high school students learning English as a foreign language.

First, vocabulary teaching in many schools continues to rely heavily on conventional and teacher-centered methods such as rote memorization, textbook drills, and mechanical repetition. While these methods may provide some benefits in terms of short-term recall, they often fail to support deeper understanding or long-term retention of vocabulary. More importantly, such methods can be perceived as tedious and uninspiring by students, particularly in a modern educational environment that increasingly values student engagement and active learning.

Second, this reliance on traditional techniques has contributed to a noticeable lack of motivation among students when it comes to learning English vocabulary. Many learners view vocabulary learning as a difficult and repetitive task, rather than an exciting part of language acquisition. As a result, their enthusiasm for learning English diminishes, and this lack of interest can negatively affect their overall language performance. In many cases, students are reluctant to participate actively in class or practice vocabulary outside of school hours, which further hinders their progress.

Third, there remains a significant gap in the use of creative and interactive teaching strategies that could make vocabulary learning more enjoyable and meaningful. Innovative approaches such as educational games, collaborative learning, and student-centered activities are underutilized, even though they have been shown to foster deeper learning and greater engagement. Without such methods, many students may miss the opportunity to connect with the language in a way that feels relevant and fun, which is especially important for younger learners.

Overall, these issues highlight the urgent need to explore alternative strategies that not only improve vocabulary acquisition but also transform the learning experience into one that is dynamic, inclusive, and motivating. One such strategy is the integration of game-based learning tools like the Spelling Bee, which offers both linguistic benefits and increased learner engagement. This research is therefore motivated by the need to address these challenges and propose a more effective vocabulary teaching approach for junior high school students.

1.3 Limitation of the Research

To maintain focus and manage ability, this research is limited to the use of the Spelling Bee game in enriching students' vocabulary. The research is conducted at SMPN 16 Kota Jambi and involves eighth grade students as the sample. The research does not cover other language skills such as grammar, writing, or speaking in detail, although they may be indirectly influenced. It also focuses on general vocabulary improvement rather than technical or academic vocabulary.

1.4 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the identification and limitation of the research, the research problem can be formulated as follows : **"How does the use of the Spelling Bee game affect students' vocabulary in the classroom?"**

1.5 Objectives of the Research

The main objective of this research is to explore the effect of using the Spelling Bee game on students' vocabulary. Specifically, it aims to:

1. Investigate the differences before and after Spelling bee treatment to the students' vocabulary.
2. Examine how the Spelling bee game affects students' in learning English vocabulary.

1.6 Significance of the Research

This research is anticipated to offer valuable contributions both in theoretical and practical terms, particularly in the field of language education. Theoretically, the research aims to enrich the existing body of knowledge on second language acquisition, especially in relation to vocabulary development and student engagement. By exploring the integration of the Spelling Bee game as a vocabulary learning tool, the research supports the premise that active and student-centered learning strategies can significantly enhance language outcomes. It aligns with constructivist theories of learning, which emphasize the importance of engaging students through interactive and meaningful activities. Additionally, it contributes to the growing literature on educational gamification by demonstrating how classroom games can be effectively employed to support cognitive and linguistic development.

From a practical perspective, this research holds relevance for several stakeholders. For teachers, the findings may provide a fresh and enjoyable alternative to traditional vocabulary teaching methods. Many educators often rely on rote memorization and textbook-based drills, which may not resonate with all learners. This research encourages teachers to consider more dynamic, student-friendly approaches, such as the Spelling Bee, which can transform vocabulary instruction into an engaging and motivating experience. By incorporating this game into their teaching repertoire, educators may find that students become more active participants in their own learning.

For students, the use of the Spelling Bee is expected to make vocabulary learning more interactive, enjoyable, and memorable. The competitive and playful elements of the game can spark curiosity and increase motivation, especially for learners who might otherwise find language learning tedious or challenging. When students are more engaged and interested, they are likely to retain vocabulary more effectively and apply it more confidently in both spoken and written contexts.

Moreover, the research also offers significance for future researchers. The results can serve as a stepping stone for further investigation into game-based learning strategies and their application across various language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It opens opportunities for comparative studies between different types of educational games and their effectiveness, as well as research in diverse educational settings. Ultimately, this research contributes to a broader understanding of how learning through play can be a powerful tool in language education.

To fully comprehend the scope and focus of this research, several key terms used throughout the research are defined below.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

- **Spelling Bee Game:** In this research, the Spelling Bee Game refers to a structured language activity in which students are required to spell aloud words pronounced by a teacher or designated pronouncer. This activity typically takes place in a competitive format and integrates listening, memory, and oral spelling skills. The game is used as a medium for vocabulary reinforcement and student engagement.
- **Vocabulary Enrichment:** This term refers to the process of expanding a learner's vocabulary bank both in terms of quantity and depth of understanding. In the context of this research, vocabulary enrichment involves not only knowing how to spell words correctly but also understanding their meanings, pronunciations, and appropriate usage in context.

- **Engagement:** Engagement in this research pertains to the degree of interest, motivation, and active participation demonstrated by students during vocabulary learning activities, particularly when using the Spelling Bee game. High levels of engagement are considered a key factor in successful vocabulary acquisition.
- **Junior High School Students:** Specifically, this research focuses on eighth-grade students enrolled at SMPN 16 Kota Jambi, an Indonesian junior high school. These students represent the target population for observing the effects of the Spelling Bee game on vocabulary enrichment.