

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief overview of the overall content of this research. This chapter present background of the research, problem of the research, purpose of the research, operational definition, significance of the research, scope of the research.

### 1.1 Background of the Research

Having a rich vocabulary is essential for speaking English well (Asyiah, 2017). Vocabulary also plays a critical role in mastering the four main language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It means that vocabulary is one of the important factors in language learning that is able to have an impact not only in terms of communication. It is clear that vocabulary is crucial since it is the fundamental skill that must be acquired before the language skills can be achieved. Therefore, it is necessary to choose effective learning methods and media to improve students' vocabulary mastery.

Teaching vocabulary must be done in a fun way to attract students' attention and make learning more enjoyable. There are many lively ways to increase student vocabulary and one of them is through games. This is in line with Song, et al (2021) stated that games are an engaging and enjoyable medium that can be used to teach English. Therefore, learning English through game is expected to be an effective way in mastering vocabulary. Some examples of

games that can be used to increase vocabulary include Scrabble, Hangman, Pictionary, and others.

In a previous study, Lubis (2021) investigated the effect of Word Search Puzzle games on vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students at SMP N 5 Padangsidempuan. The study found that many students struggled to use vocabulary correctly and were uninterested in the teaching strategy, which made it difficult for them to understand vocabulary and led them to avoid using dictionaries. The aim of the study was to determine whether Word Search Puzzle games could improve students' vocabulary mastery, and the results indicated a significant positive effect.

The second previous research, Chesy (2018) conducted research to investigate the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test of the vocabulary mastery after being taught by Word Search Puzzle. This is a pre-experimental study with one group pre-test and post-test design. Pre-testing and post-testing were done on one group in this pre-experimental study. 31 students from class X TSM at SMK PGRI Pontianak make up the sample for this study. Essay tests are used as the data gathering tool and measuring technique, respectively. The items to be assessed for each section of the test are definition, spelling, and the sentence pattern. As a result, the tenth students at SMK PGRI Pontianak had better vocabulary mastery thanks to word search puzzles, which are also very successful in teaching vocabulary acquisition.

Based on interviews conducted by the researcher with the English teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Kalisat, namely Mrs. Tuty Sunaryowati, the students had

difficulty learning English vocabulary, and memorizing, rarely read, and still had difficulty naming objects around them. They have an extremely tough time picking up new vocabulary. This is due to a lack of enthusiasm for English classes. The majority of students believe that English is useless since it is not used in their daily lives, but the main factor is that they find lessons that call for memorization boring.

In conjunction with the aforementioned illustration, Word Search Puzzle is proposed as a way to teach and to enhance the students' vocabulary mastery. According to Garwan and Jusnita (2020) Word Search Puzzle is a game word search in a collection of letters arranged randomly on a grid which is usually square, the player has to find all the words hidden in the square and the words that hidden can be found horizontally, vertically and diagonally. This game makes it easier for students to train their memory as well as master vocabulary, especially English.

This study aims to explore the factors that contribute to novice learners' success in increasing vocabulary using Word Search Puzzles. The population in this study was the first grades students of SMP N 1 Kalisat in the academic year 2022/2023. Based on the explanation above the researcher decided to have a title "Enhancing Novice Learners' Vocabulary Mastery Through Word Search Puzzle".

## **1.2 Problem of the Research**

Based on the background above, the problem of this research is "How can the use of Word Search Puzzle increase students' vocabulary mastery?"

### **1.3 Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this research is to find out how Word Search Puzzle can enhance students' vocabulary mastery

### **1.4 Operational Definition**

**1.4.1** Vocabulary Mastery is a student's ability to understand and master words in a language. Mastering is that students can define and use words correctly in a sentence at the age level of first graders of junior high school students. In this study, the vocabulary being investigated include nouns in the surrounding environment or in daily life. For examples things at school, in the classroom, at home, like lamp, mirror, table, blanket, clock, etc.

**1.4.2** Novice Learner is somebody with little to no prior knowledge or expertise in a particular field. The subjects in this study were students at the age level of 13 years, namely first graders of junior high schools. They are said to be novice learner or beginner because this year is the first year of them officially learning English, so their English are considered low.

**1.4.3** Word Search Puzzle is a word search game paper-based where students find meaningful words from a set of jumbled letters in a box. Word search game can be vertical, horizontal, diagonal to find a word. There is a column and picture for the word that students are looking for and its meaning. Students write down the word they have been looking for by looking at the picture provided and writing the meaning in the column.

## **1.5 Significance of the Research**

### **1.5.1 Practical Significance:**

For teachers, this research can provide an insight that this media can be used in learning for vocabulary mastery in language learning.

### **1.5.2 Theoretical Significance:**

For other researchers, the finding of this research could be used as a reference material for further research.

## **1.6 Scope of the Research**

This research focused on finding out the factors related to students' success in enhancing vocabulary using Word Search Puzzle. Factors that can enhance students' vocabulary which will be examined further in this study. The subject in this research was Class A of the first grades students of SMP N 1 Kalisat. This research method is Classroom Action Research. This research was conducted in March until the research was completed. In this study, the specific vocabulary is nouns.