

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the background of the research, the research problem, the research objectives, operational definitions, the significance of the research, and the scope of the research.

### **1.1 Background of the Research**

Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language learning, serving as the foundation for developing the four core language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Yudha & Mandasari., 2021). In addition, good vocabulary mastery determines the quality of students in using a language (Supriadi & Jalaluddin., 2023). However, students often experience difficulties in learning English, especially in terms of vocabulary. They are faced with unfamiliar words and have to communicate with their limited vocabulary. In addition, they also have difficulty in spelling words correctly and are confused in pronouncing them according to English rules (Somantri & Nurhayati., 2017). These difficulties are often caused by traditional teacher-centered teaching methods. Many teachers still use the method of memorizing vocabulary lists, which is less effective and can make students frustrated and reluctant to learn (Yudha & Mandasari., 2021).

This method tends to emphasize memorization without clear context, while the lack of interaction in learning makes students quickly bored and less motivated. In fact, active engagement is essential for them to understand, remember and use vocabulary effectively in the long run. In this case, teachers

play a big role in enhancing the quality of vocabulary learning in English classes. According to Yekple et al. (2021), teachers need to have responsive pedagogical skills to create effective learning. Therefore, teachers need to choose the right methods and media, such as games, so that English learning feels fresh and interesting (Somantri & Nurhayati., 2017).

An approach that can be applied is game-based learning, where students learn through fun and meaningful activities. According to Wu et al. (2020), Game-based learning creates innovative opportunities in the learning process by allowing students to organize their own materials, share experiences, and develop relevant skills for real life. Educational games can be adapted according to students' needs and learning styles, so they can be an effective tool in vocabulary learning (Kurniawan et al., 2024).

Among the many educational games, Scrabble is effective in enhancing vocabulary acquisition, as it not only helps students remember new words, but also understand word structure, spell correctly, and use them in the right context (Somantri & Nurhayati., 2017). Scrabble stands out as a word-based board game that challenges players to form words from a grid of letters, thus strengthening their vocabulary acquisition in a fun and interactive way (Supriadi & Jalaluddin., 2023). According to Harahap et al. (2023), integrating Scrabble into English language learning can increase word recognition, spelling accuracy and overall vocabulary retention in students.

According to Mubarak et al. (2023), the independent curriculum gives students the freedom to explore, discuss, and do activities outside the classroom without neglecting learning in the classroom. Therefore, the implementation of an

independent curriculum in Indonesia emphasizes a student-centered learning approach, encouraging creativity, collaboration, and active participation. A teacher must have the skills to choose learning methods that are in accordance with curriculum objectives and student potential, because the accuracy of method selection affects student success and learning outcomes (Dalimunthe & Haryadi, 2022). In line with this, integrating Scrabble as a learning tool is in accordance with the principles of the independent curriculum. By using games like Scrabble, teachers can create a more dynamic classroom environment, where students actively develop their vocabulary skills in a fun and stress-free way.

Several studies have emphasized the importance of instructional media and teaching strategies in enhancing students' English vocabulary mastery. One relevant study was conducted by Mahendra et al. (2024), titled *The Effectiveness of Scrabble Games to Promote Vocabulary Achievement of Migrant Workers' Children in Malaysia*. This research employed a pre-experimental design involving a single group of ninth-grade students who received treatment using Scrabble. The findings demonstrated a significant enhancing in vocabulary acquisition after the intervention. Moreover, the study highlighted that students became more engaged and motivated when learning through interactive, game-based methods. Although both Mahendra et al.'s study and the present research utilize Scrabble as a learning medium, key differences exist in terms of research design and participant characteristics. Mahendra et al. used a single-group design without a control group, whereas the present study adopts a quasi-experimental design involving both experimental and control groups, offering a more robust comparison of outcomes.

Supporting evidence also comes from a study by Chairani. (2021), entitled *Using Scrabble to Increase English Vocabulary Mastery of Non-English Undergraduate Students*. Conducted at MAN 2 Kuantan Singingi, this study explored the implementation of Scrabble in improving learners' vocabulary among non-English major students. The results indicated that the game not only enhanced vocabulary in aspects such as spelling, pronunciation, and retention, but also contributed to greater speaking confidence and learner motivation. However, Chairani employed a qualitative approach, focusing on descriptive data rather than statistical evidence. In contrast, the current study utilizes a quantitative method to measure the effectiveness of Scrabble more objectively through pre- and post-test comparisons.

In addition, research by Somantri and Nurhayati. (2017) confirmed the effectiveness of Scrabble in facilitating vocabulary development among junior high school students. Their study applied a pre-experimental design without a control group, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, their focus on younger learners left open the question of how Scrabble might impact older students with more advanced language competencies. Addressing this gap, the present study applies a quasi-experimental design with control and experimental groups, targeting tenth-grade students at the senior high school level. This approach provides a clearer comparative framework for evaluating the effectiveness of Scrabble in a more academically demanding context.

## 1.2 Problem of the Research

Based on the research background, the research problem formulation is as follows: Is there any significant effect of Scrabble game on students' vocabulary mastery at SMAN 1 Glenmore Banyuwangi?

## 1.3 Objectives of the Research

Based on the research problem, the objective of this research is to determine whether there is any significant effect of using the Scrabble game on students' vocabulary mastery at SMAN 1 Glenmore Banyuwangi.

## 1.4 Operational Definition of the Terms

To order avoid understanding about, it is necessary to provide some explanation about some of the terms that will be used in this research.

### 1. Scrabble Game

In this research, Scrabble refers to a word game used as a learning media in teaching vocabulary. The game involves arranging letter tiles into meaningful words on a game board following certain rules. In the classroom, Scrabble is implemented in group settings where students are encouraged to form English words competitively or cooperatively.

### 2. Vocabulary Mastery

In this research refers to students' ability to recognize, understand, and use English words appropriately in context. Vocabulary mastery was measured through a vocabulary test consisting of 20 multiple-choice items, designed to assess knowledge of synonyms, antonyms, and word usage. Students' test scores were used to determine their level of vocabulary mastery.

### 1.5 Significance of the Research

Based on the problems described, this research explores the impact of Scrabble, a well-known word game, on students' vocabulary mastery. By examining the effectiveness of Scrabble as a teaching tool, this research aims to provide theoretical insights into game-based learning as well as practical strategies for educators and learners. The significance of this research is discussed in two main aspects: theoretical and practical contributions.

#### 1. Theoretical

This research contributes to enriching English language learning theory, especially in the area of teaching vocabulary through a game-based approach. The results of this research can support the theory that game-based learning can increase students' engagement and retention of vocabulary in English. Apart from that, this research also adds references for further research that wants to develop game-based learning strategies to increase students' vocabulary mastery.

#### 2. Practical

This research has practical significance in various aspects. For teachers, this research provides insight into the effectiveness of the Scrabble game as a tool in teaching vocabulary in a more interactive and fun way. For students, this game can help increase their vocabulary mastery in a way that is more interesting and less boring than conventional methods. In addition, for schools, the results of this research can be a basis for considering the use of educational games as an alternative learning media that supports the development of students' language skills. Finally, for future researchers, this research can be a reference in further

exploring the impact of playing Scrabble or other educational games in English language learning.

### **1.6 Scope of the Research**

The scope of this research is focused on investigating the effects of Scrabble as a tool for teaching students' vocabulary mastery at SMAN 1 Glenmore, Banyuwangi, specifically targeting 10th grade students. This research explores how Scrabble affects students' ability to learn and remember new words in English.

