

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the research background, research questions, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, scope, and limitation of the study, the significance of the study, scope, and limitation of the study, and definition of terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

English is one of the most essential languages in the world. English has become the most used language in the world. English is commonly used in various fields, such as international communication, commerce, and trade, including education. According to Shelagh Rixon (Cahyati et al., 2019) English instruction is being taught at younger ages, which is put pressure on educational worldwide. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language at elementary, middle, high, and university levels.

In the process of learning English, proficiency in four skills is required namely listening, speaking, reading and writing which must also be supported by four existing sub-skills such as spelling, structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation. They are essential because we can determine the level of written and verbal understanding by mastering these four skills. To accomplish the four skill above, vocabulary is the key to language and communication skills.

Vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of language knowledge, playing a crucial role for individuals learning languages, particularly English, or for those acquiring new languages (Cameron, 2001). According to Richards and Renandya (2002), vocabulary constitutes a central element of language skills and significantly influences learners' abilities in speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Students will find it easier to express their ideas when they need more vocabulary to support them in understanding and speaking English. Furthermore, Hasanah L. (2006) said that vocabulary plays crucial element of language because it is a person's thoughts that can only be clearly understood by other people if what is expressed uses vocabulary.

However, learning vocabulary is a challenging thing for some people. That is why teachers need to find or create strategies for learning vocabulary. Teachers have an important role in devising strategies for teaching. This is because the teacher is a source of knowledge for their students; the teacher has a role as a model motivator and also a facilitator who can create a learning process that attracts students' desire to learn. Teachers have a crucial role in the education system. Teachers and students have a reciprocal relationship in a learning process where the teacher is influential in creating a learning strategy that can make students more cheerful and active. If the teacher succeeds in creating suitable learning strategies, students will participate more in the learning process.

Games can be one of the learning strategies that can be used to learn vocabulary. Due to their ability to offer enjoyable activities with structured rules, objectives, and a sense of achievement, games are frequently employed as an

educational tool to engage young learners in English language acquisition (Tri Widyahening & Sufa, 2021). Correspondingly, crossword puzzles represent a game that can effectively aid in teaching vocabulary by providing enjoyable classroom activities and fostering vocabulary.

. Using crossword puzzles has proven to be effective in teaching vocabulary. According to Wiantara et al. (2020), incorporating crossword puzzles within brain-based learning models enhances engagement and promotes active learning. Meliyani & Kareviati (2021) suggest that crossword puzzles effectively support learning by defining terms, reinforcing spelling, and associating key concepts with relevant terms, thereby improving retention and memory of information.

Apart from that, when the writer was still in junior high school, there were no particular strategies used by the teacher to enrich the stock of vocabulary of the writer and friends. The teacher just came in and asked to look for a new word in a text and then looked for the corresponding meaning in Bahasa Indonesia. This made us felt bored and uninterested in taking English lessons because we had to do the same thing every time we took English lessons.

So, based on the explanation regarding the importance of learning vocabulary and the experience of researchers who found a lack of strategies that attract students to learn vocabulary in English when the researcher was in junior high school, the researcher is interested in researching **“USING CROSSWORD PUZZLES TO IMPROVE VOCABULARY OF STUDENTS OF SMPN 6 KUPANG TENGAH IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 2023/2024.”**

1.2 Statement of the Problem

From the background, the research problem can be formulated as:

1. To what extent does crossword puzzles improve vocabulary for seventh-grade students of SMPN 6 Kupang Tengah in the school year 2023/2024?
2. What are the difficulties in using crossword puzzles in learning vocabulary for seventh-grade students of SMPN 6 Kupang Tengah?

1.3 Objectives Research

Based on the inquiry, the study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To find out the extent of using crossword puzzles to improve vocabulary for seventh-grade students of SMPN 6 Kupang Tengah in the school year 2023/2024.
2. To find out difficulties in using crossword puzzles to improve vocabulary for seventh-grade students of SMPN 6 Kupang Tengah.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research is expected to be helpful to teachers. In this case, the teachers can look closely at this strategy when teaching vocabulary. Then, for the students. Students can increase their vocabulary, and finally, for the researcher, it is to increase her vocabulary knowledge through crossword puzzles.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of Study

This research is limited to teaching and learning vocabulary using crossword puzzles for the VIIIB-grade SMPN 6 Kupang Tengah students. The research covered

the use of picture crossword puzzles and definition crossword puzzles to improve the students' vocabularies because by using crossword puzzles definition, they can find out the uses and the other words relates to the object and the use of picture crossword puzzles is to make it easier for students to guess the word. This research focus on common nouns because common nouns can help the students know the nouns around them.

1.6. Definition of Terms

Vocabulary

According to Hornby (1995), vocabulary comprises words that form a language, representing a collection of words along with their meanings. The researcher will teach vocabulary focused on nouns and adjectives in this study.

Richards and Renandya (2002), vocabulary is fundamental to language proficiency and significantly influences learners' abilities in speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Students will find it easier to express their ideas when they easier to express their ideas when they need more vocabulary to support them in understanding and speaking English.

Games

Hadfield (2008) said that “ a game is defined as an activity structure with the rules and objectives to helping participants learn, memorize the spelling, pronunciation and meanings of words, all while incorporating an element of enjoyment. This definition emphasizes the structured roles and clear objectives of players within the teaching and learning process..

Crossword Puzzles

According to Khalilullah (2012), a crossword puzzle is a game where you fill in empty spaces in the form of boxes using letters so that a word is formed according to the instructions.

Crossword puzzle is a game of guessing words according to the instructions provided and filling in the word in the white box horizontally or downwards. Clues in crossword puzzles can be in the form of pictures, statements, questions, or another keyword.