

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

Education is the first priority for humankind to live in this world. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah SWT told to prophet Muhammad SAW, that the variant of languages as an evident for humankind of all His mighty and language is one of the sciences that we have to learn. It is said in (Q.S. Ar-Rum/30:22):

“And of His sign is the creation of heaven and the earth, and the different of your languages and colors. Lo! Herein indeed are portents for men of knowledge”.

Language is the way to convey our feelings, ideas, and opinions to other people through oral or written communication. There are many languages used in international communication. One of them is English. It is an evitable fact that English become the most important language in the world, which is used by people all over the world as an international language to communicate to one another either in spoken or written interaction. Bearing in Spolsky's mind (2004, p. 91) that “English as a global language is now a factor that needs to be taken into account in its language policy by any nation state”.

In Indonesia English takes an important role. In spite of the difficulties in studying English, it is worthwhile to study the language because it plays a very

important role in almost aspects of life such as; communication, commerce, economy, politics, education, science, technology etc. Based on the roles above, Indonesia government absolutely realizes with this situation that to encounter and compete in this globalization era, English is considered to be taught from kindergarten up to university and make it as a compulsory subject which always demanding people have to able to use English. Based on writer's experience students sometimes do not realize that mastering English is important. They learn English just because it is a compulsory subject and what they want to achieve is getting good marks and passing the exam. The problem occur because since English is not Indonesian first language, they assumes that English language is a foreign language.

The paradigm stick in Indonesian mind and caused Indonesian feels difficult to accept and learn it. Ramelan (1999, p.5) stated that "most learning problems are caused by different components found in the two languages, so that when students learn a foreign language he will get difficulties". English language components consist of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and phonology. Those components support four skills in English language they are listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Fact revealed in most of Indonesian classroom is many teachers only teach their students just to get the curriculum target. The previous study conducted by Rosmayanti (2008) revealed in most English classroom, most teachers still use conventional method in teaching vocabulary, in which they only give the students a

non-stop drilling and memorization practice in a dry classroom drill. This makes the students feel bored, not motivated to learn and even caused lack of vocabularies and

fluency. Whereas in fact if students want to mastery English they have to deal with vocabulary first. Laufer (1997, cited in Akbari,2008) conveyed that vocabulary learning is at the heart of language use. Without vocabulary the students cannot convey meaning and communicate with each other in a particular language. Vocabulary may be not as an English skill in English language but it becomes fundamental thing that support the skills. Allen confirmed (1983, p. 7) “people have to know much vocabulary because communication will break down when people do not use the right words and the communication will also stop when learners lack the necessary words”. Based on the writer’s opinion that vocabulary is the most important from English language components as Suryanto (2007, p. 77) stated that “vocabulary is the crucial components of a language”. The writer’s opinion also strongly support by Thornburry (2002) highlighted that “without grammar very little can be conveyed, but without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed”. Hence grammar and other English language components are important but the most important is vocabulary.

Those points enlighten the writer that vocabulary is an essential means in conducting our communication from language material in learning English. Due to vocabulary as a fundamental things students have to enrich their vocabulary knowledge and teachers as a facilitator should expose them with vocabulary in their teaching and learning process. Thus the teacher have to find the best and effective media to teach English vocabulary. The teachers should use an appropriate instructional media. It should gain the students’ interest in learning new vocabulary.

To teach English vocabulary creativity is very required, through games teacher can make teaching and learning process become interesting and fun. Tasuli (2000, p. 17) conveyed that “it is very useful for the teacher to achieve the instructional goals and the objectives of learning, besides as a tool to command students in teaching learning process”. Using visual aids, teachers help the students to overcome the problem by making vocabulary more interesting in order to motivate them in achieving the language target. The statement above also supported by Thornburry (2002) he stated that learners will easily understand and memorize the words in visual. Based on the previous study conducted by Amalia (2006) learning vocabulary using word puzzle gives a significant success result to the students. From the previous study above using word puzzle in fact can help the students in learning English vocabulary. The writer assumes by using word puzzle can stimulate and motivate the students in learning English vocabulary.

From the explanation above enlighten the writer comes to a conclusion that teaching vocabulary through Word Puzzle is one of the appropriate techniques to interest eight graders in learning English vocabulary. By using Word Puzzles it is assume that students can master contextual vocabulary items. Byre and Ashley (2001) conveyed that puzzles are proven tool for building vocabulary (www.amazon.com) based on the whole statements above the writer pleasantly to present improving eight graders vocabulary achievement in reading context using word puzzles

B. Reasons of Choosing the Topic

Considering the importance of English in every aspect of life and vocabulary as a basic language component, the followings are the reasons of the writer choosing the topic are vocabulary is a basic language component that supports the four language skills. Second it has to be mastered by the students in order to be able to communicate in English fluently by using Word Puzzles. Third is most of the students face the difficulties in mastering vocabulary so that they cannot present their ideas clearly because of their limited vocabulary. Finally trying something challenging is interesting for almost all children who like having fun in activities it makes them enjoy in learning English vocabulary. There are a lot of types of vocabulary teaching techniques. In this research, the writer will propose one of the visual techniques through the use of Word Puzzles as suggested by Uberman (1998).

C. Identification of the Problems

Considering the problem above it can be seen that English is still less effective at school. The problem is caused from some factors which is coming from the students, teachers, environment (family) and school.

1. Students are not motivated to study English because of the teacher's monotonous way of teaching. As a result, the students have no motivation to write and speak and it becomes a boring and hard activity for them.

2. Teachers are blamed for their lack of creativity in utilizing and varying their teaching methodology, techniques and teaching media which can lead to the birth of conductive learning and teaching climate.
3. School does not give the media or less media such as visual media and audio media.

D. Statement of the Problem

Based on the background above, thus this research aims to answer the following questions:

- I. Can Word Puzzles improve students' vocabulary achievement?

E. Objectives of the Research

The objectives of the research can be stated as follows:

The main objective of this research is to improve eight graders vocabulary achievement at SMP PGRI 2 Bekasi. Particularly this research is directed to improve eighth graders vovabulary achievement through word puzzle.

F. Significances of the Research

By doing the action research, the writer hopes that this research will be beneficial for some parties as follows:

1. School : It is suggestion that school should provide better facilities for teaching and learning process. The teacher should be creative enough in preparing the teaching aids for whatever subject they teach.
2. Students : As a motivation in trying to improve students' achievement especially in enlarging students' vocabularies through Word Puzzles
3. Teachers : Hopefully this research can encourage the teacher to be open minded and ready to use various techniques or teaching aids in teaching their students. So that the minimal standard score or grade can be reach.
4. The writer : This research is a reference in developing my knowledge about one of the good ways in teaching and learning process.

G. Scope of the Research

This research focused on the using of Word Puzzles in learning vocabulary to improve the eight graders vocabulary achievement. The project was carried out through Word Puzzles. The subject was Eight graders' at SMP PGRI 2 Bekasi in the