

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the research, the limitation of the problem, the formulation of the problem, the objectives of the research, and the significance of the research.

A. Background of the Research

Language is the most effective communication tool (Amalia, 2018). Without language, communication in this life would not run optimally. Especially in the era of globalization, language skills significantly influence a person's ability to gain knowledge about culture, science, and also the social sciences that develop in society.

A German philosopher Johann Wolfgang von said, "Those who know nothing about a foreign language, they have nothing about their own." This proverb implies that mastering a foreign language is very important besides the mother tongue and the national language (Handayani, 2016). One of the foreign languages that a language learner must learn is English. English is an international language, and English is like a window to see the world. With this language, people or language learners can learn about the world and can get more information from around the world. Learning the English language is not limited to one country but worldwide. Mastering this language is not easy.

In Merdeka Curriculum, English is taught in elementary school, especially first grade and fourth grade as the main subject. For some students, English is a new experience, so they need to start learning English from the basics. Vocabulary is an essential requirement in learning English. Therefore, vocabulary mastery is crucial for elementary school children, especially in fourth grade. Students in fourth grade are included in the category of young learners because they are about ten years old.

According to Linse, (2005), vocabulary development is an important aspect of language development. Learners with little vocabulary mastery cannot perform well in every aspect of the language. Therefore, vocabulary is the most fundamental aspect of language to be learned by every language learner. The learners would need to learn vocabulary before learning the English language.

Teaching English vocabulary to young learners must be done before they learn the English language. The purpose of teaching English vocabulary is to facilitate the students or young learners to improve and develop their English skills. Most of young learners at the golden age can memorize and remember the vocabulary more than adults. According to Emery, (2018), young learners are described as children between 5 years old and 12 years old. From 5 years old until 12 years old is the right age to learn the English language because the children have a good brain condition to receive something new. Then young learners also have very different characteristics from older learners like teenagers and adults.

Teaching English to young learners is a very challenging activity. Students, especially young learners, easy to feel bore and also distracted. This phenomenon is normal because they are playful. Then, the other reason why teaching English is a challenging activity is due to differences in habits, environment and also differences in mindset in society. Children who live in urban areas would not have problems in learning a new language, especially English. This is due to many factors that support, both in the form of facilities, a supportive environment, the habits of urban people who often mix their mother tongue with English, and the most important thing is the mindset of urban people who are advanced and future-oriented. In contrast to children who live in rural areas, where the level of advancement is much different when compared to children who live in urban areas. It can be said, that English is a new language, challenging, difficult, and not very important to learn because the society do not know what benefits from learning English. The main factors that hinder why children in rural areas learn English is difficult, namely the lack of adequate facilities, an environment that does not support students to develop, and of course the mindset of rural society. Several factors become obstacles why learning English in rural schools has greater obstacles when compared to schools in urban areas, including those related to low student interest in English lessons, lack of support from parents and the environment, and the relatively low competence of English teachers (Harlina & Yusuf, 2020). The urban environment, both in terms of technology and also in terms of infrastructure, is certainly more advanced than the countryside. In addition,

the habits of village people are different from urban people in terms of using language. Village people tend to use Indonesian and dialects, while urban people are used to using English as their daily language or mixing it with other languages. The last thing is why teaching English is a challenging activity, namely because there are different mindsets in the village community who think English is the language of the upper class so that people who can speak English are considered cool and also smart people. Even though learning English is a necessity to support the future and keep up with the current development in this increasingly advanced and modern era.

Students, especially young learners, easy to feel bored and also distracted is a normal condition. Then, the differences in habits, environment, and mindset also affect the level of students' ability to learn English vocabulary. Therefore, media is needed to attract their attention so that learning vocabulary can run well and be conducive. Playing game is one of the methods to develop students' vocabulary mastery (Megawany, 2020). Games are fun and help the students improve vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and the four skills in English, namely speaking, reading, listening, and writing. The purpose of using games in the learning process is to make learning seem fun and the application of different media in learning new vocabulary. According to Handayani&Zaharani, (2021), when education and games are combined, it can be educative and can be entertaining for education environment. The point is vocabulary and games combined have benefits for the students. The students

can enjoy to learn vocabulary and are very enthusiastic, and this can attract students' motivation to learn vocabulary.

This research focuses on applying the Spelling Bee Game to teach vocabulary to young learners. A Spelling Bee is a type of competition where participants are required to spell words, and this competition can be held at any level from schools to the national level (Ningrum&Pusparini, 2020). Spelling Bee is a simple media to teach vocabulary to young learners. Spelling Bee is a simple education game to spell English vocabulary. The purpose of Spelling Bee is to help students to improve their spelling, increase their vocabulary, and also develop correct English usage (Pratiwi et al., 2021).

According to Rohmawati, (2015), Uranga (2003), spelling bee game is a competition when a competitor who spells the word wrongly will be eliminated. Here, the students get several clues to answer or spell words correctly, such as alternative pronunciation, types of words like noun, adjective or verb. Spelling bee game is a competition that is usually performed by children.

Some researchers have applied Spelling Bee game to teach vocabulary. The previous study (Ningrum&Pusparini, 2020) found that teaching English through Spelling Bee game gave positive changes to students' attitudes and habits. The implementation of Spelling Bee game makes students pay more attention, be active, have abilities, and are motivated in learning English. The management of teacher activities gave encouraged influenced students to motivate them in learning English. The other research (Navaratna

et al., 2022) shows that using the Spelling Bee game is effective. Then, the other research (Yusuf et al., 2017) found that the use of Spelling Bee game in the classroom improved the students' English vocabulary. This game has helped students improve their vocabulary mastery in English by learning in a fun and interesting way. The results of the previous study showed that spelling bee game has a positive impact on students' vocabulary.

In general, the Spelling Bee Game is a competition to spell words in front of an audience which is usually done by children, especially elementary school-age children. In the Spelling Bee competition, there are people who read the word and the children must spell the word individually. However, in an increasingly advanced era, technology is also developing rapidly. There is a new way to play the Spelling Bee Game, namely by using an application that can be downloaded on the gadget. By using the Spelling Bee Game application, there is no longer a need for speakers to read out the vocabulary. Students simply press the word it would sound automatically, and students only need to write down what letter is missing in the word.

The Spelling Bee Game application is a new breakthrough for learning vocabulary in a more modern way, according to the times, and of course up to date for the current generation. As already explained that children of primary school age are the age of playing and learning, besides that students get bored easily and are easily influenced by their surroundings.

Based on the problems and challenges in the teaching and learning process above, the researcher designing classroom action research (CAR). The

researcher uses classroom action research because this research is intended to solve the problem and improve the performance of the learning process in the classroom. The researcher uses Spelling Bee game (*application*) as the media for teaching vocabulary to the fourth-grade students. It may help the teacher to teach vocabulary and improve students' performance, comprehension and interest. Spelling Bee game gives chances for students to get new vocabulary. It also makes students learn something new in the classroom. Especially, for students who are in rural areas, where they can learn English vocabulary in a modern way, up to date, interesting, fun way, and only using gadgets. This is as explained above, that for rural communities, English is not important so of course parents do not have the initiative to provide English courses to their children. So that the only way for students to learn English is from school. Moreover, researcher thought that Spelling Bee game is an effective and interesting way to teach vocabulary to elementary school students who are in rural areas because they only need a gadget to learn English vocabulary. Therefore, the researcher argued that the Spelling Bee game media positively impacts students' vocabulary mastery. The researcher focuses on implementing the Spelling Bee game (*application*) for teaching vocabulary to the fourth-grade students of SDN 1 Jetak in the Academic Year 2022/2023.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the research background, the researcher identified several problems. Students between 5 to 12 years old or young learners get bored easily

in learning English language. They are also easily affected by the situation around them. They would get bored with conventional media. They need a new way of learning English media to increase their interest in learning. Teaching vocabulary to young learners should be fun and also creative. Learning media is important because it shows whether the material being studied by the teacher can be accepted or not by students in the class. Finally, teachers would implement appropriate and up-to-date media to teach vocabulary to young learners.

The researcher found vocabulary problems faced by students of SDN 1 Jetak in the Academic Year 2022/2023. Fourth-grade students at SDN 1 Jetak prefer to play than studied English, get bored easily in learning English, most of students have not been able to write vocabulary correctly because there is still a shortage of letters when writing vocabulary and the learning media used by the teacher was just textbook. Then, other problems found by the researcher were the lack of awareness of parents, the economic condition of students' parents, and the lack of support from students' environment to learn English. Parents of students think that learning English is not important so parents do not have the initiative to take their children to English courses outside of school. So, the fourth graders at SDN 1 Jetak's only way to learn English during English lessons in class. This is what adds the problem why children cannot write English vocabulary correctly. Therefore, the new learning media are needed to increase students' enthusiasm, students' comprehension and also students' interest in learning English, especially vocabulary lessons. With this

problem, the researcher thinks that the Spelling Bee game has the potential to become a media in teaching English to fourth-grade students who are categorized as young learners.

C. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problems, the researcher makes limitations to get an in-depth investigation. It is limited to investigate the application of Spelling Bee Game to teach vocabulary to the fourth-grade students of SDN 1 Jetak in the Academic Year 2022/2023. The researcher investigates the students' responses toward Spelling Bee Game to teach vocabulary. It also investigates the parents' strategies to develop English skill of fourth-grade students of SDN 1 Jetak in the Academic Year 2022/2023.

D. Statement of the Problem

1. How is the application of Spelling Bee Game (*application*) to improve students' vocabulary mastery for the fourth-grade students of SDN 1 Jetak in the Academic Year 2022/2023?
2. How are the students' responses toward Spelling Bee Game application to teach vocabulary to fourth-grade students of SDN 1 Jetak in the Academic Year 2022/2023?
3. How are the parents' strategies to develop English Skill of fourth-grade students of SDN 1 Jetak in the Academic Year 2022/2023?

E. Objectives of the Research

Based on the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study are:

1. To describe whether the Spelling Bee Game application can improve students' vocabulary mastery for the fourth-grade students of SDN 1 Jetak in the Academic Year 2022/2023.
2. To know the students' responses toward Spelling Bee Game application to teach vocabulary to the fourth-grade students of SDN 1 Jetak in the Academic Year 2022/2023.
3. To know the parents' strategies to develop English Skill of fourth-grade students of SDN 1 Jetak in the Academic Year 2022/2023.

F. Significances of the Research

1. Theoretically

This research is expected to contribute to the development of knowledge in the field of education as a reference in conducting similar research on Spelling Bee Game.

2. Practically

- a. English Teachers

This research's results can be used as a reference for vocabulary teaching media. Moreover, it also helps the teacher to implement the new technology for teaching vocabulary.

b. The Students

For the students, this research is also beneficial. This application can create good vocabulary learning to develop their vocabulary mastery.

c. The Institution

This research can be a source of information for the school to improve the teaching media, especially in teaching vocabulary to elementary students.

d. Other Researchers

For other researchers, this research can be used as a reference who have the same interest in teaching vocabulary.

