ENHANCING THE STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY
IN THE FIRST-GRADE FISHERY MAJOR
OF SMKN 1 BAKUNG BLITAR
THROUGH WORD SEARCH GAMES (WSG)

THESIS

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THESIS
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ABSTRACT

The hardest obstacle faced by EFL students in Indonesia is mastering vocabulary (Sujadi and Wulandari, 2021). The students struggle to comprehend the reading text, speak English effectively and consistently using the same phrases, and their interactions are frequently interrupted due to missing words. The fundamental source of these issue is a less of vocabulary.

The students on fisheries in the first grade at SMKN 1 Bakung considered English to be a challenging subject due to lack of vocabulary. Learning English vocabulary was complicated regarding word meaning, pronunciation, and searching for synonyms and antonyms. To determine the most effective method for teaching vocabulary, this research aims to find out the use of Word Search Games (WSG) enhances the students' vocabulary mastery in the first-grade fishery major of SMKN 1 Bakung Blitar.

This study uses a Classroom Action Research (CAR) with the steps namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting to learn how to word search activities can help students improve their vocabulary mastery in determining the synonyms and antonyms of words of recount text. The research is conducted at SMKN 1 Bakung Blitar. The research session is in even semester in the academic year of 2021/2022. One cycle consists of four meetings. Each meeting will last for 45 minutes because of the implementation of "PTM terbatas". When the cycle meets the success criteria, it will end. The research subject is the first-grade fishery major consisting of 24 male students.

The data collection involved a number of instruments namely vocabulary test and observation sheet. The study's findings provided numerical and verbal data. The numerical data was the vocabulary test results. To analyze the numerical data, the researcher compared the test results to the predetermined success criteria for analysis. Using WSG to increase students' vocabulary knowledge was judged to be effective if 75% of students received a score of 65 on a test. Whilst, verbal data was gathered by the researcher from observations of students' activities and the

classroom environment during the teaching-learning process. This data was examined using descriptive qualitative analysis.

As part of the WSG implementation, the teacher gave a broad topic overview, organized groups, distributed recount passage and printed WSG. The students took sticky notes off a whiteboard. The student's goal is to search up the synonyms and antonyms on printed WSG. Each group should present their finding to the class as a whole. Following the presentation, the students swapped the work from each group. Each student would get a list of vocabulary from the material discussed, including synonyms and antonyms.

Based on observations of students' vocabulary test scores, the mean is improved from cycle to cycle. The different scores mean between the two cycles is 4.5. Cycle 1, the average score is 63.4 which reveal that 12 children (or 50% of pupils) still obtain a score of 65 or higher. However, in cycle 2, the average rise of 67.9. Seventy-nine percent of pupils achieved a score of 65 or above. It implies that students may be able to meet the success criteria.

Suggestions proposed for students to expand their vocabulary by playing word search or other word games. Moreover, for teachers, it was suggested that word search games (WSG) be used as an alternative to other methods of teaching English vocabulary by English teachers. Lastly, for further research, the following study will conduct this strategy's effectiveness compared to other research approaches. Additionally, future studies will test this tactic in different lessons. Consequently, the success of the WSG plan will be known not only in English lesson but also other subjects.
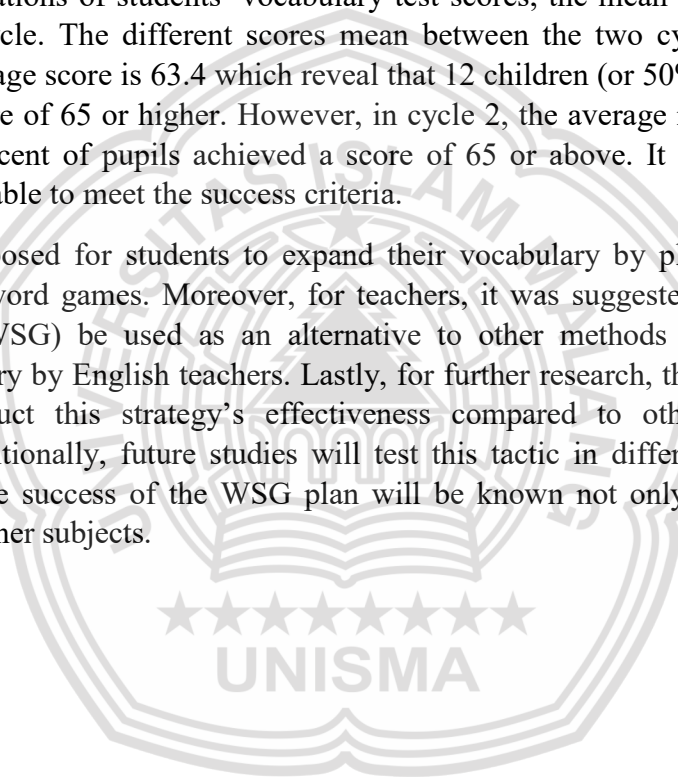
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the information related to the research being undertaken. It consists of background of the study, research problem, research objective, significance of study, scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The hardest obstacle faced by EFL students in Indonesia is mastering vocabulary. The students struggle to comprehend the reading text, speak English effectively and consistently using the same phrases, and their interactions are frequently interrupted due to missing words. The fundamental source of these issue is a less of vocabulary (Sujadi and Wulandari, 2021). Furthermore, communication is frequently affected by vocabulary issues. When the person talking does not utilize the appropriate words, communication will come to a halt (Nurjanah, 2018). Because students should memorize unfamiliar words and spelling, many students find vocabulary learning to be monotonous when studying EFL (Muhanna, 2012).

Students experienced similar issues at SMKN 1 Bakung, especially those focusing on fisheries in first grade. They considered English to be a challenging subject as well. According to the findings of some students' interviews, they had much trouble with this lesson. The Covid-19 pandemic required that the students completed their coursework online. They acknowledged that they were unable to apply this lesson fully. They must assist their parents at work. Therefore, they did

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not have much free time for studying. Additionally, they lacked the learning tools they would need to support their online study, including books, modules, or English dictionaries. WhatsApp groups were the only place where materials or assignments were communicated, and no further English-language resources were provided. Finally, they admitted that learning English vocabulary was complicated regarding word meaning, pronunciation, and searching for synonyms and antonyms.

The outcomes of the midterm exam served to emphasize the students' difficulties in learning English. With an English score more significant than the KKM *(Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal)*, which is 65, only 31% of students passed the midterm. And the remaining 69% did not get a higher score than the KKM. According to their interviews, some students struggled with the midterm exam. They had a limited vocabulary of English. As a result, they selected their responses hastily. They admited that their main difficulty in learning English for speaking, listening, reading, and writing was a lack of vocabulary.

Several factors could bring on the issue of students' limited vocabulary. First, the teacher did not use media during lessons to help students learn English. The teacher primarily used the board and worksheets, but she also allowed students to copy and remember challenging terms from the text. In addition, students quickly lost track of learnt vocabulary. Moreover, the teacher did not emphasize the importance of students carrying an app-based dictionary with them at all times. Students were not actively involved in the instructional technique being used, which supported the students' enhanced vocabulary. The focus of

teachers' teaching strategies was still on the teacher. Most of the time, students only attended class to hear the teacher explain things. Students consequently experienced reluctance to attend English classes even though face-to-face learning began in September 2021. Lastly, the duration of learning, which only lasts 45 minutes because of the implementation of PTM *(Pertemuan Tatap Muka Terbatas)*, makes students less optimal in learning in class.

With such problem, a teacher must seek for an appropriate strategy in teaching vocabulary. There are myriad strategies to develop the vocabulary skill. There are numerous options, strategies, activities, and practice that may be utilized to teach vocabulary, but teachers must determine which ones are appropriate for their students and situations (Taheri, 2014). DeMarco (2021) went on to say that while deciding which approach to utilize, the teacher should consider whether the technique meets the objectives, maintains the learner's interest and passion, and is appropriate for all sorts of students.

Game experience is a popular approach that make students become immersed in the study of a foreign language. Games are highly motivating due to their amusement and interest (Alevli, 2020). Nguyen and Khuat in Ramadhaniarti (2016) feel that students prefer to learn a language in an informal environment, such as through vocabulary games. Further, it was discovered that digital and online-based games can be applied in the school for vocabulary learning and that they might be excellent methods for improving students' vocabulary (Şimşek and Direkci, 2019). According to Harmer in Vossoughi, Hossein, and Zargar (2009),

games provide learners with an ambition, motivating them to participate in the process of acquiring vocabulary and to repeat it with excitement.

In research finding conducted by Kalyuga, Mantai, and Marrone (2013) they stated that the usage of online activities is seen as a significant strategy in aiding pupils' memorization of new terms. They combine a variety of multimedia features that are critical for vocabulary acquisition. This is in line with Ashraf, Motlagh, and Salami (2014), the results of their study show that online games can help with vocabulary acquisition. In a fun environment, the students can easily compete and cooperate with one another.

According to the idea, learning vocabulary through games is an effective and engaging method used in any EFL classroom to make language sessions more appealing for students. To determine the most effective method for teaching vocabulary, this research aims to employ Word Search Games (hereafter WSG) to help students overcome their difficulties in mastering vocabulary in first grade majoring in fisheries.

What makes this research different from others is that WSG can be developed as a teaching strategy and a medium for enhancing vocabulary mastery. The game in this research will be online-based and will consider various factors. First, students spend much time on their cell phones because of the implementation of online learning. Students can use their cellphones for more than just online learning; they can also utilize them for enjoyment, such as playing games. Finally, the research adopts a game-based strategy to make it easier for students to master vocabulary.

1.2 Research Problem

Based on the background information provided above, this study focuses on the following issue namely: How is the use of Word Search Games (WSG) to enhance the students' vocabulary mastery in the first-grade fishery major of SMKN 1 Bakung Blitar?

1.3 Research Objective

To answer the research problem above, the purpose of the study is as follows: To find out the use of Word Search Games (WSG) enhances the students' vocabulary mastery in the first-grade fishery major of SMKN 1 Bakung Blitar.

1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The focus of this research is to see if using WSG may help students enhance their vocabulary mastery, mainly by knowing synonyms and antonyms of the words in recount text. The study involved 24 students from SMKN 1 Bakung's first-grade fishery major. This research period will last for one semester.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation in interpreting this study, the researcher gives a detailed explanation of the primary terminology used in it, as follows:

1.5.1 Vocabulary Mastery

The researcher defined vocabulary mastery as mastery of word meaning as measured by knowing the synonyms and antonyms of the words. The researcher is interested in the words in the recount text. Synonyms are considered as a group of words from the same language that have the same or a meaning that is very similar to it. Whilst, antonyms mean a term with the inverse meaning.

1.5.2 Recount Text

Recount text is one of the basic competence given to students in the tenth grade of vocational high school. Recount texts in English that describe an action or activity by the author or one of the story's characters. Recount texts frequently have two goals: to inform and amuse the reader. The movement or action in question is the author's experience as expressed in the text.

1.5.3 Word Search Games (WSG)

WSG is a game that help the students enhance their vocabulary by searching the hidden words. The words will be written horizontally, vertically, and diagonally. This game helps to engage students in active learning. The teacher will be a facilitator, and the teaching will be student-centered. The students will then actively participate in education by discussing and collaborating with their groups to hunt for concealed words. In addition, students learning vocabulary will benefit from word-search puzzle games, in which they can learn terms and use them to look up information or guess the meaning of unfamiliar words.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

6.1   Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion from the previous session, it can be inferred that teaching vocabulary through word search games (WSG) can assist students in the first-grade fishery major at SMKN 1 Bakung Blitar enhance their vocabulary mastery.

The WSG implementation (appendix 3, page 44) is as follows: as part of apperception, the teacher showed some pictures or photos (appendix 4, page 45-46) related to historical events, the battle of Surabaya and the character involved namely Bung Tomo. The teacher delivered questions such as "Do you know who he is?" What is the war about?" When did it happen?". Furthermore, the teacher gave a broad topic overview mainly historical recount by explaining the slides of power point (appendix 5, page 47-54).

The following action was to organize groups. The groups were divided based on the students' abilities. The students with better abilities were spread equally throughout all groups to serve as peer tutors for other friends struggling in class. The teacher then gave each group a copy of the recount section (appendix 6, page 55-56) and printed WSG (appendix 8, page 59-63). The printed WSG is a square sheet with letter-filled tiny boxes. There are words concealed in these letters that can be found diagonally, vertically, and horizontally. The recount passage that has been shared has the words that are hidden.

Afterwards, the students took three sticky notes off a whiteboard. The sticky notes (appendix 7, page 57-58) contained a number of the recount's difficult words. Based on the sticky notes they have selected, the student's goal is to search up the terms' synonyms and antonyms on printed WSG. Each group should present their finding to the class as a whole. Following the presentation, the students swapped the work from each group. Each student would get a list of vocabulary from the material discussed, including synonyms and antonyms.

At the end of the class, the teacher reviewed the lesson by giving questions such as, "What have you learnt?", "Do you enjoy when doing printed word search games?", "What is your difficulty today?" etc. For practicing at home, the teacher gave the students URL of word search games wordwall.net/resource/33861592. Then, the teacher closed the lesson.

6.2 Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study, the authors provide the following suggestions for enhancing students' vocabulary mastery:

6.2.1 For students

Students are expected to expand their vocabulary by playing word search or other word games. It is thought that playing while learning may help students become more motivated to learn.

6.2.2 For teachers

It was suggested that word search games (WSG) be used as an alternative to other methods of teaching English vocabulary by English teachers. It was one of the vocabulary-teaching techniques used to keep kids interested in learning English.

6.2.3 For further research

The following study will conduct this strategy's effectiveness compared to other research approaches. Additionally, future studies will test this tactic in different lessons. Consequently, the success of the WSG plan will be known not only in English lesson but also other subjects.
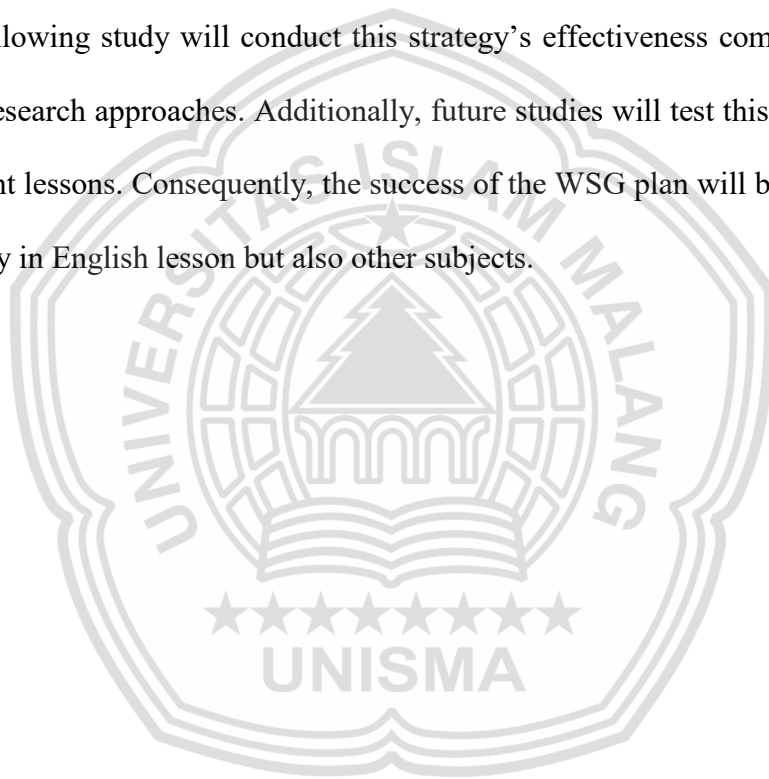
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