

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter has an introduction and background section of the study. This section explains various supporting things, including why the researcher is interested in making the topic a learning approach using the Word Search Puzzle game method for vocabulary size. In addition to explaining the reasons for the research, this first chapter also contains research questions followed by the objectives of this current research and the significances. At the end, the organization of the chapter is also presented.

Background of the Study

In learning English, vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of learning a language. A student needs to learn vocabulary to communicate with others. Vocabulary is defined as the knowledge of words and their meanings. The importance of vocabulary acquisition should also be considered. Developing a strong command of vocabulary is essential for English proficiency. Acquiring English language skills, particularly vocabulary, is crucial for enhancing listening, reading, speaking, and writing abilities. By mastering vocabulary, improving ability to communicate with others is easier (Zulfira Pane, 2019).

In certain level, for instance, vocabulary size in Junior high school, is lacking. Many students are not interested in learning English because they experience difficulties learning to gain English vocabulary. Research by Rahayuningsih et al. (2022) revealed that the problems arose because students were not interested in the standard tools usually used in learning English and

needed more motivation. Students still find it difficult to remember unfamiliar words. In different setting, students easily forgot unfamiliar words given by the teacher and were not enthusiastic about learning vocabulary because they had to memorize many words themselves (Pandiangan et al., 2018).

There are various methods for delivering materials in the teaching process. One of which is Game-based learning. The term "game-based learning" refers to the process of accomplishing specified learning objectives using game materials. It plays and enhances knowledge by incorporating problem-solving spaces and challenges that provide a sense of accomplishment to learners who are also players in the game-based learning teaching method (Krath et al., 2021). Furthermore, Purba and Katemba, (2022) stated that Game-Based Learning is a game intentionally designed for educational purposes to support learning media. Since, games always bring joy and hold students' attention more than teachers provided learning materials, students can get materials quickly. One of the most important benefits of using game-based learning in the educational process is providing students with sufficient and lasting motivation (Goumas et al., 2020). In relation with motivation, Krath et al. (2021) said that game-based learning is becoming popular among teachers because of the practical and motivational outcomes. Therefore, the teacher places a significant emphasis on factors that motivate students to participate in the learning process.

Word search puzzle is one of game-based learning tools, where players are given clues and word counts. As mentioned by Dahlia (2023) that word search puzzles are an effective educational tool for defining terms, spellings, key

concepts, and related name combinations, leading to better retention and memory of facts. The word search puzzle educational game consists of letters arranged in a grid. It is designed to help students find the listed words in any direction, for example, horizontal, vertical, diagonal, forward, or backward (Maylani et al., 2021a). In short, a word search puzzle is a game where one must locate words by forming a straight line within a grid.

The use of game tools in language learning is appropriate. As Goumas et al. (2020) also stated that in native and foreign language learning, educational games have been generalized. One of the games that can be used is a word search puzzle. Word search puzzles is a game that combines teaching student's definitions with giving students experiences in writing words which are a practical part of memorizing vocabulary (Rahayuningsih et al., 2022).

Based on observations conducted at the junior high school, the researcher realized that almost all students did not know basic vocabulary and had difficulty learning English. The way that can be done to increase students' interest in gaining vocabulary size is by using games, one of which is puzzle games. Using word search puzzles in class makes students active learners. It also encourages students to be disciplined about their assignments and to develop a deeper understanding of the material, thus making them more independent (Pandiangan et al., 2018). With the support of the effectiveness of using word search puzzles, the researcher chose the word search puzzle game to gain the vocabulary size of junior high school students. Therefore, the purpose of this current research is to find out whether the

word search puzzle game significantly affects the vocabulary mastery of junior high school students or not.

Identification of the Problem

The level of interest among junior high school students in Indonesia towards learning English is still in need of improvement. Despite students' familiarity with the English language, there is still a need for improvement in their vocabulary skills. Middle school students typically possess limited knowledge of English vocabulary and encounter challenges in both pronunciation and written expression. Teachers and principals share similar feelings. They believe that junior high school students continue to lack sufficient interest and encounter challenges in learning the English language.

Based on the previous researcher's explanation and the results of the researcher's observation experience regarding the difficulties of junior high school students related to vocabulary learning, it can be concluded that three things become the main problem in the vocabulary size of junior high school students. The first problem is that students have difficulty memorizing the vocabulary they have learned. This factor is present and subsequently leads to other issues. For instance, students' lack of interest hinders their motivation to study diligently and acquire a strong command of vocabulary. Second, the student's English vocabulary is still lacking. This problem makes it difficult for students to speak English. The last problem is the class learning process, which is considered boring for junior high school students. Students want interesting and fun vocabulary learning tools.

Therefore, the problems must be addressed in depth to find the effectiveness of appropriate learning tools. Looking for vocabulary size learning tools that can make junior high school students enthusiastic and easily memorize English vocabulary as well as being able to pronounce and write English vocabulary is necessary. Consequently, teachers are expected to be able to make innovations that can make the class active in learning English subjects. Fitria, (2023) explained that students actively participate in word search puzzles from the moment the learning activities start. Pupils are encouraged to engage in mental and physical learning processes throughout the whole learning process. Students will experience a more enjoyable environment and maximize learning results. Thus, this study seeks to determine the impact of the word search puzzle game on the vocabulary size of junior high school students.

Delimitation of the Research

This study focuses on the effectiveness of the word search puzzle game on the vocabulary size of junior high school students and whether the word search puzzle can significantly gain junior high school students' interest in learning English. This research conducted at one of junior high schools in Bantul, Yogyakarta. The research developed its vocabulary size test regarding the chapter material "What are you doing?" in the English book "When English Rings a Bell." The results of the vocabulary size test have shown the effectiveness of the word search puzzle game in gaining vocabulary size for eighth-grade students.

Research Question

Based on the background above, the research formulates two research questions as follows:

1. How is the vocabulary size of eighth-grade students before applying the learning method using the word search puzzle game?
2. How is the vocabulary size of eighth-grade students after applying the learning method using the word search puzzle game?
3. Is there any significant effectiveness between the students' vocabulary size before and after the use of word search puzzle?

The Objective of the Research

Based on the research question above, the objectives of this current research are presented as follows:

1. To find out the vocabulary size of eighth-grade students before applying the learning method using the word search puzzle game.
2. To find out the vocabulary size of eighth-grade students after applying the learning method using the word search puzzle game.
3. To find out whether there is any significant effectiveness between students' vocabulary size before and after the use of word search puzzle.

The Significance of the Research

This research is expected to provide students, teachers, and future researchers with benefits and knowledge. The details significances are presented below.

Student

This research helps increase student activity in participating in English language learning. In addition, this research is also helpful for students to gain more vocabulary size.

Teacher

This research is also conducted to provide benefits for teachers in general, especially English teachers. Teachers can find out various activities or strategies that can be done to increase junior high school student's interest in learning English, especially to gain vocabulary size. Furthermore, by using word search puzzles as a teaching tool in the classroom, teachers can also find out in more detail the vocabulary ability of each student. In addition, it can assist in learning context clues.

Future researchers

Future researchers in the same field can use this research as a reference. This research also can add to the knowledge of further researchers about the same Teaching Methodology and Approach taking the word search puzzle game field.

Organization of the Research

This research consists of five chapters. Each chapter will discuss the background of the research, theory, methodology, research results, and conclusions.

The first chapter discusses why this research needs to be carried out. In addition to discussing the existing problems, the challenges and objectives of the research are explained in chapter one.

Chapter two is a literature review. It defines vocabulary, then mastery in vocabulary size. Besides that, an explanation of the characteristics of junior high school students. Then regarding the learning method using the game. Definition of word search puzzle. Further description regarding the effect of using the word search puzzle game. Also, the elaboration of theories related to research is also presented.

Chapter three is about methodology. This chapter describes how the researcher will conduct research. This chapter describes data collection methods, tools, participants, attitudes, and techniques. This chapter also describes how the researcher analyzed the data.

Chapter four of this study describes the results of the research data that has been found. Related to student vocabulary size before and after treatment, then the results of hypothesis testing, and discussion related to the results that have been processed.

Chapter five discusses the conclusions of the entire research that has been carried out. Then, recommendations from researchers to provide an overview for

each party related to research in the word search puzzle field are also explained in chapter five.