CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Vocabulary mastery is one of the important aspects in learning foreign languages. In order to communicate well in a foreign language, one should have enough vocabulary and knows how to use them correctly. Vocabulary is one of the elements that cannot be separated from language learning as it links the four language skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Vocabulary has also been important issue both for teachers and students in learning a foreign language. One's comprehension on a text either written or spoken will be highly depended on his/her level of vocabulary mastery. If he has sufficient numbers of vocabulary, he will easily comprehend the points either what writer delivers in a written text or messages delivered in spoken texts. Otherwise, s/he will not understand anything. Allen (1999:1) states that we know what we want to say but often struggle to find just the right words. Therefore, vocabulary mastery has become one of the indications to measure one's depth of knowledge. As stated by Wilkins (1972:111), without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. This statement also in line with Krashen who comments that learners do not carry grammar books in their pockets, but they carry dictionaries. Conventionally, vocabulary teaching is conducted by introducing students to new words found in a text by giving them list of new words provided by the meaning in their native language. Teachers then give students time to memorize the words. After a while, teachers check their understanding by asking

them to perform the vocabulary again or by asking the meaning of the vocabulary they have just learnt.

However, vocabulary is not a specific subject taught in the class. Vocabulary teaching is not included in the curriculum. Thornburry (2002:13) has commented that vocabulary teaching has not always been very responsive and teachers have not fully recognized the tremendous communicative advantage in developing an extensive vocabulary. In the teaching and learning process, vocabulary teaching is usually inserted in the teaching of language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading or writing. During the teaching, teachers usually introduce students to new words they might find in text then they give the meaning of the words in the students' native language. Therefore, many students think that studying vocabulary is studying list of new words which accompanied by their meaning in the native language. They lack of knowledge how to use the words in the real contexts.

In fact, most of students have realized the importance of vocabulary in learning a foreign language. They also have strategies and ways to enhance the number of vocabulary they have. Usually, they carry a bilingual dictionary anywhere they go. As soon as they meet unfamiliar words, they will look up the new meaning of those words from the dictionary and write them on their notebooks. But after a while, they soon realize that this is not an effective way to improve the number of their vocabulary mastery. Most of the time, students feel bored and frustrated learning this way because they often forget the words as soon as they write them. Sometimes this condition might lead them to the conclusion that they have bad memorizations and this condition is concern to lead them to lose motivation. Allen (1999:2) commented that teaching vocabulary in the traditional way which is often assumed as *assign, define* and *test* do not increase students' speaking, reading and writing language anymore than looking words up in the dictionary.

Students seldom gain enough in-depth word knowledge which resulting difficulty in integrating the words into their spoken or written language. Thus, it can be concluded that dictionary and memorization are not a recommended way to learn vocabulary.

The practice of teaching vocabulary which typically done in many schools also make students do not have creativity and initiatives. Mostly, Students only ask teachers to provide the meaning of unfamiliar words found in a text. They wait for teachers to control the lesson by providing the meaning of the words and write them on their notebooks or to use them to complete their exercises. As a result, students can only use the word in the exact form they have taught and not knowing how to use them in different contexts in the real life communication.

Moreover, Bromley (2008:81) emphasizes the important of enhancing vocabulary by relating to school achievement. He states that inadequacy of vocabulary knowledge is the main cause of students' failure in language learning.

It can be revealed by the candidate students who took the admittance test at STMIK Potensi Utama, which is considered low as presented in Table 1.1:

	INFORMATICS ENGINEERING			INFORMATION SYSTEM			INFORMATICS MANAGEMENT			
	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D
The Average Vocabulary Scores	48	52	60	44	48	70	60	56	40	52

Table 1.1 The Average of Students Admittance Test Vocabulary Scores

From Table 1.1, it can be explained that there are ten parallel classes of 2013/ 2014 Academic year at STMIK POTENSI UTAMA which divided into three study programs, they are: informatics engineering, information system and informatics management. The average scores of vocabulary test for each class is obtained by divided the total scores of vocabulary obtained by the total number of the students.

Teachers should not only feel responsible for the use of language, but also feel compelled to focus on vocabulary study so that students are exposed to rich, expressive language in which they can use variety of sentence structures, asks questions, makes up stories and talk enthusiastically about what they see and do. Therefore, effective learning strategies and media should be thought to provide students with successful vocabulary mastery.

The implementation of technology is widely believed to help teachers can create conducive and motivating learning environment in classrooms. Computers as the integral parts of technology have developed significantly either the hardwares or softwares since their first

appearance. The price of computers which are getting reachable have also become the consideration and interests for those who are interested in finding better and effective way to improve the quality of education.

The development of computer softwares is indicated by the emergence of many software developers which design and create computer applications for various purposes in many different fields. In the field of teaching and learning English, there are many interactive application programs that can be used to improve the four language skills, like listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Games as one of the computer applications are informally considered as the entertaining media for leisure time activities. But games can also be used for educative purposes and the media to promote students' knowledge. In language teaching, games have often been used to stimulate students' motivation and interest as games are fun challenging .It is in line with Shaffer (2006:6) who stated that games help create and support children's interests.

Therefore, the role of games in teaching and learning vocabulary cannot be denied. However, in order to achieve the most from vocabulary games, it is essential that suitable games are chosen. Whenever a game is to be conducted, some factors such as the number of students, proficiency level, timing, learning topic and the classroom settings are the factors that should be taken into account.

Sheng-Hue Hsu et al (2009) defined computer vocabulary games as the games which are specifically designed for the educational purpose. These games are created for enhancing students' vocabulary mastery. There is various vocabulary games have been created by software developers. They are sold either at computer stores or can be downloaded free from the internet. The types of the computer vocabulary games that will be used are called Jeopardy Betting game,

Hidden Pictures game. These are interactive fun games that can make students compete in a challenging, motivating and friendly atmosphere. This game can be used for practicing English vocabulary as it will have students to recall the vocabulary they have learnt and also introduce them to the new ones. Moreover, students' vocabulary mastery will be enhanced as teacher and students will make a discussion on the words found after the game is played.

Generally, board games are not only defined as the games which are played on the board, but also the games that designed on paper which related to the material taught. Some of the most popular board games are scrabble, taboo, hangman, boggle, balderdash, etc. Most of these games require a subset of the following skills – having a good passive vocabulary, a good active vocabulary, creativity and communication. The type of the board game that will be used in this study is called Football Board Game. The template can be developed and designed with the needs of the learners or the curriculum used. The use of this game can make students communicatively practice while having fun. In this game there are flash cards which contain questions should be answered or tasks should be performed. This game is also adaptable for all levels of students and all class sizes.

Motivation is one of the most significant factors in learning languages. It is also related to students' mastery. Dornyei (1994) states that motivation is one of the main determinants of second or foreign language learning. Students who have high motivation will have better mastery and learn faster if compared with those who have low motivation. Students with high motivation will do strategic actions and are willing to spend more time to do the necessary efforts to achieve their goals.

The source of motivation can be derived from either inside or outside someone. The motivation which is from inside is called Intrinsic motivation. This can be seen when someone

performs something to get pleasure or satisfaction or even to satisfy his/ her curiosity. The motivation which is from outside is called Extrinsic Motivation. This can be seen when someone performs something to get reward (good scores, employment, etc) or to avoid punishments.

Based on this background, the writer is interested in conducting a research and find out the effectiveness of games in improving students' vocabulary mastery.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the background which was given above, this study investigated the use of games and motivation in teaching vocabulary in the classrooms. Based on the notions above, the problems of the study can be formulated as follows:

1. Is the vocabulary mastery of the students taught by using computer vocabulary games higher than the vocabulary mastery of the students taught by using board games?

2. Is the vocabulary mastery of the students who have intrinsic motivation higher than the students who have extrinsic motivation?

3. Is there any significant interaction between games and motivation on the students' vocabulary mastery?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In general, this study aims to obtain the description on the effect of certain games and motivation on the students' vocabulary mastery. In particular, this study aims to explore:

1. The vocabulary mastery of the students taught by using Computer Vocabulary Games is higher than the vocabulary mastery of the students taught by using board games.

2. The vocabulary mastery of the students who have intrinsic motivation is higher than the students who have extrinsic motivation.

3. The interaction between games and motivation on the students' vocabulary mastery.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

Vocabulary is one of the basic elements in mastering language skills. It is almost impossible for students to understand what their teacher explains without having sufficient knowledge of vocabulary. There are a lot of methods/ approaches that can be used in enhancing students' vocabulary. Games as the integral part of communicative language teaching is presumably can improve students' ability in learning languages, especially English. This study focuses on the application of computer vocabulary games and board game to improve students' mastery in vocabulary. Motivation as one of the most significant factors in learning a language can be categorized as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to be useful for English teachers to enhance students' vocabulary mastery and also further researchers who concern with the use of language and teaching and learning research.

This study is expected to provide useful information which has theoretical and practical value for English teachers. Theoretically, the results of this study will enrich what has been found in the area of teaching foreign languages, especially English. Meanwhile, practically, the results of the study will provide information for English teachers to choose the most appropriate media that can be applied in the classroom to enhance students' vocabulary mastery.