

# CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

## A. The Background of the Study

Language plays an important role in human life to communicate, to express the ideas, feeling and desire even spoken and written individually, nationally, and universally. The essence of language is human activity- activity on the part of one individual to make himself understood, and activity on the part of the other to understand what was in the mind of the first. The fundamental function of language is a means of communication.

A study of language includes the four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those skills will be difficult to achieve if vocabulary can't be mastered because vocabulary is one of the basic elements in achieving language skills. In other words, vocabulary as one of the language components and as supporting elements to the mastery of the four skills is very important in learning language.

The statement above reveals that the importance of vocabulary affects the students' mastery of the fourth language skills. In other words, reading, listening, writing and speaking skill cannot be separated from vocabulary.

However, based on the researcher's experience during the Field Experience Practice (PPL) in SMP 1 Berastagi, the vocabulary achievement of students particularly was very poor. It was seen that the students had a poor achievement in vocabulary which result in their poor performance in English language skills. Poor vocabulary achievement of students could also be seen from

the number of vocabularies that they mastered, was very low. Moreover, the junior high school' students should acquire approximately 2.000-3000 words per year, or about 6 to 8 new words per day (Anderson & Nagy, 1992). Poor achievement of English vocabulary caused the students found learning English was hard and unattractive.

Moreover, vocabulary is one of linguistic features, which influences the communicative competence. Carter and Nunan (2001: 42) write the English teachers learn to ignore the significance of vocabulary in their teaching of speaking or communication performance. In fact the use of suitable vocabulary can cancel out structural incorrectness. Based on authenticity, recently methodologist and linguist have increasingly turned their attention to vocabulary, learning stressing, and their importance in language teaching and reassessing some of the ways it is thought and learnt. It means that vocabulary plays a very essential task in language teaching.

Teaching or learning vocabulary is not easy. It constitutes a significant educational enterprise; one must make an effort to understand whole, to repeat, accurately and to use the whole range of known language in conversation or written composition.

However, many English teachers in the schools taught English subject without paying any attention to vocabulary itself. The others fact, the teachers kept teaching and learning as a monotonous process. The teacher spoke formally in front of the class, gave some explanations, read some information from the books, showed the materials and asked the student to translate some text.

It caused the students feel bored. Students did less participation in the class activity and did not have wide chance to call out what they had learnt. These fact influenced students' vocabulary achievement. It can be measured from the indicators of learning and competency standard that students reached in each material. The students' result of reading test in comprehending the text that was given by teacher was bad. Many students failed in answering the questions because their vocabulary achievement was very weak.

Therefore, there must be way out of overcoming this problem. There are many things can be done to solve this problem. One of those things is tic-tac-toe game. Tic-tac-toe game is one of creative technique to attract the students' interest in learning activity. Tic-tac-toe game is one kind of board games. Tic-tac toe is a game that is played on the board, paper, or slate which has a structure that features three rows and three columns each. Then, students are asked to discover a relationship in three lexical items in a diagonal, vertical or horizontal row.

Tic-tac toe game is very useful to attract students' attention in learning and can improve students' vocabulary achievement. Tic-tac-toe game plays an important role in creating an effective teaching learning process. Tic-tac-toe makes students' learning become fun, attractive and enjoyable.

Considering the importance of the above fact, therefore the research is highly motivated in investigating conduct a research on "Improving students' Vocabulary Achievement by Applying Tic-tac-toe Game" in SMP N 1 Payung at eighth grade.

## **B. The Problem of the Study**

In line with the background of the study, the problem of the study is formulated as follows:

Is the students' vocabulary achievement significantly improved by the application of Tic-tac-toe game?

## **C. The Objective of the Study**

In relation to the problem, the objective of the study is to investigate whether the application of Tic-tac-toe game can significantly improve the students' vocabulary achievement.

## **D. The Scope of the Study**

To limit this study the writer only focused on the application of Tic-tac-toe Game in improving students' vocabulary achievement in reading text term which is taken from Junior high School' textbook.

## **E. The Significance of the Study**

Findings of the research are expected to be useful for theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically, the findings are useful to enlarge horizon in the teaching learning process. In addition, the findings can be references for further study.

2. Practically, the findings are expected to give benefit for the teachers, researchers, students, and institution.

- a) For teachers, this finding will be directly help the teachers to apply tic-tac-toe game in teaching learning process.

- b) For researchers, this finding is hopefully can be operated in conducting further research/study for obtaining better result.
- c) For students, it is expected to help the students learn vocabulary in a good and enjoyable way through tic-tac-toe game.
- d) For institution, it can useful to develop the teaching learning technique for increasing motivation in further.