CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the introduction of the research. It tends to provide brief explanation about the whole paper. It is initiated with the background of study, followed by limitation of study, research questions, aims of study, hypothesis, research method, procedure of study, clarification of the terms and ended by organization of the paper.

1.1. Background of The Study

The common stereotype of people about vocabulary is a long list of words from textbooks, spelling word lists, or even the various lists of terms to study for examination only. This circumstance drives many practitioners to use various techniques to teach vocabulary. Normally, flash card becomes favorite technique in mind. No doubt that this comes up to share the common childhood experience of having to “go look up the words in dictionary, write the definition, and then write the sentence using the terms,” but how many of that vocabularies remain unforgettable?

To deal with those unforgettable issues, other techniques come as an alternative. First, it has two main criterion “look and remember” technique. Here, students typically stare at terms and definition, apparently trying to activate their super
memory they wish they had. Another common vocabulary study technique is to do “word-rehearsing.” It is about saying the terms over and over again, usually in the exact language and format in which the definition originally comes.

While both techniques are considerably effective to enhance students’ mastering vocabularies, those techniques are nonetheless a true weakling when compared to others considerably stronger techniques that could be used. These “look and remember” and “word-rehearsing” seems to be seductive strategies as Haycraft (1993) believes that for students, it seems working but only short terms. So that it rarely results in sustained memory of the new terms.

Nevertheless, researchers (Melka, 1995; Nation and Waring, 1995; Nagy, 2005) offer the good way to learn vocabularies. In which it should be taught in a manner that makes the vocabulary meaningful to make it remembered. It can be interpreted that vocabularies should be taught within meaningful context, so the new terms are part of experiences which are meaningful to the students. In other words, the new terms for students to learn are in meaningful context, so that students understand them contextually and have a chance to understand how to put them in different context.

Because of that, the stereotype definition to vocabulary supposed to be changed. It is not only the series of words that should be learnt, but more than that. It is series of words that should be used in context.
An issue rises in its application. Often teachers in secondary schools weekly require students to memorize lists of vocabulary terms. So that the result is students who perform well in memorizing the list is considered that he/she can master the vocabularies. It is believed that their scores in quizzes and unit test are a good reflection of students’ vocabulary skill. Yet the real test is whether they still remember those vocabularies in a few months later? Or can they keep the new term they gained? If the answer is “NO”, then the whole teaching/learning/testing and exercise were largely a waste of time and energy.

Although there are no specific and perfect ways to teach vocabularies to students, still, vocabularies are basic to communication and often seen as problems for foreign language learners. “When students travel, they don’t carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries.” (Krashen, cited from Lewis, 1993). So it can be concluded that efforts to identify and to give another techniques to teach vocabulary are needed, considering how important they are.

Generally, every teaching and learning activity has two main elements; teacher and students (Suherdi, 2009). Because of that, if learning vocabularies becomes a waste of time and energy since students cannot reach learning goal, the analysis will only be narrowed to those elements. It can be inferred from the teacher who teaches or from the students who lose interest in learning vocabularies.
In non-English spoken countries (as, Indonesia), the chance of failure to some extent is higher. Since in Indonesia, learning vocabularies usually takes place only in class during the English lesson, learners have a little time to gain and to practice the new terms they get. This circumstance is quite impossible to eliminate, yet, it can be possibly reduced by taking some considerations to teacher techniques and learning media in the teaching-learning activities (Suherdi, 2009).

By joining a good teacher techniques and learning media, it can create an effective learning that is able to dispel or reduce the failure of vocabulary learning. In this case it is built by creating well-made approaches, well-planned method and well-applied techniques. In addition, this effective learning can stimulate students to become active learners in their own right (Brown, 2001; Cameroon, 2001).

Unfortunately, there is no single formula for giving effective vocabulary teaching and learning, and there is no single ‘right way’ to explain that are high quality vocabulary learning experiences for students (Schmitt, 1993: 27-33).

Furthermore, besides learning media and teacher techniques, students’ motivation, which actually is connected to them, is assumed to be effective to create chance to eliminate the failure of vocabulary teaching. Because of that, to brush up self-motivation, there should be a creative, active, innovative and joyful teaching and learning to motivate learners, to give them exposure in gaining or mastering vocabulary accurately by learners’ own way. Such activity considerably helps students to formulate realistic hypotheses about the nature and limits of cross
linguistic, and becomes more attentive to important categories in the target language vocabularies they learned (Weaver, 1990).

Hence, the effectiveness of learning and teaching is judged not by performance but by outcome (Haycraft, 1993; Brown, 2001; Cameron, 2001.) and the outcome that counts in higher education is the quality of the students vocabulary learning scores that occur. So it can be summarized that effective vocabulary learning is vocabulary learning that is well organized and presented clearly and enthusiastically with variation and students’ involvement and great outcome as the results.

On the other hand, from those three aspects; learning media, teacher techniques, and students’ motivation, it seems that learning media can provide a chance to affect the other two aspects. An attractive, innovative, learning media makes teacher easier to carry out teaching activity. It is also related to students’ motivation. The more interesting the media is the higher motivation of students to learn vocabulary.

In recent time, the use of technology changes students’ mind a lot. This circumstance advances education applications of computer that provide a raid growing resources for language classroom. Because of that, learning language, specifically learning vocabulary, has been developed to take the advantage of
technology to be applied in a language classroom. Hence it creates Computer-Assisted Language Learning or CALL (Beaty, 2003; Egbert, 2005).

In view of facts, CALL provides game as a language learning media. As in Walton (1999) computer game is used to learn the use of language, history, geography, current event, theology, management and math. Another example provided by Palmbreg (1988). Here, the computer game was analyzed to be used as a media to learn foreign-language vocabulary. In a view of those researches, vocabularies can be taught using a computer game.

Furthermore, computer game as a learning media is one way to work out the problems. Game encourages, entertains, teaches and promotes fluency or at least, game is used to show students the beauty of foreign language they learnt, not just a problem that at times seem overwhelming (Uberman, 2007). Computer game is also developmental, educational, social and fun (Walton, 1999).

In particular, in Indonesia, a little work has been carried out on vocabulary mastery using a computer game which is not specified for learning media, since Indonesian researchers still assume that teacher in Indonesia is “non-native” to computer. So, considering how important learning vocabularies for foreign language learners and advancing technology to the classroom activities and also only few researchers in Indonesia are interested to this field. So that, this research
investigates the vocabulary mastery using a computer game as one of the features of Computer-Assisted Language Learning.

Besides that, vocabulary mastery has been developed for traditional classroom type learning and thus need to be reassessed for CALL. It offers the unique advantage of learning, analyzing, and both the development of vocabulary knowledge and usage.

From several reasons in the previous paragraphs, this study investigates the usefulness of a broad range of vocabulary mastery in CALL environment in terms of vocabulary knowledge.

One appropriate computer game is used for this study. The game criteria are based on Gairns and Redman (1986) about visual technique and verbal explanation in learning vocabulary, since the new terms must be defined using language and example which are already familiar to students and that the more ideas form background knowledge with which the students are able to associate them. This chosen game is utilized as a media to learn vocabulary. The game uses as an example to comprehend the effectiveness in regard of learners’ development in mastering vocabularies.

Based on the several reasons in the previous, it is summarized that this study investigates the use of a computer game to enhance students’ ability in mastering
vocabularies. It is assumed that using games in teaching and learning process as a media can help developing students’ ability in mastering vocabularies.

1.2. Limitation of Study

This study only investigated whether a computer game as a feature of CALL is quite effective as a language teaching media to master vocabularies for foreign language learners, in this case, junior high school students, grade 8. It explains how and why by giving appropriate statistical manifest to this study and its interpretations.

1.3. Research Questions

This study aimed to seek the answer of following questions;

1. Does playing computer game improve students’ ability in mastering vocabularies?

2. What are students’ responses toward the game as a media in mastering vocabularies?

1.4. Aims of The Study

Associated with the previous research questions, this research investigated the application of role playing game as one of Computer-Assisted Language Learning feature to enhance students' ability of vocabulary mastery. It tended to seek not only its significant statistically, but also deeper understanding of mastering
vocabulary using game. In addition, the authentic responses of students toward the game to be used as a media in mastering vocabularies were analyzed. This aims of the study are supported by theoretical foundations of vocabulary mastery and the theories of CALL.

1.5. Hypothesis
This research was begun with null-Hypothesis ($H_0$) where both classes conducted; experimental class and control class are similar in the ability level of vocabulary mastery.

$$H_0 : \mu_{\text{experimental}} = \mu_{\text{control}}$$

So, the null hypothesis of this research is playing a computer game cannot develop students’ ability in mastering vocabulary. In other words, there are no significant different between experimental class and control class in mastering vocabulary.

1.6. Research Methods
Some brief explanations of research methodology for this research provides below;

1.6.1. Research design
In general, this research employed a quantitative method of analysis. Some calculations were used in order to seek the significance of the program (game)
affected the students’ vocabulary mastery by analyzing the result of the tests as a quasi-experimental design (Hatch and Farhady, 1982; Hatch and Lazaraton, 1994; Kranszler and Moursund, 1999; Dornyei, 2007). Generally, this quasi-experimental design was used to test the Null Hypothesis \(H_0\); there are no significant different in term of vocabulary scores between the experimental class and the control class.

1.6.2. Settings and Participants

This study worked with forty participants of second grade students represented from one of junior high school students in Pamulihan, Sumedang. They were chosen since they are in the rural area that is presumed quite rare engaging with computer, so that it is assumed that they are interested much to study using computer. This research employs the students and their teacher.

The participants were divided into two classes. Thus, English teacher of those participants was asked to apply the program in English lesson hours.

1.6.3. Data collection techniques

Several data collection techniques were employed to this research to obtain deep and comprehensive analysis;

a. Tests

This study used two tests as instruments. These instruments were used to measure students’ vocabulary development based on the score they got. First is vocabulary
test one as a pre-test. This test comprises 30 items of multiple choices questions which were developed by own. This test was applied to both classes; experimental class and control class.

Second is vocabulary test 2 as a post-test. This test also comprises 30 items of multiple choices questions. This test was applied to both classes after the treatment given to experimental class. In addition, questionnaire and interview were used to gain comprehensive data from respondents.

b. Questionnaire
Questionnaire in this research was used to triangulate data along with the interpretation of the test result. Generally, this questionnaire checked the result of students’ vocabulary development through test from participants’ point of view. This questionnaire also gave the clear reason and explanation how students could learn vocabularies. The questionnaire for this research consists of 15 questions answered by participants. It was given to the participants at the end of the program.

c. Data analysis
Data analysis was needed to gather students’ background score of English. It was generally used to define students’ homogeneity and also in creating instruments as validity and reliability measurement for the pre-test and post-test. This analysis
was used to acknowledge the researcher whether the program is effective to improve participants in mastering vocabulary.

Since this research employed a quasi-experimental design, the result of pre-test was provided as a media to seek the homogeneity of participants using \( t\)-test, (Hatch and Farhady, 1982; Hatch and Lazaraton, 1994; Kranszler and Moursund, 1999; Dornyei, 2007) to compare means of pre-test score to seek whether the participants are homogeneity or not.

Meanwhile, the result of post-test was compared to seek the significant different between two classes. The representative of this design is

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\frac{G_1 (\text{experimental}) \times T_1}{G_2 (\text{Control})} = T_1
\]

Where \( G_1 \) is experimental class, \( G_2 \) is control class, \( x \) is treatment and \( T_1 \) is post-test.

The post-test was analyzed using two-tailed independent \( t\)-test to seek the significance of the program by testing the Null-hypothesis that has been presented above, since independent \( t\)-test aimed to compare two means of different classes (Hatch and Farhady, 1982; Hatch and Lazaraton, 1994; Kranszler and Moursund, 1999; Dornyei, 2007).

1.7. Procedures of The Study

Below were the procedures of this study:

a. Collecting respondents
b. Clustering respondents into experimental class and control class

c. Pre-testing both classes with instruments (vocabularies test 1)

d. Giving treatment to experimental class.

e. Post-testing both classes with instruments (vocabularies test 2)

f. Comparing the data by using independent $t$-test in order to seek out whether the result is significant or not.

g. Giving questionnaire to students in experimental class.

h. Concluding the study.

1.8. Clarification of Terms

• Foreign Language (Cambridge Advance Learners’ Dictionary) Language which belongs or is connected to country that is not yours

• Vocabulary (Oxford Dictionary, 1995) Vocabulary is whole words that are consisted in a language. Words are parts of vocabulary. For instant, when someone masters vocabulary, it means that he/she knows many words and its meaning. So we can say that vocabulary is a list of words which are known by someone or used in particular text.

• Teaching Vocabulary (Nation, 2005) the main issue in teaching vocabulary is that learner only needs to know a few words and small parts of a word that can be dealt with at any one time. Basically, teaching vocabulary means teaching words which are considered as new terms (new words).

• Mastery (Cambridge Advance Learners’ Dictionary) Skilled, talented, able and competent to do something/of something.
• Game (Cambridge Advance Learners’ Dictionary) An entertaining activity
• Computer Game (Cambridge Advance Learners’ Dictionary) A game which is played on a computer, in which the pictures that appear on the screen are controlled by pressing keys or moving a joystick
• Feature (Cambridge Advance Learners’ Dictionary) A typical quality or an important part of something
• Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) (Egbert, 2005). CALL is focused not on technology but on language learning. The word assisted indicates that technology only facilitates the language learning process.
CALL occurs in many contexts and with many diverse participants. Therefore, practitioners need to be prepared to meet a variety of needs.
CALL pedagogy should be grounded in theory and practice from a number of fields, especially applied linguistics, second language acquisition, psychology, and computer science.

1.9. **Organization of The Paper**

**Chapter I Introduction**

This chapter contains Background of Study, Limitation of study, Hypothesis, Research Questions, Aims of Study, Research Method, Clarification of Terms and Organization of the paper.
Chapter II Theoretical Foundations

This chapter includes foundation of theories underneath the study.

Chapter III Methodology

This chapter provides the application of the research, based on the methodology that was explained previously in chapter one.

Chapter IV Finding and Discussions

The result found at chapter 3 is analyzed and discussed in this chapter.

Chapter V Conclusions and Suggestions

The conclusions and suggestions of this study are served in this chapter.