CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Regarding to the following inquiry of this present study, this chapter presents the introduction of this study. The discussion begins with background of the study, statement of the problems, hypothesis, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and definition of the key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

In the learning process, one of the important parts in creating and understanding the language is vocabulary mastery. People cannot express their opinions and ideas in English without knowing their vocabulary. Poor mastery of vocabulary also makes them unable to express their opinions properly.

Vocabulary is one of the essential language components in studying English. It is necessary in the sense that words are the basic building blocks of language, the unit of meaning from which larger structures such as sentences, paragraphs and whole texts are formed. If people have less vocabulary, they cannot only understand others’ saying but also cannot make sentences to transfer their messages to them either, thus they will understand English expressions if they have enough vocabulary. Cameron (2001:72) said, “Building up a useful vocabulary is central to the learning of a foreign language at primary level”. Some students only think of vocabulary learning as knowing the primary meaning of new words, they may recognize a word in the written or spoken from and think
that they already “know the word”, but they may not be able to use the word properly in different contexts.

There are some reasons why vocabulary is necessary to learn. Allen (1997: 149 in Aeni, 2010) says that vocabulary is very important in a language, when we learn a language like English, we learn the words of language. In addition, the vocabulary is needed to master the four skills in English. According to Aleidine (2009), vocabulary is central to the learning and teaching of a second language as it affords learners’ access to all forms of oral and written communication that includes literature, music, and content knowledge. It will help students master the basic skills in English when they improve their vocabulary. In other words, they will be more confident in speaking by using the vocabulary they have mastered.

Vocabulary is a fundamental requirement that influences students’ achievement in studying English. Without vocabulary, there is no written or oral communication which can be conveyed due to the fact that it is important to know what the vocabulary is. The objective of learning vocabulary is to make the students have a good language proficiency in the language skills. It depends on the quality and quantity of the vocabulary that they have mastered. The more the students master a lot of vocabulary, the more they will get better skill that can be reached in using language.

Vocabulary is needed to improve the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed (Thornbury, 2002:13).
When we just learn about grammar without learning vocabulary, we cannot express anything. The linguist Wilkins (1972 in Jun Lin et. al, 2013) sums up the importance of vocabulary learning; he advised to students from a recent course book as follows:

If you spend most of your time studying grammar, your English will not improve very much. You will see most improvement, if you learn more words and expressions. You can say very little with grammar, but you can say almost anything with words! (Thornbury; 2002: 13).

The problems were found when the writer did Internship in SMP Muhammadiyah 06 Dau. Students had poor knowledge of vocabulary mastery. For example, when they found word “bold” and “underline” in a test question, they still asked the teacher about the meaning of the words. On the other hand, when the teacher asked them to transfer the word into Indonesian language, they also could not answer it. Almost all of the students in that class got low scores, under the Minimum Achievement Criterion. It always made the teacher conduct a remedial testing.

There are several problems faced by the seventh grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 06 Dau. The problems are various. Firstly, the students’ enthusiasm and active learning are still not visible. Furthermore, they rarely ask questions although the teacher often requested them to ask if they have problems, and the explanations are not clear or less understood. Moreover, due to the lack of courage to work on and present it in front of the class and being positioned as listeners, they felt bored and not interested in learning vocabulary. Another problem was the lack of the subject matter mastery, especially vocabulary. Lastly,
the learning processes and strategies used by the teacher were still monotonous and less interesting and they had limited facilities to improve their English learning.

This research is conducted in seventh grade. The reason is because teachers still use the same technique and the same strategy in teaching vocabulary. It makes the students uninterested in learning English, because they have limited vocabulary. Moreover, vocabulary lesson should be applied early as a basis for studying other skills.

As a result, most students face difficulties in understanding the meaning of words. It is because students may not know them when they are learning. It is hard for them to understand the lesson well, and they are unmotivated to learn English. Besides, when they try to translate English words into Indonesian language, they attempt to look up the words in the dictionary.

Commonly, the problems are faced by the students because the teacher mostly teaches vocabulary through traditional method. It seems to be a monotonous method because vocabulary is usually taught by memorizing words and drilling pattern so that it might make students bored in learning English. That is why the teaching and learning process in the classroom becomes boring. If this problem comes, the teacher should be creative to teach this subject in various ways and to stimulate learners in order to feel comfortable in the teaching and learning process, especially in understanding the material.

Based upon the previous explanations, one of the problems is that the students still feel bored. Consequently, the writer chooses words clap game as a
medium for teaching English since there are several benefits of using words clap game. For instance, students can improve their vocabulary mastery and try to remember the vocabularies as soon as possible by clapping their hands. The students also can learn vocabularies enjoyably without any boredom. Moreover, this game can build students’ self-confidence because this game is played in groups. The writer expects that by using words clap game, students can memorize new vocabularies easily. Finally, based on the background above, the writer is interested in conducting a research entitled: “Improving Students’ Vocabulary Mastery through Word Clap game at the Seventh Grade Students of SMP 06 DAU.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background above, the research problem is formulated as follows: “Does “word clap” game improve vocabulary mastery of the seventh grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 06 Dau?

1.3 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is stated as follows:

H₀: “Word Clap game does not improve the students’ vocabulary mastery.”

H₁: “Word Clap game improves the students’ vocabulary mastery.”
1.4 Objective of the Study

In accordance with the statement of the problem mentioned previously, the objective of the study is stated as follows: “To investigate whether the use of “word clap’ game improves the vocabulary mastery of the seventh grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 06 Dau.”

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is aimed for English teachers and students. The result of the research is expected to give contribution to the teachers in term of creating a variation of teaching vocabulary mastery, especially by using word clap game.

The result of this research is also expected to give significance to the students. Through the implementation of word clap game, the students are expected to improve their vocabulary mastery within exciting and motivating situation in order that they will perform their speaking by using much vocabulary.

The result of this research is hoped to give input for teachers who use word clap games as a strategy in teaching new vocabulary.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the scope of this research is focused on improving students’ vocabulary mastery through Word Clap game. This research is limited on the seventh grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 06 Dau.
1.7 Definition of the Key Terms

*Vocabulary* is a collection of words or phrases and a list of words in language textbooks, usually alphabetically defined. It is a part of language components (Hornby, 2000: 495).

*Words clap* is a game that uses claps and collaboration with other students. They have to mention a word from a pre-selected lexical set (for example, fruit and vegetable) or every fourth beat. This game is like the champion in the class, someone who can mention more words than the other is the winner (Thornbury, 2002: 102).