

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Background of Study**

Vocabulary is all the words that exist in a language and have an important role in a language. Vocabulary plays an important role in helping someone learn their target language. If the structure of language is the framework of speech, then vocabulary is the organ of life and the body. It is the foundation of language production and one of the elements that support the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) along with structure, pronunciation, and spelling.

It is very important for everyone who learns a language to understand and improve their vocabulary because the more one knows, the better one can understand the meaning of the words (Lelawati et al., 2018). The more a person masters vocabulary, the more confident person will be when speaking in a foreign language.

Vocabulary also plays a vital role in communicative activities as it helps young learners understand the meaning of words. Clear communication is impossible without vocabulary knowledge. Language is a communication tool for everyone to express their intentions and goals. Every country has its language. Therefore, someone cannot interact with the other person unless both parties understand the language in which they communicate. In the Qur'an, Allah has explained the diversity of languages as a tool of human communication, precisely in Q.S. *Ar-Rum*/ 22: 30

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ

لآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

Allah Almighty implies that understanding foreign languages is the initial capital to know each other and establish harmony between nations, especially English, which is widely accessed and studied worldwide. At least for now, a language is a communicative tool to explore knowledge and knowledge and to master a language. It is important to learn vocabulary first as an initial capital for learning a language.

Likewise, teaching vocabulary for young learners. Teaching vocabulary is very important for young learners because without it from an early age, students cannot improve their speaking, reading, and writing abilities in their target language. Teaching vocabulary to young learners early can help them understand the target language when they are already at a high level. According to Priyatni (2019), the primary goal of teaching English in the early grades is to prepare young learners to be ready and confident in learning English at a higher level of education. Teaching English as a foreign language has progressed very early in recent years according to human resource development needs.

In other words, teachers teach English early, hoping students will gain more knowledge and acquire language skills to understand foreign languages better. A teacher must first teach English vocabulary to students as a basic capital in learning English. However, teaching vocabulary to young learners requires

more effort and media because teaching vocabulary is more than just conveying information. Teaching vocabulary with the proper methods and media can help students to understand new words and encourage them to become independent learners.

However, learning vocabulary is not easy for young learners because English vocabulary is often challenging to learn because of the large number of them. Teachers should be more creative in teaching vocabulary to young students. The teacher has to use many teaching methods because the teacher helps students keep them interested and motivated.

Without the right skills, vocabulary learning will be boring, even if the teacher prepares excellent and helpful material for the students. Teachers can use and utilize many teaching media to improve teaching and learning English. The ability of humans to use their minds in doing something is stated in Q.S. *Al-Isra/ 70: 17*.

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ  
كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا

Based on the verse above, it can be concluded that humans are unique living beings. God gives privileges to humans to optimize the potential on land and sea. All resources in the world are solely for human needs in living their lives. Humans are given the ability to take advantage of everything that exists to help their lives. Likewise, teachers must also be able to utilize the mind and everything around them to help students in the teaching process. A teacher is

required to be able to develop and use any method or media in the teaching process optimally.

According to Lelawati et al. (2017), teachers have an important role in teaching vocabulary to young learners. A good method is useless in the hands of a teacher who does not know how to use it, and good teachers will be ineffective if they use inappropriate methods. If an error occurs, the teacher cannot blame the students and introspects themselves because the students' mistakes can sometimes also come from the teacher.

Teaching English vocabulary for young learners is a very complex process. Young learners are easy to learn and understand because they have enthusiasm and interest to learn new things or something they have never encountered. They will feel happy and satisfied when they succeed in learning something new, and the success of learning what they learn depends entirely on the teacher. In short, the success of a foreign language program in elementary schools depends on the teacher and his methods.

Teachers need to know not only the language spoken and the culture expressed in that language but also how that language is taught in schools. In short, the success of foreign language programs in primary schools depends on the teachers and their methods. Teachers need to know the language spoken and the culture in schools.

Suarmita & Fatimah (2019) state that young students learn material designed for their age in elementary school. In elementary school, young learners

encounter the elements of writing for the first time, from forming letters to organizing their ideas to using correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Since it is the beginning of learning a foreign language, teachers and students may face obstacles and problems. Like young learners, they will learn everything from what they see and do. They prefer to play while learning rather than just listening and paying attention.

Based on the researcher's first observation of four elementary schools in Barabai which still teach English to their students, the researcher found that a fourth-grade teacher at Darul Istiqamah Barabai Elementary School used Word Square in teaching English vocabulary. Therefore the researcher was interested in conducting research there because the researcher wanted to know more about the implementation of this game in teaching vocabulary and the teacher's perception of teaching vocabulary using the Word Square game. Therefore, this study focused on the implementation of the Word Square game in teaching English vocabulary for young English learners and the teacher's perception of teaching English vocabulary using the Word Square game.

## **B. Definition of Key Term**

To avoid misunderstanding this research, the researcher provided the key terms to make it easier for readers to understand this study. These are the key terms of this paper:

### **1. Teaching Vocabulary**

In this study, teaching English vocabulary to fourth-grade students of MI Darul Istiqamah was referred to as the process of teaching

vocabulary about the living room and the gardening tools. All the materials taught by a teacher are based on the textbook.

## 2. English Young Learners

The English young learners refer to fourth-grade students at MI Darul Istiqamah Barabai, consisting of fourteen students and they were just learning English at this level.

## 3. Word Square Game

English teachers use the Word Square game for teaching vocabulary about the living room and gardening tools in MI Darul Istiqamah.

## 4. Teacher's Perception

The teacher's perception in this study is a perception that indicates the teacher's positive perception of the implementation of the Word Square game.

### **C. Research Questions**

Based on the background above, the researcher considers the problem are :

1. How is the implementation of the Word Square game in teaching English vocabulary to the fourth-grade students of MI Darul Istiqamah?
2. How is the teacher's perception of the implementation of the Word Square game in teaching English vocabulary for young learners?

### **D. Objectives of Study**

Based on the background above, the researcher considers the objectives of the study are :

1. To describe the implementation of Word Square in teaching vocabulary to the fourth-grade students of MI Darul Istiqamah.
2. To investigate the teacher's perception of the implementation of the Word Square game in teaching English vocabulary for young learners.

#### **E. Significance of Study**

1. The English teachers. They can get new insight and another method of teaching English to young learners. Besides, they can also learn how to implement this method in their class and the inspiration method for mastering vocabulary for EYL.
2. For other researchers, this research could be a reference for searching for a similar topic about teaching English vocabulary games for EYL.