

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

The main topic of this research is about vocabulary because vocabulary is very important for learning language, especially learning English. There are four skills in English lesson: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. All of them are very important especially for students who learn English but the most important thing is vocabulary because without vocabulary, all of those skills are nothing. As Richards (2002) states that to be proficient in vocabulary is a core component that provides many points for how well learners speak, listen, read and write. Therefore, vocabulary is very needed to learn those skills. Wilkins (2002:13) states that without grammar very little to say and without vocabulary nothing to say. It means that vocabulary is more important than grammar because in speaking English even though grammar is not used, people still understand what speakers say but without any vocabulary people cannot understand the conversation.

This research focuses on improving the retention of learning vocabulary. According to Panich (2016), retention is ability to recall or recognize what has been studied or experienced. Retention can be known as memory of human that involves encodes, stores, and retrieves information automatically. It means that retention is very important because people can remember and save information for a long period time.

Based on the preliminary observation at SMP Manggala Pacet, Bandung, most students have low vocabulary mastery. Without vocabulary, they find it difficult to speak English. They also get trouble to read and understand an English text. Not only that, the students also find it hard to write an English text. When they listen to an English explanation, they do not understand the material and just seemed confused.

Moreover, students at SMP Manggala Pacet, Bandung master vocabulary with memorizing technique. Most students feel bored with memorizing technique and some students get hard and stressed in memorization and it makes them not interested in learning vocabulary. As Pinter (2006) states, most students learn and forget new words quickly. Based on the statement, the teacher should improve and change the technique to

make students enjoy during learning English vocabulary and make them remember for a long period time.

Classical music has advantages in lowering stress and improving memory. As Chafin (2004) cited in Fauziyyah (2018) states that more classical music has a greater benefit in lowering the level of stress and improve memory. A research on the selection of the type of music that is heard when working on a math problem, when someone listen this type of classical music's result proved more significantly can lower stress and improve right on the type of memory other music. Another definition is from Medina (2003) cited in Mohammad Alipour (2012) that a wide variety of useful vocabulary items can be acquired through popular songs. It is supported by Murphey (1992) states that using popular songs to teach vocabulary creates endless opportunities for revision which is fundamental for storing the information in the long term memory. Based on the theories above, songs or musics can reduce stress and make students enjoy in learning English vocabulary and save memories for a long period time. Therefore, this research uses English children songs to improve students' retention of English vocabulary is conducted.

Several researches have conducted similar studies before. The first is from Atae (2014) that focused on the effect of background music on vocabulary recall and retention of children learning English as a foreign language. The previous research focuses on children and they only use background music while this current research focuses on junior high school learners and uses children's songs. Another research is from Mohammad Alipour (2012), that focused on the effects of songs on EFL learners' vocabulary recall and retention: The case of gender. The research also uses songs but the songs is still general and has specific case "The case of gender". On the other hand, this current research uses more specific songs "Children English songs" and does not have specific case of gender. Therefore, this research is different from the previous researches.

B. Research Questions

Based on the title "**The Use of English Children Songs to Improve Students' Retention of English Vocabulary**", these are some problems:

1. What is the improvement of students' retention of English vocabulary after being taught using English children songs?
2. What is the improvement of students' retention of English vocabulary after being taught without using English children songs?
3. How significant is the difference between students' English vocabulary retention improvement with and without English children songs?

C. Research Objectives

The research objectives of this research are :

1. To find the improvement of students' retention of English vocabulary after being taught using English children songs.
2. To find the improvement of students' retention of English vocabulary after being taught without using English children songs.
3. To find the significant difference between students' English vocabulary retention improvement with and without English children songs.

D. Significances of Research

Practically: this research helps teachers and researchers to know how to improve students' retention in English vocabulary and make them enjoy in learning. In addition, this research also helps teachers and researchers to develop new method in learning vocabulary and helps to improve students' retention in vocabulary using some methods.

Theoretically: this research gives reference to the teachers and other researchers about the use of English songs in improving students' retention of English vocabulary.

E. Rationale

According to Panich (2016), vocabulary can be defined as the words of a language involving single items and phrases or chunks of several words which provide a particular meaning. Vocabulary is very important for students who learn language especially English. Without any vocabulary how they can speak, read, listen and write English. As

Nation (2011) states, “In English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) learning vocabulary items plays a vital role in all language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing)”. Vocabulary is fundamental to English language learning, enabling students to effectively communicate, comprehend, and develop their overall English proficiency across all language skills. Essentially, a strong vocabulary is the cornerstone of successful English language acquisition. It means that students must enrich their vocabulary to support them mastering in English. It also supports students to explore their ideas orally and in writing. Therefore, it can develop their ability in English.

This research focuses on vocabulary in form noun because noun can be found everywhere, such as things around the world and it relates to the English syllabus for seventh grade. The material is about “This is my world”. This research is conducted with the aim of improving the ability of seventh grade students to understand and master noun, because noun is one of the basic concepts in language which is in accordance with the English lesson curriculum in seventh grade, and noun is also easy to find and identify in everyday life around us, so it is hoped that it can increase students’s interest and motivation in learning. Therefore, this research takes vocabulary about part of bodies, professions, animals, fruits and vegetables because those vocabularies are familiar and students can find those vocabularies easily around them.

According to Merriam Webster (1956), retention is an ability to retain things in mind specifically: a preservation of the after effect of experience and learning that makes recall or recognition possible. In addition, Wickelgren (1973) states that a separate retention function for short and long term memory and found data to support the notion that short term memory could best be described by an exponential decay, while long term memory could be described by a power function decay or an exponential- power function. Based on the theories presented, retention involves the brain’s ability to preserve the effects of learning, enabling recall and recognition, and that this process differs between short-term and long-term memory, with varying decay patterns. Substantially, retention is not a uniform process, but a complex one with different mechanisms at play. So that, students’ retention is very important to be increased because it helps students to save many English vocabularies in a long period time.

Moreover, many theories tell about the advantages of music in improving students' retention. Such as Mishan (2005) cited in atae (2014), the use of music in language classes puts students at ease, makes them more attentive and can increase their desire to learn a language. Furthermore, Abbott (2002) cited in Atae (2014), songs have the capacity to motivate learners and can be used in the adult English classrooms to increase vocabulary, expand cultural knowledge, and make language lessons enjoyable. It means that music can increase and motivate their interest in learning English vocabulary and make them relax and enjoy during learning process. In addition, Cockerton (1997) cited in Atae (2014), found an increase in IQ scores for participants who were played (relaxing) music compared to those in no-music condition. It is supported by Mora (2000) cited in Atae (2014), songs have a positive outcome on the students' language acquisition and that lexical patterns stored in the long-term musical memory can be retrieved with ease at a later date for mental rehearsal, memorization or during oral interaction. The research consistently indicates that music, particularly in language learning contexts, significantly enhances student retention and overall learning experience. By creating a relaxed and engaging atmosphere, music not only boosts motivation and vocabulary acquisition but also demonstrably improves memory recall and cognitive function, as evidenced by increased IQ scores. This suggests that incorporating music into educational settings can be a powerful tool for fostering a more effective and enjoyable learning environment. Therefore, musics or songs can make students learn and memorize vocabulary easily and remember in a long period time.

Based on the theories, this research uses songs specifically English children' songs to improve students' retention in vocabulary. This research uses a quasi-experimental and the students are divided into two groups. The first group is experimental group and the second group is control group. The tests are divided into two steps : treatments, and posttest. The experimental group uses English children's songs during the treatment process and the control group uses memorizing technique as the treatment. The last, both groups get posttest with the same vocabulary tests and the result can be concluded from the posttest of both groups. This research does not use pretest because retention cannot be seen in the beginning.

F. Hypothesis

This research uses independent and dependent variables. According to Creswell (2012), A dependent variable is an attribute or characteristic that is dependent on or influenced by the independent variable while Independent variable is an attribute or characteristic that influences or affects an outcome or dependent variable. Creswell's definitions establish a clear relationship between independent and dependent variables, highlighting that the independent variable acts as the cause or influencer, while the dependent variable represents the effect or outcome that is being measured. This distinction is fundamental for designing and interpreting research studies, as it provides a framework for understanding how changes in one variable impact another. Independent variable in this research is English children song while dependent variable is students' retention in English vocabulary.

According to Creswell (2012), hypotheses are statements in quantitative research in which the researcher makes a prediction about the outcome of the relationship among characteristics. In conclusion, hypotheses serve as crucial predictive statements in quantitative research, allowing researchers to formally test and evaluate anticipated relationships between variables, ultimately contributing to the objective and systematic investigation of research questions.

Based on the statement above, the alternative hypotheses of this research are stated as follows:

1. H_0 accepted if $t_{\text{account}} < t_{\text{table}}$: it means that there is no significant difference between the results of using English children songs to improve students' retention in English vocabulary and without using English children's songs.
2. H_a accepted if $t_{\text{account}} > t_{\text{table}}$: it means that there is any significant difference between the results of using English children songs to improve students' retention in English vocabulary and without using English children's songs.

G. Previous Studies

There are some researches related to this research. The first research is from Salcedo (2010) which focused on the effects of songs in the foreign language classroom on text recall, delayed text recall and involuntary mental rehearsal. The purpose of the research is to investigate whether English native-speaker students learning a foreign language can benefit from integrating music into the curriculum. The research uses a quasi-experimental research design inspired by McElhinney and Annett's study (1996), however, the study is a 3X3 factorial design. Three trials are used and participants are tested on three variables. Subjects are assessed in text recall by counting the total number of words that are correctly written in the blanks that replaced deleted words. A one-way ANOVA test is performed in order to test for significance of the means of treatment in regard to the dependent variables between the classes. The construct presents a fixed effects model, since specific treatments are considered, such as song, text, and din. The result of the research shows text recall is better in the song condition than text passage. Also, treatment condition does not affect delayed recall; however, it impacts involuntary mental rehearsal. The difference between this research with the current research is that the current research focuses on improving students' retention in vocabulary while this research focused on text recall. The research design is same that uses a quasi-experimental but this research uses three variables test for participants while the current research only uses two variables those are English children songs and students' retention.

The second research is about effectiveness of English song activities on vocabulary learning and retention by Panich (2016). The purpose of the research is to study the effectiveness of song activities on vocabulary learning and retention and to study students' opinions toward song activities while the current research purpose is to study the use of English children' song to improve students' retention in vocabulary. The result of this research shows that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest I, the mean score of the students' English vocabulary achievement is at level 01. However, there is no significant difference between Posttest I and Posttest II. Students have positive attitudes toward using song activities to develop their vocabulary learning and retention. While Panich's (2016) research demonstrated the effectiveness of English song activities in improving immediate vocabulary learning, it also revealed a lack of sustained retention

over time. Despite this, students maintained a positive perception of using songs as a learning tool. Therefore, while songs are effective for initial vocabulary acquisition, further strategies may be needed to ensure long-term retention. In addition, that learning English through song activities can encourage students to develop and retain their vocabulary knowledge.

The third research is from Mohammad Alipour (2012) about the effects of songs on EFL learners' vocabulary recall and retention: the case of gender. The research focuses on music in terms of its effectiveness on vocabulary retention and its effectiveness on male and female EFL learners. This research and the present research have the same focus that music can be useful and effective on vocabulary retention. However, this research and the present research also have differences that this research has specific focus on gender case while the present research is general. The result of a series of t-tests shows that the musical- mode group performs better on both vocabulary recall and retention. The result also indicates better performance of the male learners than the females. The findings suggest that songs are not merely an entertaining tool and they can be utilized as a pedagogic material particularly when it comes to teaching vocabulary. In conclusion, Alipour's (2012) research reinforces the notion that music, particularly songs, significantly enhances vocabulary recall and retention for EFL learners. While both Alipour's and the present research explore music's impact on vocabulary retention, Alipour's study uniquely highlights the influence of gender, revealing superior performance in male learners. Ultimately, the findings underscore the pedagogical value of songs as a potent tool for vocabulary instruction, moving beyond their mere entertainment function.

The last research is from Atae (2014) about the effect of background music on vocabulary recall and retention of children learning English as a foreign language. The research is aimed to examine whether background music have any effects on Iranian children EFL learners' vocabulary development. It is different from the present research that the aim is to know the use of English children' songs in improving students' retention on vocabulary and the target is junior high school students. The findings reveal that the experimental group significantly improve the vocabulary recall and retention better than the control group. Moreover, the background music had a positive effect on young

learners' motivation in language learning and their paying attention to the teacher. As a result, Atae's (2014) research confirms that background music significantly enhances vocabulary recall and retention in young EFL learners, while also positively impacting motivation and attention. While differing in focus and target group from the present research, which explores the use of English children's songs for vocabulary retention in junior high students, both studies consistently demonstrate the beneficial effects of music on vocabulary learning. This reinforces the broader concept that music, whether as background or through songs, can be a valuable tool in language education. It is clear that the previous research and the present research is quite different.

