CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

Vocabulary is one of the aspects of language that should be mastered by learners in learning English as a foreign language. Vocabulary learning should be understood by learners because it has been in curriculum of education where curriculum is oriented in competence (Culture and Education Department, 2004 : 26). It means that learner is forced to have good competence in one aspect. The basic competence education force the students’ ability that has been owned by graduated from education. Based on the curriculum of English learning purpose, students have to able to master English well. The mastery of language is primary measured by how someone can use it, not by how much someone knows about it. The proficiency in target language includes the four skills, such as listening, writing, reading, and speaking. Those skills are be able to be implemented well if someone knows vocabulary. A person who is successful in mastering foreign language are not be able to be seen from how someone expresses the idea by using suitable vocabulary in speaking or writing form. The type of vocabulary which is used to express the idea will also mark the degree of the mastery English.

Students have to know the meaning of word that is used by teacher. Moreover, the limitation of vocabulary will obstruct the purpose of English competence. The number of vocabulary that is mastered by
students with the academic material in learning English will minimize the academic failure of students. So, students have to master vocabulary in learning English.

Ramsey (1981) in Hatch (1995:369) states that the ideal vocabulary has to be owned by students in senior high school is between 1,700-2,000 words. However, in the reality, the students are lack of vocabulary nowadays. It is just less than 1,000 words based on the vocabulary test in senior high school. It is evidenced by the vocabulary test. Their vocabulary is very limited. The understanding of vocabulary in SMA is still low or it is far from the ideal condition above. In other hand, this condition was also found in SMA N 1 Sokaraja. Based on the observation in SMA N 1 Sokaraja of the first grade students by the researcher on 20th of August 2012, the vocabulary score of the student is only 50 – 60. It could be seen based on the students’ vocabulary result that was done by English teacher in SMA N 1 Sokaraja. This score is far from the academic standard, which is 70. The researcher found some problems that were faced in vocabulary learning. First, students’ motivation in learning vocabulary was not good. To give an example when teacher taught vocabulary in the classroom, students did not focus to the teacher explanation. They preferred to keep silent in learning process. Second, students’ ability in memorizing vocabularies was so bad. It happened because students never memorized the vocabulary that was given by teacher. They just wrote the vocabulary in the book and forgot it. Third, the teacher did not teach pronunciation in vocabulary lesson. Teacher
asked students to write in the students’ book, but the teacher didn’t teach on how to pronounce the vocabulary. In addition, the media was not optimally used in the process of teaching and learning vocabulary. For example: Puppets, Pictures, LCD, Tape recorder, and television. Teacher did not have motivation to make interesting media for students. Teacher just used whiteboard and wrote vocabulary in whiteboard. The teacher did not know how to use the interesting media and technique in teaching vocabulary. These factors gave some bad effect for students’ vocabulary. As a result their vocabulary was low. They often got many difficulties in understanding vocabulary.

Concerning with those problems, Napa (1990 : 6) states that the vocabularies are developed by using different methods and technique of games. Students will enjoy in teaching and learning process through game. A game is not only just for fun in learning process but also game has a good value. Uberman (1998 : 20) says that there are many researcher and methodology books which say that game is a game to spend the time, but it has many education values. Therefore, the researcher chooses the game to learn vocabulary namely snake and ladder game.

Snake and ladder game is an ancient Indian board game regarded today as a worldwide classic. It is played between two or more players on a game board having numbered, gridded squares. A number of "ladders" and "snakes" are pictured on the board, each connecting two specific board squares. The object of the game is to navigate one's game piece from the
start (bottom square) to the finish (top square), helped or hindered by ladders and snakes. (Halimah, 2012 : 150)

In addition, this game contains fun aspects which students will appreciate so that it is easy for a teacher to communicate the instructional material to the students. It will be fun when the students try to guess the thing being described. Sometimes the students will guess a wrong thing as expected. It seems that they are not studying but playing game. The game is able to be played in pairs or small groups, where all of the members of the groups have some information.

*Snakes and Ladders game* is also easy game to improve students’ vocabulary. Students can get many informations and new vocabularies using this game. It does not only make students get knowledge but also get fun in learning vocabulary. This game can be applied in various materials such as vocabulary in recount, descriptive, narrative text, etc. It can help teacher in teaching vocabulary without write many vocabularies on the whiteboard.

Therefore, the researcher is interested in implementing “*snake and ladder game*” for teaching vocabulary in research entitled “Improving Students’ Vocabulary Through *Snake and Ladder Game* at the First Grade of SMA N 1 Sokaraja”.

**B. The Reason for Choosing the Topic**

Based on the background above, there are some reasons that are very important to be understood:
1. Vocabulary is very important to master four language skills, such as speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Without enough vocabulary, students will find difficulties in expressing their ideas orally and written. Therefore, they should be able to master adequate vocabulary.

2. Snake and ladder game constitutes a fun vocabulary game. It means that if it is applied in the vocabulary learning process, the students will enjoy in learning English especially vocabularies. When the students enjoy, they will be happy to learn English and they will master vocabulary well.

C. The Problems of the Research

Based on the reason above the problem is formulated as follow:

1. Can “snake and ladder game” improve vocabulary of the first grade students of SMA N 1 Sokaraja?
2. Can “snake and ladder game” give positive value to improve students’ vocabulary?
3. Can “snake and ladder game” show the successful of learning vocabulary of the first grade students of SMA N 1 Sokaraja?

D. The Aim of the Research

Based on the problem formulation above, the aim of the research is to know if snake and ladder can improve students’ vocabulary at the first grade of SMA N 1 Sokaraja.
E. Clarification of the Term

To understand the title more easily, essential terms of this research are classified as follow:

1. Improving

   According to Free Meriam webster, “improve or improving” is to advance or make progress in what is desirable.

2. Students

   According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, student is a learner, or someone who attends an educational institution.

3. Vocabulary

   Red John (2000: 16) vocabulary is knowledge involves knowing the meanings of words and therefore the purpose of a vocabulary test in to find out whether the learners can match each word with a synonym, a dictionary – tape definition, or an equivalent word in their own language.

4. Snake and Ladder

   *Snakes and ladders game* is a game that uses board game and dice contain of 20 common boxes which have to be done by player. The common boxes have been modified in order to students can explain the vocabulary well. It is a very simple *board game* that has been around for years.
5. Game

Game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun. There are two kinds of games, namely competitive games which players or teams race to be the first to reach the goal, and co-operative games which players or teams work together towards a common goal. The emphasis in this game is on successful communication rather than on correctness of language. (Toth in Yin Young Mei and Jang Yu-jung, 2000 : 1). Game or simulation is a simplified, operational model of real life situation that provides students with various participations in a variety of roles and events.

F. Contribution of the Research

1. For the Teacher
   a. The result of this research will help the teacher on how to use *snake and ladder game* in teaching vocabulary. Therefore, teacher can help the students to use it in teaching and learning process.
   b. Teacher also will know the students’ vocabulary mastery. Therefore, teacher can anticipate students’ problem in learning vocabulary.

2. For the Students
   a. This research can motivate the students to be more interested in learning English especially in learning vocabulary. It is because
snake and ladder game is a popular game that is often used students in daily life activity. Students will get fun in learning vocabulary.

b. It is hoped that students’ motivation in learning English will increase. Students can know how good their vocabulary is, so they will be enthusiastic in the teaching learning process.