

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Vocabulary is one of the most essential components in learning English because it supports students in developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, students may have difficulty understanding messages and expressing their ideas. Nation (2001) states that vocabulary knowledge is central to language use because it enables learners to comprehend language input and express meaning. Similarly, Schmitt (2000) explains that vocabulary is an important component of language acquisition because words are the basic elements used to construct communication.

Vocabulary learning is particularly important for elementary school students because they are still developing their basic language competence. At this stage, students need to learn vocabulary that is simple, concrete, and related to their daily lives. Cameron (2001) explains that young learners learn vocabulary more effectively when words are presented through meaningful contexts, visual support, and enjoyable activities. Therefore, vocabulary teaching for elementary school students should not depend only on memorizing isolated words but should provide meaningful and engaging learning experiences.

However, memorizing English vocabulary can be difficult for young learners. Thornbury (2002) argues that learners may easily forget newly learned vocabulary when they do not receive sufficient repetition and opportunities to use the words meaningfully. Nation (2001) also emphasizes that repeated exposure to vocabulary in different contexts is important for vocabulary retention. Therefore, students need learning activities that provide repeated exposure, meaningful contexts, and opportunities to recognize and recall vocabulary.

Based on the preliminary observation conducted at SDN 071 Bengkulu Utara, the fifth-grade students experienced several difficulties in learning and memorizing English vocabulary. The observation showed that some students had difficulty understanding the meanings of new English words, remembering vocabulary without assistance, and pronouncing several English words correctly. Some students also needed repeated explanations and practice before they could remember the vocabulary independently. These findings are consistent with the observation field notes in Appendix 10, which recorded that several students still needed guidance in understanding and memorizing new vocabulary.

The students' vocabulary problems were also reflected in the vocabulary assessment. The vocabulary test

used in this study consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions and 5 essay questions. The test measured several aspects of vocabulary learning, namely meaning recognition, contextual understanding, word recall, and word form recognition. The test specification in Appendix 7 shows that meaning recognition and contextual understanding were assessed through multiple-choice items, while word recall and word form recognition were assessed through essay items. These assessment aspects were relevant to identifying whether students were able not only to recognize vocabulary but also to understand and recall the words they had learned.

The results of Cycle I provided further evidence of the students' vocabulary difficulties. The scores of the 19 students ranged from 12 to 88, and many students remained below the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 75. For example, several students obtained scores of 56, 60, and 64, while one student obtained 12. Only several students reached scores above the KKM. The mean score in Cycle I was 64.21, which was below the KKM of 75. These results indicated that the students still needed improvement in recognizing word meanings, understanding vocabulary in context, and recalling previously learned vocabulary. The findings were also supported by the observation results, which showed that some students were hesitant to answer

questions and still required assistance when recalling vocabulary.

In addition to the students' vocabulary difficulties, the learning process also indicated that students needed more engaging and contextual learning experiences. Although most students showed interest when *The Loud House* cartoon was introduced, some students still had difficulty remembering vocabulary meanings and pronouncing English words correctly. The observation notes from Cycle I showed that students were enthusiastic about watching the cartoon, but several students still required more practice and repetition. This finding supports Harmer's (2007) view that monotonous learning activities may reduce students' interest and motivation, whereas engaging learning activities can encourage students to participate more actively.

The use of appropriate learning media may help address these problems. Mayer (2009) explains that multimedia learning combines verbal and visual information, which can support students' understanding and memory. Similarly, Paivio's (1991) Dual Coding Theory explains that information presented through verbal and visual forms can create stronger mental associations and facilitate memory. These theories support the use of audio-visual media such as cartoons in vocabulary learning because students can hear

English words while simultaneously observing characters, objects, actions, and situations related to the vocabulary.

The Loud House was selected as the learning medium in this study because it presents English vocabulary through dialogue, visual scenes, character interactions, and everyday situations. The cartoon therefore provides students with opportunities to encounter vocabulary in meaningful contexts rather than memorizing words in isolation. The use of The Loud House also allows students to repeatedly hear, see, identify, and practice vocabulary. This is in line with Cameron (2001), who emphasizes the importance of visual support, meaningful contexts, and enjoyable activities for young learners.

The improvement observed during the research further supports the potential of this learning medium. After improvements were implemented in Cycle II through additional vocabulary practice, repetition activities, and greater student participation, the classroom atmosphere became more active and interactive. Most students became more confident in answering questions and were able to remember more vocabulary than in Cycle I. The students' scores also increased in Cycle II, with many students achieving scores above the KKM. The Cycle II results show that 16 of the 19 students achieved the KKM of 75, with several students obtaining scores between 88 and 100.

Therefore, the problems identified among the fifth-grade students were mainly related to their difficulty in understanding word meanings, retaining newly learned vocabulary, recalling vocabulary independently, and pronouncing some English words correctly. The findings also indicated the need for repeated practice, meaningful contexts, and engaging learning media. Based on these problems and the theoretical support from Nation (2001), Thornbury (2002), Cameron (2001), Harmer (2007), Mayer (2009), and Paivio (1991), the researcher was interested in using The Loud House cartoon as an audio-visual learning medium to improve students' vocabulary memorization.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, several problems related to students' vocabulary memorization were identified. First, some fifth-grade students had difficulty recognizing and understanding the meanings of new English vocabulary. The observation results showed that several students still needed guidance when identifying word meanings and completing vocabulary activities. Second, students experienced difficulty retaining vocabulary after it had been introduced. Some students could recognize vocabulary when visual support was available but had difficulty recalling the words independently without assistance. This condition is consistent with Thornbury

(2002), who explains that vocabulary retention requires repeated exposure, retrieval, and meaningful use. Third, some students had difficulty pronouncing several English words correctly, indicating that vocabulary learning involved not only remembering meanings but also recognizing and producing word forms. Fourth, some students were hesitant to answer questions because they were not confident in their vocabulary knowledge. The Cycle I observation specifically recorded difficulties in recognizing meanings, recalling vocabulary, and pronunciation, while some students were hesitant to respond to questions.

Another identified problem was the students' need for more varied and engaging learning activities. Although the students showed enthusiasm when learning through The Loud House cartoon, the Cycle I reflection indicated that several students still required additional practice and repetition to strengthen their vocabulary memorization. According to Cameron (2001), young learners benefit from vocabulary instruction that provides meaningful contexts, visual support, and enjoyable activities. Harmer (2007) similarly emphasizes the importance of engaging classroom activities and appropriate teaching media in maintaining young learners' attention and motivation.

The vocabulary test results further confirmed that students' vocabulary memorization needed improvement.

The mean score in Cycle I was 64.21, which was below the KKM of 75, and several students obtained scores below the mastery criterion. These results indicated that students had not yet achieved the expected level of vocabulary memorization, particularly in meaning recognition, contextual understanding, and word recall. Therefore, an appropriate learning medium was needed to provide students with visual and auditory input, meaningful contexts, repetition, and opportunities to actively recall vocabulary.

Based on the identification above, the problems can be summarized as follows:

- (1) Students had difficulty recognizing the meanings of new English vocabulary
- (2) Students had difficulty remembering and recalling vocabulary independently
- (3) Some students had difficulty pronouncing English vocabulary correctly
- (4) Some students lacked confidence when answering vocabulary questions
- (5) Students needed more engaging, contextualized, and repetitive vocabulary learning activities. These problems became the basis for implementing The Loud House cartoon as an audio-visual learning medium in the Classroom Action Research conducted in this study.

C. Research Question

How the use of *The Loud House* cartoon improve students' vocabulary memorization for fifth grade students' at SDN 071 Bengkulu Utara?

D. Research Objectives

The use of *The Loud House* cartoon improved students' vocabulary memorization by providing visual and auditory learning experiences. The students listened to vocabulary through the characters' dialogues and saw the characters, objects, actions, and situations related to the words. They then identified the vocabulary, understood its meaning from the context, practiced pronunciation, answered questions, matched words with pictures, and reviewed the vocabulary repeatedly. These activities helped students recognize, understand, and recall English vocabulary more effectively.

E. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide meaningful contributions both theoretically and practically to the field of English language teaching, particularly in improving students' vocabulary memorization through the use of audio-visual media. The findings of this study are anticipated to offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of animated cartoons as a learning medium in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among

elementary school students. Furthermore, this study aims to enrich the existing body of knowledge related to vocabulary learning strategies and media integration in language teaching.

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of English language teaching, especially in the area of vocabulary instruction using audio-visual media. This study supports multimedia learning theory, which emphasizes that students learn more effectively when information is presented through both visual and auditory channels. According to Mayer (2009), multimedia learning enhances students' memory retention and comprehension because learners are able to process and integrate information more efficiently when it is presented in multiple forms.

In addition, this study is expected to provide empirical evidence regarding The role of animated cartoons in facilitating vocabulary memorization. It also contributes to the understanding of how contextualized visual media can enhance students' cognitive engagement, motivation, and retention of vocabulary. Therefore, this study can serve as an academic reference for future studies related to vocabulary learning, multimedia learning, and the integration of audio-visual media in language education, particularly at the elementary school level.

2. Practical Significance

Practically, this study is expected to provide benefits for students, teachers, schools, and future researchers, as described below:

a. For Students

This study is expected to help students improve their vocabulary memorization through the use of engaging and meaningful learning media. By learning vocabulary through animated cartoons, students can understand word meanings more easily because vocabulary is presented in a clear and contextualized manner. In addition, the use of interesting and enjoyable media is expected to increase students' motivation, attention, and participation in the learning process. As a result, students may develop greater confidence in understanding and using English vocabulary in both spoken and written communication.

b. For Teachers

This study is expected to provide teachers with alternative teaching media that can be used to enhance vocabulary instruction. The findings of this study may help teachers understand the importance of using audio-visual media, especially animated cartoons, as an effective instructional tool. Furthermore, this study can assist teachers in creating a more interactive, engaging, and

student-centered learning environment. By integrating appropriate media into the teaching process, teachers can improve the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction and support students' language development more efficiently.

c. For Schools

This study is expected to contribute to improving the quality of English teaching and learning at the elementary school level. The use of innovative and effective learning media can support the implementation of more engaging and meaningful instructional practices. In addition, this study may encourage schools to provide better learning resources and support teachers in integrating multimedia into classroom instruction. Ultimately, this can enhance the overall quality of education and support students' academic achievement in English learning.

d. For Future Researchers

This study is expected to serve as a valuable reference for future researchers who are interested in conducting research related to vocabulary learning, multimedia learning, and the use of audio-visual media in education. The findings of this study may also provide useful insights for researchers who wish to explore similar topics using different research designs, participants, or learning media. Furthermore,

this study can contribute to the development of future research that aims to improve the effectiveness of English language teaching through innovative and technology-based learning approaches.

F. Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding and ensure clarity in interpreting the key terms used in this study, the following operational definitions are provided:

1. Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to a set of words that students understand and are able to use in communication. It includes knowledge of word meanings, pronunciation, spelling, and appropriate usage in context. Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language proficiency because it enables students to understand spoken and written language and express their ideas effectively. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary knowledge is essential for successful language learning, as it supports learners in comprehending and producing meaningful communication.

Vocabulary is not only about memorizing words, but also about understanding their meaning and using them appropriately in daily communication. Vocabulary in this context focuses on English words related to daily life topics such as school, family, and daily activities, which are relevant for elementary school students.

2. Vocabulary Memorization

Vocabulary memorization refers to the process of storing and retaining new words in memory so that they can be recalled and used when needed. It involves not only remembering the meaning of words, but also recognizing their form, pronunciation, and appropriate use in different contexts. Effective vocabulary memorization requires repeated exposure, meaningful practice, and active engagement with the words being learned. According to Thornbury (2002), learners are more likely to remember vocabulary when they encounter it repeatedly and use it in meaningful contexts, rather than simply memorizing word lists. This indicates that memorization is strengthened through use and contextual learning.

Vocabulary memorization becomes more effective when students learn words through engaging and enjoyable activities, such as visual media, games, or storytelling. When students are interested and actively involved, they tend to remember vocabulary more easily and use it more confidently in communication.

3. Cartoon as Learning Media

Cartoon as learning media refers to the use of animated audio-visual content as an instructional tool to support vocabulary learning. Animated cartoons provide visual context, character interaction, and meaningful situations

that help students understand and remember vocabulary more effectively. Cartoon as learning media specifically refers to the use of The Loud House cartoon as an audio-visual teaching medium to facilitate vocabulary memorization. The cartoon presents vocabulary through dialogue, visual actions, and contextual situations that support students' comprehension and retention.