

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter consists of background of the problem, formulation of the research, objectives of the research, uses of the research, scope of the research and definition of terms.

### **1.1 Background of the Problem**

English as an international language is very important to be learned. By learning English, the students can help themselves to face their future because English is needed in facing the globalization era. It is also a top requirement for those seeking for job because the applicant who master English whether in passive or active are more favorable than those who do not master it.

One of the most difficult and important aspect of learning a foreign language is the retention of vocabulary. Vocabulary can not be separated from the language because vocabulary is a part of language. Vocabulary is important for learning language because of several reasons. First, the ability to understand the target language greatly depends on one's knowledge of vocabulary. Second, vocabulary acquisition is an important aspect to master all language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Edge, 1993).

According to the pre observation which has done by the researcher, students often find difficulties in using a foreign language because they are lack of vocabulary and they often forget easily new vocabulary after they get the meaning from dictionary. Sometimes in speaking class, students can not speak fluently because they are lack of vocabulary. They say only a few sentences because they can not find the appropriate vocabulary to be used in expressing their ideas. The same problem is found in writing classes that students can not write essays easily because they are lack of vocabulary. Even though they have already learned the strategies or techniques in writing essays, still they will find difficulties in constructing sentences. They will find difficulties in choosing and using the appropriate vocabulary.

Vocabulary is the first step to be taught before teaching other aspects of language. Vocabulary mastery is essential part of English as a foreign language. There is no doubt that vocabulary mastery plays an important role in the four language skills. It gives contribution to the learners to perform or practice their skills better. Because of that reason, by mastering the vocabulary, they will be able to produce so many sentences easily either in spoken or written and to receive words in reading and listening.

Without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed because vocabulary is the flesh of a language. In order to be able to use the language productively, students must know certain amount of vocabulary, not only for communicating orally, but also in writing. It is in line with the concept of communicative approach in which

learners have a big chance to use the language directly in classroom activities. This approach is useful in improving students' vocabulary. Through the approach students are forced to use the language directly either in spoken or written communication.

Vocabulary must not be neglected by everyone who learns a language. The students need to master it in order to master the language. That's why teaching vocabulary considered as the most important thing in the English language teaching.

The mastery of structure of the language without adequate mastery of vocabulary could not guarantee a capability of communication in English. Vocabulary is very important to be mastered since it is an essential means for conducting communication. Therefore, vocabulary mastery must be on the first priority in English language teaching and learning. Without mastering the vocabulary the learners will get difficulty to master the other language skills.

Unfortunately, based on the researcher's experience when she was teaching English course at Junior high school, she found that 9 out of 10 students are lack of vocabulary. They got difficulties in learning English. They also became passive in doing the activity in the class. It's hard for them to express their ideas. They often used the wrong words when expressing their opinion. That problem also affected to students motivation in learning language.

Another possible problem was that the way of teaching and learning vocabulary used by the teacher is monotonous. It made the students bored while learning language. Because of that reason, the English teacher should create the technique or using an interesting media in teaching in order to make the students more interesting in learning English.

From the researchers' preliminary study at the second semester of the second year students in SMP N 2 Abung Selatan, it was found that most of students are lack of vocabulary and also low motivation in learning language. They became passive during the teaching learning process, because they could not understand the meaning of the words. They can not get the information from the lesson. They also had low motivation in learning English. They neglected the teacher who is teaching in front of the class.

It is not an easy thing to teach English subject to the students, especially to make them mastered the vocabulary. Therefore it is important to make the students enjoy studying English especially vocabulary by making an interesting condition in the class. So choosing appropriate technique and media in teaching vocabulary is important in order to improve their vocabulary.

Considering the statement above, the researcher was interested to use an enjoyable media and technique that can motivate the students in learning vocabulary. Riddle is chosen to be used as a media and also technique in this research.

Riddle is excellent tools because they require students to practice a variety of language skills in order to find a solution. Riddle requires higher level critical thinking skills, which is often needed in language learning, especially in the early stages of language acquisition where a significant amount of time is devoted to memorization and repetition. Riddle not only asks students to think logically and creatively, but also a fun challenge to students, who will be motivated to solve the puzzle the riddle provides.

Yuliana (2011) also has conducted a research about using riddle in improving students' vocabulary and the result was riddle could improve students' vocabulary because they can easily remember the vocabulary.

One interesting feature of riddle is that they appeal to all age groups, from the wise and experienced to the very young. Over the years the nature of riddle has changed. Riddle game require ingenuity to solving riddle, so it can make students' more training their brain, with it students can be more motivated to learn vocabulary.

By conducting this research, it is hoped to produce model that is effective and can be used by the teacher in using riddle game in teaching vocabulary in order to help students improve their vocabulary mastery and their participation during teaching learning process.

To reach the result, the researcher uses action research in her research. It was chosen because by using action research the researcher considered to improve the process of learning, could find the solution of every problem in every cycle, and it

could be fixed in the next cycle. Action research provides the best way to identify the steps of using riddle in teaching vocabulary. Finally the procedures of teaching vocabulary through riddle can be developed for the improvement of learning process based on the empirical data collected in this research.

## **1.2 Formulation of the Problem**

Based on the background discussed above, the writer would like to formulate the problem as follows:

1. How can the use of riddle improve students' vocabulary mastery at second year of SMPN 2 Abung Selatan?
2. How can the use of riddle improve students' activity during teaching learning process?

## **1.3 Objective of the Research**

Based on the problem above, the objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To find out how the use of riddle improve students vocabulary mastery.
2. To find out how the use of riddle improve students' activity during teaching learning process.

## **1.4 Uses of the Research**

This research will be useful both practically and theoretically.

1. Practically

Hopefully, this research would be useful for the English teacher, students, and school.

a. The teacher

Through this research, the English teacher could use the riddle as the media and also as a technique in teaching vocabulary and also could improve his or her teaching performance.

b. The students

The use of riddle in this research would make the students get accustomed to use English as the target language. So, by using riddle, the students could be helped to improve their vocabulary and also their learning activity during the teaching learning process.

c. The school

The result of this research could be used as a consideration for the school in order to use riddle as the media and also a technique in teaching vocabulary. Although this media could be used only for specific lesson, but it could be used for all levels, not excepted for intermediate level.

2. Theoretically

The result of this research produced a new method how to use riddle effectively in teaching learning process, especially in conducting the vocabulary class.

### **1.5 Scope of the Research**

This research is conducted in SMPN 2 Abung Selatan. The subject of this research is the second year students in class VIII E. In this Action Research, the researcher conducts two cycles. The first cycle is done based on the problems of the research and the next cycle is done based on the result of the analysis and the reflection from the previous cycle.

Besides the students' vocabulary mastery, the researcher also focused on students' learning activities covered to their activities on pre – activities, while – activities, and post – activities.

### **1.6 Definition of Term**

#### **a. Teaching Vocabulary**

Teaching vocabulary means the process of giving knowledge to others the goal of which is to improve vocabulary of the students.

#### **b. Vocabulary Mastery**

Vocabulary mastery is the ability of students to use English vocabulary in teaching learning process.

#### **c. Riddle**

Riddle is a question that is amusing and typically presented as a game.