

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

In teaching vocabulary to Young Learners (YLS), teachers are expected to utilize the strategy which is suitable to YLS' characteristics and needs to make the learning process more attractive and effective. As Ghosen (2013) stated that YLS have some characteristics related to the way they are learning a language. First, their ability to grasp the meaning while communicating even before they understand the individuals' words. Second, they are creative to use limited language sources. Third, they have a high capacity to do indirect learning. Fourth, their capacity for finding and making fun is large. Furthermore, they are interested in imagination and fantasy. Last, they have a high instinct to interact and communicate with others. Therefore, teachers are expected to make a learning strategy that is suitable to the characteristics and needs of YLS.

Many teaching strategies are designed for YLS in a learning language. In this case, teachers must have consideration in utilizing a strategy which is suitable to the characteristics of YLS. Game-Based Learning (GBL) is a strategy which is appropriate to the characteristics of YLS who are curious, imaginative, and playful because it provides fun activities in teaching vocabulary in the classroom (Bakhsh, 2016). Moreover, GBL has been explored in teaching-learning to make an effort to achieve better performance as an effective way to stimulate students' progress (Hung, 2015). Game is used to assist YLS by motivating them in learning a language in the classroom. In this case, the game motivates YLS by creating a fun

atmosphere in the classroom (Wright, Betteridge, & Buckby, 2005). Furthermore, Lewis (1999) stated that games are popular among children because they are interesting and addictive. Through GBL, teachers assist YLs in learning language, particularly mastering vocabulary without making them feel pressured and reducing their learning motivation. As Uberman (1998) stated that the role of games provides an environment where the YLs can practice while using new words and express themselves freely. In this case, GBL strategy assists YLs in learning vocabulary effectively.

Although some researchers proposed the strength of GBL, other researchers investigated the limitation of games in TEYL context. Ting and Li (2012) stated that teaching by using games can be time-consuming because it takes time to learn a way to play the game and requires a longer time to be prepared for teachers. On the other hand, teaching vocabulary through games has several limitations. Besides, some teachers have difficulties to attract their students in teaching by using the game. Moreover, YLs become overly focused on the game and losing their control of getting the learning material. This condition makes it hard for teachers to take control over students in the classroom. In this case, a teacher must be able to increase YLs' enthusiasm for learning and find effective strategies which are interesting for them. The interest of YLs in learning through games has become an interesting phenomenon in the teaching-learning process, it is related to the various innovations that have been used in teaching English through GBL for several objectives such as, learning vocabulary process, and teaching grammar (Garard et al. 2013; Ibrahim 2016), Thus, this research also has its objective, it is to get know

EFL teachers' perceptions toward GBL as a strategy in teaching English vocabulary to YLs. This research will conduct some interviews with EFL teachers who use GBL as a strategy in teaching vocabulary to YLs in a course.

## **1.2 Formulation of the Problem**

The research question addressed in the current research is “What are the EFL teachers' perceptions toward GBL as a strategy in teaching vocabulary for YLs?”

## **1.3 Operational Definitions**

To prevent misconceptions of this research, here are the operational definitions of each keyword:

- A. EFL Teachers' Perceptions : It is the opinions of teachers regarding the strategy of teaching English vocabulary by utilizing Game-Based Learning in TEYL context based on their experience in a course.
  
- B. Game-Based Learning : It is a traditional game which is used as a means of teaching to develop students' motivation and interest in a fun learning way. Those are Flash Cards, Hangman, Tic Tac Two and Guessing Games.
  
- C. Vocabulary Learning : It is the activity of the teaching-learning

process related to memorizing words.

- D. EFL Young Learners : EFL Young Learners are the students who learn in a course. Their ages range from six to twelve years old.

#### **1.4 Aims of the Research**

The current study aims to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions toward GBL in teaching vocabulary to YLs.

#### **1.5 Significances of the Research**

There are three points of this research's significance:

A. Theoretical Use

This research provides new data on teachers' perceptions toward GBL as a strategy in teaching vocabulary to YLs in a course.

B. Empirical Use

The result of this study will provide empirical insights into how GBL as a strategy in teaching vocabulary is applied in teaching-learning processes by teachers in a course.

C. Practical Use

This study will provide useful information for the teachers about GBL as a strategy for teaching vocabulary to YLs in a course.