

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Vocabulary is the foundation of language ability (Nation, 2013). In learning English as a foreign language (EFL), mastery of vocabulary is the key to developing other abilities such as writing, listening, reading, and speaking. Vocabulary knowledge is more than merely recognizing words; it also includes comprehending their meanings, connotations, and proper situations for application. Vocabulary mastery is regarded as the comprehension of various aspects of words. This includes meaning, pronunciation, written form, grammatical usage and appropriate usage both spoken and written. Vocabulary mastery is the foundation of language learning. Effective language use can be achieved with a high level of vocabulary mastery. Therefore, this underlines the importance of mastering vocabulary, because it provides a framework that guides learner to comprehend the language. Knowledge of words allow students to comprehend grammar, syntax and tenses with ease.

Though, Cahyono & Widiati (2015) stated that the vocabulary mastery aspect of language acquisition in the field of English as a foreign language (EFL) is often disregarded in the context of Indonesia education. This can be seen by the lack of innovation in the learning media of English vocabulary teaching, which depended heavily on conventional learning media, which mainly utilize the English textbook. This learning

media is not capable to cater to the various needs and learning preferences of students. The conventional learning often overlooks the utilization of multimedia to enhance the learning experience. By depending on lecturing and the English textbook only, students find it difficult to acquire and retain new vocabularies. This resulted in the low degree of engagement among students during the learning process.

Engagement is defined as the aspect of motivation that has been changed into active participation in the learning process according to Dornyei (2019) in He & Loewen (2022). Kusumayanthi & Rusmiyati (2021) further specifically define student engagement as the affective understanding of the relations between factors in the academic environment and active participation. It includes participation, effort, attendance or positive behaviour. The strong link between engagement and academic achievement has been researched previously. Li et al (2022) found that active engagement in the learning process helps students to maintain their focus, motivation and interest. This resulted in the increased vocabulary acquisition and retention. Kusumayanthi & Rusmiyati (2021) stated that engagement in the learning process helps students to strive, become more independent on setting their own academic goals, and becoming more eager to accept and overcome challenges.

According to the preliminary findings through classroom observation, it was revealed that a majority of students were not engaged with the current learning media in vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, a teacher at the school also highlighted this issue, stating, “Many students have difficulty learning new vocabulary because the students feel that current learning media using the English textbook and exercises, like memorization, and repetitive exercise often lack engagement”. This may be the result of the lack of

innovative learning media that can cater to the different preferences and needs of student's learning experiences.

Due to this issue related with vocabulary mastery and learning media among English as a foreign language (EFL) students, there is a need for research which explores new learning media in order to optimize vocabulary mastery during the learning process. Therefore, the utilization of multimedia input through digital flashcard can serve as an effective alternative. Teng (2023) stated that multimedia input is a vital support for various areas of vocabulary mastery, because it incorporates image, text, audio and video for language acquisition. Moreover, the effectiveness of multimedia input is highlighted by Mayer (2002) which affirmed that multimedia input keeps students cognitively engaged throughout the process of vocabulary acquisition. It helps students to make a connection between the new words with its associated meaning with the help of visual, audio or interactive features. Therefore, digital flashcard as a learning media provides students with opportunities to engage actively through the use of image, audio or spaced repetition exercises. This creates a more enjoyable and engaging learning environment which can help with vocabulary acquisition and mastery.

Vocabulary mastery is an essential component of language learning, as it directly influences student's comprehension and communication abilities. However, conventional learning media, such as textbooks, often fail to fully engage students in the learning process. In contrast, digital flashcards offer an interactive and dynamic approach that enhances vocabulary acquisition through features like active recall, spaced repetition, and multimedia integration.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of digital flashcards in improving vocabulary mastery. Yulsardi & Ratmanida (2021) found that students using digital flashcards exhibited a 34.8-point increase in their vocabulary test scores, significantly outperforming those who relied on conventional learning media. The structured repetition and interactive nature of digital flashcards allowed for better retention and recall, which contributed to this significant improvement. Similarly, Nashir & Laili (2018) reported that the implementation of electronic flashcards resulted in a 20-point increase in students' average scores and a 10% rise in the number of students meeting the minimal competency threshold. These findings underscore the role of consistent exposure and interactive learning in enhancing vocabulary acquisition.

Beyond measurable score improvements, digital flashcards also foster higher engagement and motivation among students. Azahra et al., (2024) highlighted that students taught using digital flashcards demonstrated greater enthusiasm and active participation in learning activities. Unlike conventional learning media, which are often static and text-heavy, digital flashcards incorporate interactive elements such as instant feedback, self-paced learning, and multimedia support (e.g., images and audio). These features accommodate various learning styles and create a more engaging experience, which encourages active involvement and sustained attention.

Given their ability to enhance both vocabulary retention and student engagement, digital flashcards present a compelling alternative to conventional learning media. By integrating interactive and adaptive learning strategies, digital flashcards address the

limitations of static materials, making vocabulary learning more effective and engaging. These advantages make digital flashcards a powerful tool in modern education, supporting students in achieving better vocabulary mastery through an engaging and efficient learning process.

The utilization of digital flashcards has consistently demonstrated a substantial enhancement in student's vocabulary mastery across diverse educational environments. The significant enhancements in test scores and the heightened proportions of students attaining competency levels underscore the efficacy of this educational tool. Furthermore, student's increased involvement and enthusiasm indicate that flashcards provide a more dynamic and engaged educational setting. The results highly endorse the integration of digital flashcards into vocabulary education in order to maximize learning outcomes.

While the usage of digital learning media is increasing, previous research on the efficacy of digital flashcards, particularly in urban Indonesian educational contexts with technologically advanced resources, specifically in the region of Buleleng, Bali is scarce. The particular effect of digital flashcards on vocabulary mastery among junior high school children in Indonesia has not been adequately investigated. As a result, this research aims to determine any significant effect on grade 8th SMP Laboratorium Undiksha student's vocabulary mastery after using digital flashcards. The outcomes of this research is highly relevant and influential in resolving the difficulties that Indonesian teachers encounter when teaching English vocabulary to increase student's vocabulary mastery. The findings of this research contributes to a better understanding of the efficacy and effect of digital flashcards on the vocabulary mastery of students, particularly in the setting of schools in Indonesia with adequate technology located in urban areas. The

findings of this study are used to provide educators and educational institutions in Indonesia with further knowledge regarding the utilization of multimedia in teaching English vocabulary.

1.2 Problems Identification

The use of multimedia input, such as digital flashcards, is critical in language acquisition, particularly vocabulary mastery. Traditional learning media frequently emphasize reading and repetitious exercises. Therefore, they may not engage students or accommodate different learning styles. Regardless of the adequate technology and facilities that helps support the utilization of digital flashcard in SMP Laboratorium Undiksha, the research regarding the implementation of digital flashcard in such setting is not widely available.

Current curriculum which are implemented may not take advantage of interactive multimedia tools to support vocabulary learning, instead it mostly relies on conventional learning media. Consequently, the research regarding the effect of multimedia input available in digital flashcard such as images, audio and interactive features is critical to determine how to incorporate digital flashcard into the curriculum in school like SMP Laboratorium Undiksha which are equipped with proper technology and facilities.

Understanding how digital flashcard influence learning outcomes in such setting is vital to provide empirical evidence regarding the performance of digital flashcard in situations where technology or facilities are not an issue. This encourages educational institutions to focus on providing adequate facilities. It also suggest the implementation

of digital flashcard in school with sufficient technology and facility, in order to maximize student's learning outcomes.

1.3 Limitation of the Study

This research exclusively examines the application of digital flashcards to improve vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students at SMP Laboratorium Undiksha. Given that the school possesses sufficient technological resources, the results may not be relevant to environments with restricted or nonexistent access to technology, such as rural or underfunded schools.

Furthermore, the study doesn't investigate alternative multimedia tools or pedagogical approaches that may enhance or improve digital flashcards. The study is focused to applying a singular form of digital learning media and does not consider the influence of alternative educational technologies on vocabulary mastery. Moreover, other external factors such as socioeconomic disparity, which may contribute to the effect of digital flashcard towards vocabulary mastery is not investigated in this research. Therefore, there may be other factors that may influence the result of this study that are not investigated, due to the focus only on the two variables.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the previous context, the researcher presents the following problem to be discussed in this research:

1. Is there any significant differences on the vocabulary mastery of grade 8 SMP Laboratorium Undiksha students, after the implementation of Digital Flashcard, for those that are given the treatment and those that are not given the treatment?

1.5 Objective of the Study

In order to address the issue raised above, the research objective are as follows:

1. To identify any significant differences on the vocabulary mastery of grade SMP Laboratorium Undiksha students, after the implementation of Digital Flashcard, for those that are given the treatment and those that are not given the treatment.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are beneficial for multiple stakeholders in enhancing comprehension of the utilization of digital flashcards in improving vocabulary mastery among 8th grade junior high school students. There are both theoretical and practical as outlined below.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

Further develop the theory of using digital flashcards as a teaching instrument to increase vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students in urban regions. Furthermore, in the context of the educational system in Indonesia, the purpose of this research is to enhance the quality of education, more especially the process of learning English vocabulary.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

Contributes to the advancement of teaching and learning by providing insights on the implementation of digital flashcard learning media to increase student's vocabulary mastery for English Language Education students, teacher and education institution.

1.6.2.1 Students

This study establishes a basis for further investigations into the implementation of digital flashcards for enhancing vocabulary mastery. The result of this study is especially useful for students who have access to sufficient technology or facilities. The findings of this study can help student to incorporate digital flashcard in their study routines, as an effective learning media to improve vocabulary learning.

1.6.2.2 Teachers

The findings of this research provide teachers with practical guidance on how to utilize digital flashcard on their teaching instruction. It assist teachers in creating a more engaging and active learning environment in the classroom, to enhance participation and student's vocabulary mastery. Not only that, but digital flashcard also supports various learning preferences that may present in a single classroom. Therefore, the utilization of digital flashcard as a learning media help teachers by providing variability in the learning experience.

1.6.2.3 Educational Institutions

Educational institutions can benefit from the findings of this study by using the empirical evidence as a reference in developing their curriculum to involve digital

flashcard as a strategy which can maximize student's learning outcomes. Educational institutions in urban areas specifically can incorporate digital flashcard as one of the implementations of digital technology in the learning process. This can provide greater support for students and teachers to maximize the learning outcomes and create an enjoyable classroom environment.

