

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

There are many forms of communication in our world, and English is among the most important, especially when it comes to the development of technology and education (Saputri, 2017). England is known to be the first country to enforce universal education laws, and as a result, many countries, including Indonesia, have adopted a similar approach of teaching the English language. Learning English starts in elementary school, and part of the goal of learning English at this stage is to acquire a big enough vocabulary to perform functions in the language. That is, in order to listen, to read, to write, and to speak in English, one needs to master enough vocabulary. Grammar and pronunciation are secondary to the possession of vocabulary, and it is unfortunate that a big enough vocabulary is lacking among rural students in most parts of Indonesia.

In the context of English proficiency, the importance of vocabulary must be understood in the context of the definition of vocabulary mastery, which is the ability of a learner to understand and use words in correct and appropriate ways in different situations (Saputri, 2017). While Keraf (1996) suggests that it is the qualitative and quantitative aspects of vocabulary that contribute to effective communication, in the case of students, both aspects of vocabulary must be present in order to foster effective academic achievement, and Schmitt (2010) is correct in stating that for learners to master a given set of vocabulary, they must be meaningfully exposed to, practiced with, and used the words in different activities.

In teaching vocabulary, the main objective should not be confined to students learning the words; rather, it should aim to encourage students to use the words in communicative situations.

The effective methods of teaching employed and the media used are just as important as the students' confidence that the vocabulary is acquired when evaluating the learning of a language. Teaching media and learning methods must be appropriately integrated and designed within a learning framework in a way that actively involves students. Teaching media is important and helps with capturing learners' attention and helping learners remember and learn new things and teaching media helps and is important. Teaching media consists of all the resources that a teacher uses to convey knowledge to students. Learning media are things used by students and teachers during the learning process, according to Widodo. Learning resources can be physical media or electronic media. Learning tools and instructional media can create variations in learning and foster a pleasant atmosphere. According to The National Education Association, instructional media are all the materials that can be seen, heard, read, or spoken and that can serve a purpose in a teaching situation. According to Gagne, learning media are all the elements of the teaching situation that can capture the attention and motivate the students (as cited in Arsyad, 2002).

The incorporation of interactive media into language instruction can enhance student engagement and concentrate retention on language components, especially on vocabulary. A prominent example of digital media used in urban education exemplifies the game-based learning media known as Kahoot! Kahoot is an educational and interactive media technology blended framework. In real-time,

Kahoot! enables educators to design enjoyable and rivalrous quizzes to which students can respond via their devices. As Mustikawati (2020) states, “Kahoot! is a perfect combination of learning and play, which helps students to acquire and memorize vocabulary.” Additionally, Azhar Arsyad (2013) remarks that students are motivated more when technology is used in the classroom, particularly in combination with visual technology such as animation, illustration, and color, which are features Kahoot! naturally includes. As Hartanti (2019) states, the use of Kahoot! in the learning assessment process helps to maintain students' motivation to learn and provides a more enjoyable learning environment.

The Kahoot app promotes competing with classmates to encourage students to answer test fast and accurately (Hartanti, 2019). Motivating students to answer test accurately increases engagement in Kahoot games. Kahoot motivates students to learn and helps them understand and gain knowledge about the topic. Hartanti (2019) explained that Kahoot has many features that create a sense of challenge and ambition to engaged students. Students want to answer test and be ranked top, which increases users' scores the most.

Kahoot is not only a digital learning media but also represents the concept of gamification in education. Gamification refers to the use of game elements such as points, competition, challenges, and immediate feedback in non-game contexts, including learning activities (Deterding et al., 2011). In language learning, particularly vocabulary mastery, gamification can enhance students' motivation and engagement by making the learning process more interactive and enjoyable.

Gamification is considered appropriate for young learners because students at the elementary level tend to learn more effectively through fun and game-based activities. Hamari et al. (2014) state that gamification in education can positively influence students' motivation and learning outcomes when it is properly designed. Therefore, the use of Kahoot as a gamified learning media is relevant to support students' vocabulary mastery.

Based on these theoretical considerations, this study applies a pre-experimental design using a one-group pretest–posttest model to examine the effectiveness of Kahoot in improving students' vocabulary mastery. This design allows the researcher to compare students' vocabulary achievement before and after the implementation of Kahoot as a learning media (Ary et al., 2010).

Bali, Buleleng Regency, SD Negeri 7 Kubutambahan has not previously applied Kahoot as a digital learning media in English vocabulary instruction. Preliminary observation indicated that students' vocabulary mastery was limited, as they faced difficulties in identifying and using English vocabulary during classroom activities. Due to the dominant use of lecturing, textbooks, and paper-based exercises, vocabulary instruction is often conducted through traditional teaching practices. As a result, students may show low engagement during the learning process, which can affect their ability to retain vocabulary. Since vocabulary plays an essential role in learning English, the use of alternative learning media is needed to support students' vocabulary mastery.

Kahoot is considered a potential learning media because it integrates game elements and immediate feedback into the learning process. The use of Kahoot

allows students to practice vocabulary in an interactive and engaging environment, while also enabling teachers to assess students' responses efficiently. Therefore, this study is conducted to examine the effectiveness of Kahoot as a learning media in the English vocabulary learning process at SDN 7 Kubutambahan. This study aims to investigate whether there is a significant difference in students' vocabulary mastery before and after the implementation of Kahoot using a pre-experimental research design.

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the identified classroom challenges, Challenges in the classroom show that students at SDN 7 Kubutambahan show limited mastery in the vocabulary during the learning process. This limitation is made worse by the insufficient choice and application of interactive learning media. This also describes the phenomenon of poor teaching aids that have been available and are said to help improve vocabulary learning. Therefore, in this case, the teaching aid that remains to be a problem is the interactive learning media that is appropriate to the students' level of readiness to learn, and, therefore, is likely to be effective in improving the students' interest and the learning achievement, especially in vocabulary. One of the interactive learning media that is likely to be effective in this regard is Kahoot. Kahoot is commonly used to enhance the learning experience of students through games. The purpose of this study is to provide a Kahoot empirical study and evaluate how much Kahoot helps students in vocabulary mastery. In a Kahoot study, the Primary focus will be to analyze the vocabulary mastery of elementary school students in semi-rural areas by using a single group pre-test and post-test design. In this case, the researcher will examine the vocabulary mastery of fifth grade students

at SDN 7 Kubutambahan after using Kahoot to determine how it helps students in vocabulary refinement.

1.3 Limitations

This study uses the My Next Words Grade 5 *package book* as the main source of English learning materials for grade V students of SDN 7 Kubutambahan. This package book is part of the Merdeka curriculum and is used as a guide by teachers for teaching and learning activities in the classroom.

The focus of this research is limited to certain vocabulary materials and sentence structures that are relevant to the research objectives. For vocabulary, this research focuses on the topic of animals and fruits, where students are directed to recognize, mention, and use these words in the context of exercises and learning activities. For grammar, this study emphasizes the simple present tense sentence pattern, which usually appears in the practice of composing sentences about daily activities, habits, and simple descriptions according to the abilities of grade V students.

This study only used the parts of the package book that contained the material, not the entire book, so that the scope of the research became clearer and more focused. This restriction also ensures that research remains in line with the curriculum implemented at SDN 7 Kubutambahan and supports effective evaluation of the influence of Kahoot use on students' vocabulary mastery and this study employs the one-group pretest-posttest design to measure students'

vocabulary mastery before and after the implementation of Kahoot, the study measures students' vocabulary performance after the implementation of Kahoot.

1.4 Research Questions

From the explanation above, the research problems can be concluded as follows:

1. Is there a significant effect on fifth-grade students' vocabulary mastery after the implementation of Kahoot as a learning media at SDN 7 Kubutambahan?

1.5 Researcher Objectives

With the above research questions, the objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To determine whether the use of Kahoot as a learning media has a significant effect on the vocabulary mastery of fifth-grade students at SDN 7 Kubutambahan.

1.6 Research Significance

By conducting this research, it provides a meaning that can be divided into two parts, including:

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This study aims to test the effectiveness of interactive media, specifically Kahoot, in improving students' vocabulary mastery. The research explores how technology and gamification can support educators in enhancing the learning process within modern education. Additionally, this study contributes to

understanding the relationship between education, technology, and vocabulary mastery, particularly for English teachers in Buleleng. By examining the use of Kahoot as a learning media, the research seeks to highlight its influence on English teaching practices and its potential to improve students' language skills.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

a. For Teachers

This research urgently needs significant insights for English teachers to enhance their professional growth to increase students' interest in learning as well as students' readiness to face educational challenges that increasingly rely on technology to create a successful learning process.

b. For Next Research

This research was conducted to provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of *Kahoot!* as a learning media in the English learning process, specifically to see whether *Kahoot!* effectively supports students' vocabulary mastery. And this study aims to explore how *Kahoot!* can be optimally utilized to enhance student engagement and make the learning process more effective.

1.7 Definition of Keyterm

In order to anticipate the misinterpretation of the key terms used in this study, the researcher provides the brief definition of the key terms used in this study, as follows:

1. Vocabulary refers to the entire collection of data in a language that is known and used by a person at the time of learning to understand and be able to convey the meaning of communication both verbally and in writing.

2, Kahoot is an interactive learning platform based on digital quizzes and utilizes gamification elements to make the learning process in the classroom more effective.

1.7.1 Theoretical Definition

1. Theoretical Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a key component of language mastery that allows students to understand and convey messages effectively. Schmitt (2025) explained that vocabulary mastery is not just knowing the meaning of words, but also includes word forms, word meanings, and appropriate use of words in various communication contexts. Vocabulary mastery includes two main dimensions:

1. Receptive – the ability to recognize and understand words when reading or listening.
2. Productive – the ability to use words appropriately when writing or speaking.

According to Nation (2013), vocabulary mastery is the foundation for the development of other language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In other words, the more vocabulary students master, the easier it will be for them to understand the message and express ideas effectively. Vocabulary is also an important element for

internalizing language structure, collocation, and word use in different contexts.

2. Theoretical Definition of Kahoot

Kahoot is a quiz-based digital learning platform that uses game-based learning mechanisms to support the learning process. According to Maemanah & Shofiana (2025), Kahoot combines competition, instant feedback, and interactive elements in learning activities thereby significantly increasing student motivation and engagement.

Kahoot allows students:

1. Access online and interactive quizzes.
2. Get direct feedback from their answers, making it easier to correct errors and reinforce concepts.
3. Engage in fun, competitive, and collaborative learning experiences, which are in line with the principles of *active learning* and *interactive learning*.

In the context of vocabulary learning, Kahoot helps students internalize new words through meaningful repetition, visual and audio support, and challenges that trigger active participation. This supports context-based learning and improves vocabulary retention compared to traditional methods.

1.7.2 Operational Definition

1. Operational Definition of Vocabulary

In this study, vocabulary is defined as the ability of students to recognize, understand, and use words in English correctly. Vocabulary mastery is measured through four specific aspects:

1. Noun Recognition – the ability of students to recognize nouns, such as the names of animals, fruits, or everyday objects. The indicator is the ability to choose the right noun from the list of choices in quiz or practice questions.
2. Verb Usage – the ability of students to use verbs appropriately, especially in Simple Present sentences. The indicator is the ability to compose the correct sentence using the given verb.
3. Word Meaning – the ability to understand the meaning of words individually. The indicator is the student's answer that shows the understanding of the word according to the context of the question.
4. Word in Context – the ability of students to use words in sentences appropriately and in context. The indicator is the ability to solve sentences or problems that ask for the correct choice of words in a certain context.

Measuring vocabulary through these four aspects helps assess not only the mastery of word meaning, but also students' ability to recognize words (nouns), use words (verbs), understand the meaning of words (word meaning), and use words in the right context (word in context). This approach is in line with the theories of Schmitt (2025) and Nation (2013), which emphasize that vocabulary

mastery must be comprehensive and include the form, meaning, and use of words in real contexts.

2. Operational Definition of Kahoot

In this study, Kahoot is defined as a quiz-based digital learning platform that uses game elements to increase students' engagement and vocabulary mastery. Kahoot usage is measured through several indicators:

1. Active Participation – students actively answer quiz questions that are presented interactively.
2. Response to Feedback – students respond to correct or incorrect answers by correcting mistakes and remembering newly learned vocabulary.
3. Motivation and Enthusiasm – students show a passion for learning through scores, rankings, and healthy competition during the quizze.
4. Vocabulary Improvement – students' ability to remember, recognize, and use new words taught through Kahoot quizzes.

Kahoot was chosen because it is able to present vocabulary material in an interesting and interactive manner, which is in accordance with the principles of *digital game-based learning* and *active learning*. Through interactive, visual, and instant feedback quizzes, students can internalize vocabulary more effectively, improve retention, and be motivated to learn. This is in line with the theory of Maemanah & Shofiana (2025) which states that Kahoot supports vocabulary learning through fun, competitive, and educational learning experiences.