

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

English, as an international language, holds an essential role in the global era. It is widely used as a means of communication in education, business, science, and technology (Rohmah, 2005). In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language from the early levels of education, particularly in bilingual schools where the use of English is more emphasized compared to regular schools (Hoerudin, 2024). For young learners, mastering vocabulary is considered the cornerstone of learning English, since vocabulary knowledge directly affects the ability to listen, speak, read, and write. Students with limited vocabulary face significant barriers in understanding teachers' instructions, expressing their ideas, and comprehending texts, which ultimately hinders their overall language development. Therefore, vocabulary mastery must be prioritized from the early stages of English learning (Agazzi, 2022). Despite its importance, teaching vocabulary to young learners is not without challenges. Many teachers still rely on conventional methods such as rote memorization, repetition, and translation, which often make students feel bored and disengaged (Rizka Pebriantini et al., 2024). These approaches may not align with the developmental characteristics of young learners, who learn best through play, exploration, and interactive activities. As a result, vocabulary learning in primary schools sometimes fails to achieve its intended outcomes, as students show low retention, limited active use of vocabulary, and lack of motivation to learn. In order to overcome these challenges, teachers are encouraged to adopt more innovative, engaging, and technology-based strategies.

In the current era of digitalization, the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) into language learning has gained growing attention. Digital tools provide opportunities for interactive, personalized, and student-centered learning. One such platform that has been increasingly utilized is Educaplay, an online educational tool that allows teachers to design various interactive multimedia activities, such as crosswords, matching games, quizzes, word searches, listening tasks, and even interactive maps (Artal-Sevil et al., 2020). Educaplay is particularly suitable for young learners, as it combines visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements that stimulate students' senses and create a fun learning environment. This platform is also accessible on multiple devices, making it easier for both teachers and students to integrate technology into the learning process (Saritama & Celi, 2024). Previous studies have suggested that technology-based and game-based learning can significantly improve vocabulary mastery. Learners become more motivated, actively engaged, and confident in practicing new words when exposed to interactive activities. Vargas-Saritama (2024) conducted a quasi-experimental study titled *Educaplay as a Tool to Potentiate English*

Vocabulary Retention and Learning among EFL high school students in Ecuador. The results showed a significant improvement in vocabulary retention and mastery after

integrating interactive Educaplay activities into the classroom. The author highlighted that the effectiveness of Educaplay depends on structured activity design and continuous teacher guidance. Ramos (2022), in their study *The Integration of the Digital Platform Educaplay in Interdisciplinary Paths* published in the *Athens Journal of Education*, investigated the use of Educaplay in interdisciplinary teaching projects at the primary and middle school levels. Their qualitative findings revealed that Educaplay enhanced students' motivation, collaboration, and learning autonomy when used as a digital resource for well-designed activities. Díaz (2024) examined the *Incidence of Educaplay as a Gamified Strategy in the Teaching of Metacognition Techniques* among upper elementary students. The study found that gamification through Educaplay promoted better understanding of metacognitive strategies and encouraged students to reflect on their learning processes, demonstrating that Educaplay can support not only linguistic but also cognitive skill development. Gallegos (2021) reported on the *Implementation of Educaplay to Strengthen the Learning-Teaching Process* in a descriptive study conducted at the baccalaureate level. The research focused on teachers' adaptation of instructional content and identified several pedagogical and technical challenges in integrating Educaplay effectively into lesson delivery. Moreover, the gamification aspect of Educaplay promotes healthy competition and collaboration among students, which enhances their participation in classroom activities. However, despite these promising findings, research on the use of Educaplay at the elementary school level in Indonesia, especially in bilingual schools, is still limited.

At SD Dwi Bahasa North Bali Bilingual School, English is one of the main subjects, and students are expected to achieve higher proficiency in vocabulary as part of their bilingual education (Padmadewi, 2014). Nevertheless, observations and informal discussions with teachers reveal that many students still struggle to retain and apply vocabulary effectively. This gap highlights the need for innovative teaching strategies. Therefore, this research is conducted to examine the effect of implementing Educaplay on first grade students' English vocabulary mastery. By doing so, this study seeks to contribute both theoretical and practical insights into improving vocabulary instruction in bilingual elementary school settings.

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the research background, several problems can be identified in the context of teaching vocabulary to fourth grade students at SD Dwi Bahasa North Bali Bilingual School. At NBBS, the use of digital learning applications such as *Educaplay* has never been implemented in English language classes. Research has shown that interactive digital tools can make learning more attractive and meaningful, especially for young learners who are familiar with technology. *Educaplay* provides a variety of interactive activities such as quizzes, games, puzzles, and multimedia tasks that can stimulate students' curiosity and involvement. However, since *Educaplay* has never been applied at NBBS, there is no clear evidence of its effectiveness in this specific context.

Therefore, the problem identified in this study is the lack of implementation of *Educaplay* at NBBS and the need to investigate whether this tool can improve students' engagement and vocabulary mastery. By examining the difference before and after the use of *Educaplay*, this research aims to determine its potential contribution to creating a more interactive and engaging English learning environment.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

In order to ensure that this research remains focused and manageable, the scope of the study is limited to specific aspects. The participants of this study are restricted to fourth grade students of SD Dwi Bahasa North Bali Bilingual School in the academic year 2025/2026, so the findings may not be generalized to students in other grade levels. The language aspect under investigation is limited only to vocabulary mastery, without examining other components of English proficiency such as grammar, speaking fluency, or writing skills. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the implementation of *Educaplay* as the primary digital learning medium, without comparing it to other technological tools or platforms that might also support vocabulary learning. Finally, the comparison is made only between the use of *Educaplay* and the conventional methods commonly applied in the school, while external factors such as students' learning environment at home, prior exposure to English, or parental support are not included within the scope of this research. These limitations are necessary to maintain the clarity, depth, and feasibility of the study.

1.4 Research Questions

From the limitation of the problem, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. Is there any significant effect of implementing *Educaplay* on the fourth grade students' English vocabulary mastery at SD Dwi Bahasa North Bali Bilingual School?

1.5 Research Objective

Aligned with the research questions, the objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze whether the implementation of digital learning media in the form of *Educaplay* make any significant effect in the fourth grade students' vocabulary mastery after the *Educaplay* is implemented.

1.6 Research Significance

The study's findings are inclined to be useful and beneficial for both theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretical Significance

The problem is limited to ensure that the discussion of the problem does not extend beyond the limits of the study topic and to achieve the best possible results. This is done to ensure that the problem is limited. This study centers around using digital media, specifically Educaplay, as a tool for enhancing vocabulary mastery skills in 4th-grade elementary schools. The aim is to enhance language abilities, in vocabulary mastery which the basic four skills in English through the use of Educaplay.

2. Practical Significance

This research aims to guide how to use digital learning resources, such as learning media to help teachers and students develop their vocabulary mastery. Educational institutions also offer new learning resources that can affect students' vocabulary mastery. These contributions advance the teaching and learning process:

a. For Teacher

This research provides useful insights on how to improve vocabulary instruction in the classroom by utilising digital resources such as Educaplay. It offers information about using different teaching strategies and incorporating technology into lessons.

b. For Students

Through the use of Educaplay, which promote vocabulary development and make learning more dynamic and pleasurable, this research provides students with benefits in the form of engaging and adaptable learning experiences.

c. For Other Researcher's

The study is a resource for educational institutions looking to improve learning outcomes with digital resources. It also lays the groundwork for future study on the effectiveness of Educaplay in vocabulary instruction, benefiting the larger educational profession.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. Vocabulary Mastery

a. Conceptual Definition

Vocabulary mastery is the capacity to use words in speech while also understanding their meaning in English (Zebua et al., 2023). Vocabulary mastery substantially impacts language abilities like reading comprehension, writing fluency, and overall communication efficiency. Those who acquire language mastery may express themselves more eloquently and grasp difficult materials better than those with little vocabulary expertise (Andriani & Sriwahyuningsih, 2019). The variety of ways to tell someone vocabulary mastery, for example using vocabulary tests.

b. Operational Definition

In this research vocabulary mastery is defined as words that are taught in Grade 4 during the first semester

2. Learning Media

a. Conceptual Definition

Learning media encompasses a variety of tools and resources intended to assist learning and improve the educational experience. (Kozma, 1991) defined learning media as a complementary process in which processes and representations are created and procedures carried out, sometimes by the medium and other times by the learner, depending on their respective technologies, symbol systems, and comprehension capacities.

b. Operational Definition

This study will use digital learning media as the independent variable. Specific learning media will be used as learning media in this study. The learning media chosen aligns with the research objective, namely student vocabulary mastery.

3. Educaplay

a. Conceptual Definition

Educaplay is defined as an online tool or platform that enables educators to design free, creative, and professional educational games easily without needing additional software (Surachmi & Sison, 2021). It integrates various game-based features that promote

active learning and engagement, making learning more attractive and enjoyable even in virtual or remote learning environments. Educaplay stimulates self-confidence, skill achievement, knowledge understanding, reflection, argumentation, and communication between teachers and students during the learning process.

b. Operational Definition

Educaplay operates as an online platform designed to facilitate the creation of diverse educational activities such as quizzes, crosswords (crucigrams), letter soups (word searches), complete text exercises, dialogues, dictations, sorting letters, linking elements, test questionnaires, and video quizzes. It allows users to interact with these activities either individually or collaboratively, enhancing learning through game mechanics and immediate feedback. The platform supports offline access by allowing the download of activities in flash format to be used without an internet connection, augmenting flexibility.



