

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the writer outlines the research background, identification of the research problem, limitation of the research, research question, the purpose of the research, significance of the research, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Research Background

English language learning at the elementary school level in Indonesia, including in Bali, plays a crucial role in forming the foundation of foreign language skills from an early age. English, as an international language, opens up opportunities for the younger generation to interact, learn, and compete on the global stage. In Bali, with its rapidly growing tourism sector and increasingly advanced creative industry, English language proficiency provides significant advantages for students. Utami & Rismadewi (2024), stated that the ability to communicate in English is very important because it's not only increasing future career potential but also allows them to actively participate in the global economy and promote local culture. Sya & Helmanto (2020) stated that English has become one of the important needs for children to be able to face the future later. In line with this, Artini & Padmadewi (2022) also said that learning English as a foreign language must involve students in meaningful learning experiences so that they can use the foreign language in real-life contexts. Therefore, English is integrated into the elementary school curriculum as a subject or local content, with the hope of equipping students with adequate language skills from an early age.

Vocabulary is the main foundation in English, because understanding words allows students to understand texts, communicate effectively, and develop other language skills. Poor vocabulary mastery is one of the problems that must be solved because vocabulary mastery is an important thing that is very necessary and needed in learning English (Sucandra et al., 2022). Without adequate vocabulary mastery, students will have difficulty understanding subject matter,

participating in class activities, and using English actively. Research conducted by Amalia (2018) in one of the schools in Singaraja, shows that 18-30 students have difficulty in achieving a learning indicator caused by inadequate English vocabulary. This is in line with other research conducted by Agung et al., (2023) and Amalia (2023) which also stated that there are still many students at the elementary school level who have difficulty in mastering English vocabulary. This proves that most students are still have low vocabulary mastery.

However, in reality, the English learning process in elementary schools still faces various obstacles. The main obstacles found in the English learning process is the low mastery of students' vocabulary. This was said by the fifth-grade English teacher at SD Negeri 1 Karangasem when conducting preliminary observation. Limited vocabulary mastery is the main obstacle for students to develop comprehensive English language skills. This low vocabulary mastery not only affects students' ability to understand texts and communicate verbally, but also has an impact on their ability to write and think critically in English. In addition, low vocabulary mastery can also reduce students' motivation to learn English, because they find it difficult to understand the subject matter and participate in class activities.

One of the factors that contributes to low vocabulary mastery is the learning media used is less interesting and interactive. Research conducted by Salsabila et al., (2024) found that teachers only used textbooks and blackboards in vocabulary learning, without using more interesting and interactive learning media. This was also found during preliminary observations at SD Negeri 1 Karangasem. Teachers only use English textbooks when teaching English. This makes students feel bored and the learning process becomes monotonous because there is nothing new that is interesting for them. Nurhabibah et al., (2021) stated that the learning media used can affect the improvement of student learning achievement. Besides that, teachers also still use memorizing words method, so that students have difficulty remembering and using these words in real situations. The low of variation in learning media used makes students quickly bored and unmotivated to learn new vocabulary. Nitiasih et al., (2020) stated that teachers in 21st century are expected to make innovative learning

process in the classroom suitable with 21st century learning characteristics which involve technology. Therefore, more creativity is needed from teachers to be able to create and utilize new learning media that are interactive and able to attract or foster students' interest and motivation to learn English.

Ideally, vocabulary learning at the elementary school level should be carried out with a communicative, contextual, and fun approach. The communicative approach emphasizes the use of language to communicate in real life, so that students can learn vocabulary through interaction and practice in authentic situations. According to the Second Language Acquisition theory proposed by Krashen (1982), students will find it easier to acquire vocabulary if they are exposed to language in a context that is meaningful and relevant to their lives. The constructivist learning theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978), also stated that students will find it easier to understand the material if they are actively involved in the learning process through activities that are interesting and relevant to their daily lives. Thus, vocabulary learning must also be linked to topics or themes that are interesting and relevant to students' daily lives, so that they feel motivated to learn and remember new words.

In Indonesia in particular, not many have developed digital game media into the learning process to facilitate students in learning (Budiarta, 2024). The use of technology in the modern era such as digital and online aids has become an important resource for language mastery and educational achievement (Rismadewi & Utami, 2024). Technology helps learners improve their language learning both inside and outside the classroom (Juniarta et al., 2022). This is in line with Suprianti et al., (2024) statement, that said utilizing learning media which integrate the technology is considered important. In line with this, Agustinasari et al., (2020) also said that one of the ways or solutions for teachers to be able to make learning more interesting and interactive is by using and utilizing technology and the internet. Therefore, the use of game-based learning media can be an effective solution to overcome the problems, stated by Nitiasih et al., (2022).

Game-based learning is a learning method that uses applications or websites by combining or collaborating games to teach a learning material that will help

in the learning process. Nowadays, gamification has been developed and implemented as an integrated teaching media (Nitiasih & Budiarta, 2021). Game-based learning media offers various interactive and interesting features that can increase student motivation and make vocabulary learning more effective. Game-based learning media or digital game based learning promotes an active learning process with new fun and interactive activities for young learners in their learning, especially in language learning (Mahayanti et al., 2020).

Many studies has proven the effectiveness of using game-based learning, one of the studies conducted by Fitriati et al., (2021), which has claimed that the implementation of game-based learning media Educandy has proven to be effective in evaluating learning and increasing students' motivation. As research conducted by Komalasari (2021), showed that The Quizizz game can improve students' vocabulary and greatly help students in remembering vocabulary. Arsini et al., (2022) showed that Wordwall can help students in enriching their English vocabulary, as well as can increase their motivation to learn. Then, the Quizlet application has proven to be very helpful in increasing students' motivation in learning vocabulary (Setiawan & Wiedarti, 2020). Research conducted by Wulandari et al., (2024), claimed that Bamboozle is very helpful and supportive of students in vocabulary acquisition and students also enjoy and don't get bored easily because they use the game in the learning process. Dimyati & Purwananti (2022), showed that using Kahoot can help improve students' English vocabulary learning outcomes, as well as the learning process becomes more fun and makes students more interested in learning English. In addition, research conducted by Fadhilawati et al., (2022) also stated that the Memrize and Quizlet applications are very helpful for students in improving vocabulary achievement, as well as being able to remember vocabulary well.

One of the digital platforms that can be used as a game-based learning media is Educandy. Educandy is a platform that allows teachers to create interesting and interactive educational games for vocabulary learning. With a motto "*making learning sweeter*", as well as various features make Educandy look even more interesting. Teachers can easily create quizzes, crosswords, matching

games, and other activities using vocabulary that is relevant to the subject matter. Using Educandy is very helpful and facilitate teachers in the learning process, as well as in teaching vocabulary. The advantage of Educandy lies in its ability to increase student motivation and participation in vocabulary learning. Through a gamification approach, students learn vocabulary while playing, so that the learning process becomes more fun and not boring. Games that are designed attractively can trigger students' curiosity and encourage them to learn new vocabulary more actively. Research by Damayanti et al., (2023) showed that the use of Educandy can increase elementary school students' vocabulary mastery. By using Educandy, students not only learn vocabulary passively through memorization, but are also actively involved in activities that stimulate the use of vocabulary in meaningful contexts. The games provided by Educandy also help students develop critical thinking skills, problem solving, and teamwork. In addition, Educandy can also help teachers create an inclusive learning environment, where each student can learn according to their own pace and learning style.

This study is conducted with the aim to determine whether there is a significant effect of using Educandy as a learning media on students' vocabulary mastery of fifth grade at SD Negeri 1 Karangasem. SD Negeri 1 Karangasem is chosen because it is one of well-known elementary school in Karangasem that have several classes in every grade, which can be divided into two groups according to the type of research that conducted in this study. This study is important to conduct because it fills the research gap on the effectiveness of Educandy media on fifth grade elementary school students in Bali, especially in Karangasem, where previous studies were mostly conducted outside Bali. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of more effective and innovative English learning methods in the future, as well as the quality of English education at the elementary school level.

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the background of the research that have been explained above, the specific problems can be identified as follows:

1. Students' vocabulary mastery still needs to be strengthened, because in some situations they face difficulties when trying to convey, express, or write their ideas and opinions clearly.
2. Students' interest in learning English can be enhanced, because the teaching methods currently used still rely only on English textbooks. This condition may affect the development of students' vocabulary and English skills.
3. The learning media used tend to be less interactive, because most of them still rely on English textbooks as the main source. As a result, the learning process may feel less varied and less interesting for students.

1.3 Problem Limitation

Based on the problem identification stated above, the problem limitation in this study focused on the following problems.

1. Students' vocabulary mastery still needs to be strengthened, because in some situations they face difficulties when trying to convey, express, or write their ideas and opinions clearly.
2. The learning media used tend to be less interactive, because most of them still rely on English textbooks as the main source. As a result, the learning process may feel less varied and less interesting for students.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the background of the study, the writer has formulated the research question in this study as it is mentioned below:

1. Does the implementation of Educandy give any significant effects on students' vocabulary mastery in fifth grade of SD Negeri 1 Karangasem?

1.5 Purpose of The Research

Based on the research question, the purpose of the current research is to determine whether there is a significant effect of using Educandy as a game-

based learning media on students' vocabulary mastery in fifth grade of SD Negeri 1 Karangasem.

1.6 Significance of The Research

Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of theories regarding game-based learning in English vocabulary mastery at the elementary school level.

Practical Significance

a. For Students

The benefits of conducting this research for students are expected to contribute to the development of vocabulary mastery through the use of Educandy, making learning more engaging, interactive, and enjoyable.

b. For Teachers

The benefits of conducting this research for teachers are it can help and provide new ideas for teachers to be able to use the help of other learning media, especially by using the help of technology so that learning becomes more interactive.

c. For Other Researchers

The benefits of conducting this research for other researchers are that it can help other researchers in carrying out their research and can also be used as a reference for the research they will do.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

a) Vocabulary Mastery

Conceptually, Hornby (2006), stated that vocabulary is the words that are known and used by a person when speaking in a certain language. While, Nation (2001) stated that vocabulary mastery is the ability to recognize and use various kinds of words in various contexts. In this case,

vocabulary mastery includes not only knowledge of the meaning of words, but also an understanding of their form and use.

In this study, vocabulary mastery is the ability of students to know and understand vocabulary in English. In this case, vocabulary mastery becomes the dependent variable.

b) Game-Based Learning Media

Conceptually, Deterding et al., (2011) explained that game-based learning is an approach that integrates game elements into the learning context to improve the learning experience. Other than that, According to Gee (2003) , game-based learning is characterized by the use of video games and game elements in an educational context to create interactive and fun learning experiences.

In this study, the game-based learning media that is focused on is the use of game-based learning to teach English. In this case, game-based learning is applied as a learning media.

c) Educandy

Conceptually, Ulya (2021), stated that Educandy is a web-based application that has the slogan 'making learning sweeter' which can be used to make online games, where the games made are still in the context of learning so that it will make the learning process more fun.

In this study, Educandy is a media that is used to create interactive games that can be used as exercises and practices in teaching English vocabulary. In this case, Educandy becomes the independent variable.