

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists background of the study, research question, objective of the study, hypothesis, scope and limitation of the study, significance of the study, and definitions of the key terms.

A. Background of the Study

English education has become a vital element in the landscape of global communication, academic advancement, and career development. As English solidifies its status as the dominant international language, the ability to use it proficiently is no longer a luxury but a necessity, especially in non-English-speaking countries where access to international resources, higher education, and global employment opportunities often requires a high level of English competence (Crystal, 2012). Within the context of language acquisition, vocabulary knowledge is widely recognized as a foundational skill that underpins learners' ability to comprehend, produce, and interact in English effectively. Research has consistently shown that vocabulary mastery is essential for reading comprehension, oral fluency, writing clarity, and listening comprehension, all of which are central to academic and professional success (Nation, 2013).

However, mastering vocabulary poses a persistent challenge for many learners, particularly those in environments where English exposure is limited to classroom instruction. In these contexts, students often struggle to retain and apply newly acquired vocabulary due to insufficient practice, lack of meaningful interaction, and reliance on passive learning methods. Traditional vocabulary teaching techniques such as rote memorization, translation-based instruction, and repetitive exercises from textbooks tend to emphasize quantity over meaningful use. These methods frequently

result in superficial learning, where students can recall words temporarily but fail to integrate them into active language use (Laufer & Nation, 2015; Webb & Nation, 2017). Such limitations underscore the need for innovative instructional strategies that promote deeper cognitive engagement, contextual understanding, and long-term retention of vocabulary.

At SMP Al-Huda Kota Kediri, students often face significant challenges in acquiring and using English vocabulary effectively. Preliminary observations and informal interviews with English teachers at the school reveal that many students have a limited vocabulary range, struggle to recall learned words, and lack confidence in applying vocabulary in communicative contexts. This deficiency hinders their comprehension of reading texts, constructing meaningful sentences, and engaging in English conversations.

One of the contributing factors to this problem is the traditional vocabulary teaching method predominantly used in the classroom. Teachers often rely on textbook-based instruction, dictionary definitions, and rote memorization techniques. These methods, although structured, tend to be monotonous and teacher-centered, which can result in low student engagement and motivation (Susanti & Tarmuji, 2016). As a result, students find it difficult to retain new words and apply them in practical situations.

In response to these pedagogical limitations, educators have increasingly explored more interactive and student-centered approaches, particularly those that leverage technology and gamification. Game-based learning has been recognized as an effective strategy to enhance vocabulary acquisition by making the learning process more engaging, meaningful, and enjoyable (Taheri, 2014; Huang & Soman, 2013).

Games can reduce learner anxiety, foster collaboration, and encourage active participation, which are key factors in successful vocabulary learning (Reinders & Wattana, 2015).

One digital tool that has gained popularity among English teachers is Bamboozle, an online platform designed for game-based learning. Bamboozle allows teachers to create customized quiz games or use pre-existing question sets aligned with their instructional goals. The platform promotes competitive, team-based play, which can increase students' enthusiasm and focus during vocabulary activities (Sun & Hsieh, 2018). The game's format combining elements of chance, challenge, and instant feedback has the potential to improve vocabulary retention by promoting active recall and contextual usage (Plass et al., 2014).

Despite the growing adoption of digital games in education, research specifically examining the impact of Bamboozle on vocabulary mastery remains scarce. Most previous studies have focused on other platforms such as Kahoot, Quizlet, or Wordwall, which have shown positive effects on language learning outcomes (Derakhshan & Khatir, 2015). This research gap is particularly relevant to the context of SMP Al-Huda Kota Kediri, where teachers are beginning to integrate digital tools but lack data-driven guidance on which platforms are most effective.

Therefore, the present study, titled "The Effectiveness of Bamboozle Game on Students' Vocabulary Mastery," aims to investigate how the use of Bamboozle affects students' vocabulary learning compared to an alternative game-based tool, Wordwall. By exploring the differential impact of these platforms on student engagement and vocabulary acquisition, this study seeks to provide empirical insights for teachers at

SMP Al-Huda and contribute to the broader field of technology-enhanced language learning.

B. Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the research question of this study as follow “Is using Bamboozle games effective on students’ vocabulary mastery at seventh grade of SMP Al Huda Kota Kediri?”

C. Objectives of the Study

This research is conducted to determine whether using Bamboozle game is significantly effective on students’ vocabulary mastery at the seventh grade of SMP Al Huda Kota Kediri.

D. Hypothesis

Based on the research question and research objective, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

H0: There is no significant difference between students who are taught using Bamboozle game and those who are taught using Wordwall in learning vocabulary at the seventh grade of SMP Al Huda Kota Kediri.

Ha: There is a significant difference between students who are taught using Bamboozle game and those who are taught using Wordwall in learning vocabulary at the seventh grade of SMP Al Huda Kota Kediri.

E. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on examining the effectiveness of the Bamboozle game on students' vocabulary mastery at seventh grade of SMP Al Huda Kota Kediri. The scope includes measuring vocabulary improvement before and after using Bamboozle. The study will target vocabulary sets relevant to the seventh-grade curriculum, including

academic vocabulary and commonly used terms in various subjects. However, this study does not explore other language skills, such as listening, speaking, or grammar. Additionally, external factors influencing vocabulary learning, such as students' prior language proficiency and access to resources, are not controlled in this study.

F. Significance of the Study

This study holds both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it contributes to the growing body of research on digital game-based learning and its impact on language acquisition, particularly vocabulary mastery. The findings can enhance our understanding of how gamified learning environments, like Bamboozle, can facilitate language learning in a way that is engaging and effective. Practically, the study offers insights for educators and curriculum developers interested in incorporating digital games into vocabulary learning programs. If Bamboozle is proven effective, it can serve as a valuable resource for educators seeking innovative approaches to engage students and enhance vocabulary mastery.

G. Definition of the Key Terms

For the study, the researcher determines the definition of terms utilized in this study as follows:

- 1. Vocabulary:** Vocabulary refers to the set of words a person knows and uses to communicate effectively. It encompasses both receptive vocabulary, which involves recognizing and understanding words in context, and productive vocabulary, which involves using words in speech and writing. A rich vocabulary enhances comprehension, expression, and overall language proficiency. According to Nation (2013), vocabulary knowledge is essential for successful communication, while Thornbury (2002) emphasizes that vocabulary acquisition is central to language

learning. Cameron (2001) also highlights that a strong vocabulary is crucial for effective communication and comprehension in both spoken and written language.

2. Vocabulary Mastery: refers to the comprehensive knowledge and effective use of a language's vocabulary. It involves not only the ability to recognize and understand words (receptive vocabulary) but also the ability to produce and use them accurately in both speaking and writing (productive vocabulary). Mastery of vocabulary is essential for effective communication, reading comprehension, and language fluency. It helps learners understand and convey meaning clearly, improve communication skills, and enhance their overall language proficiency.

3. Bamboozle Game: This bamboozle game is an interactive, online game-based platform designed to enhance learning through engaging quizzes and challenges. It allows teachers to create and customize games for various subjects, promoting active participation and interaction among students. The game format is intended to make learning fun, reducing the pressure of traditional drills and encouraging students to take risks in a low-stakes environment. Bamboozle offers a wide range of ready-to-play games and quizzes, covering topics such as vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension, helping students improve their knowledge while keeping the learning process enjoyable and interactive.