

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter talks about the background of the study, the research problem, the objectives of the study, the research hypothesis, the scope and limitation of the research, the significance of the study, and definition of the key terms.

### **A. Background of the Study**

English proficiency is one of the essential competencies that student must possess, especially in one of the current era of globalization. Language functions as a tool for communication, both orally and in writing. Therefore, vocabulary acquisition becomes a fundamental element in learning English. Vocabulary is the foundation of every language skill, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, student's vocabulary proficiency often falls short of meeting the demands of the existing curriculum and educational standards. This lack of vocabulary mastery is attributed to limitations in teaching methods and low student motivation to learn (Molyaningrum & Suyata, 2021). Therefore, it is necessary to implement more effective learning strategies to enhance students' vocabulary proficiency in alignment with educational standards (Nation, I.S.P., 2001).

However, a lack of vocabulary can have serious consequences for language learners. Students with poor vocabulary knowledge often face difficulties in understanding reading materials, participating in discussions, and expressing their ideas in writing. This limitation can lead to decreased academic performance, reduced confidence in language use, and struggles in

communication (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Moreover, insufficient vocabulary hinders listening comprehension, making it challenging for students to follow instructions, engage in conversations, and understand spoken content in English.

To address vocabulary deficiencies, several strategies can be implemented. One effective approach is integrating technology-based learning tools such as mobile applications designed for vocabulary development. According to Godwin-Jones (2018), digital learning applications provide interactive and engaging methods for students to expand their vocabulary independently. Additionally, teachers can incorporate context-based learning, extensive reading, and interactive activities to enhance students' vocabulary retention (Rafiq et al., 2024). By employing diverse and engaging vocabulary learning strategies, students can gradually improve their language proficiency and become more confident in using English for communication.

The actual conditions show that many tenth-grade students continue to struggle with vocabulary development. Several factors contribute to this, including limitations in teaching methods, insufficient time allocated for vocabulary learning, and low student motivation and lack of attention to vocabulary learning (Webb & Nation, 2017). Research shows that low vocabulary proficiency significantly impacts students' abilities in other language skills. This includes listening comprehension, speaking fluency, reading comprehension and writing skills (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). A study by Schmitt (2010) emphasizes the importance of vocabulary in enhancing

students' overall communication skills. Therefore, more planned efforts in vocabulary teaching are needed to improve student learning outcomes.

The use of technology in education has advanced rapidly in recent years. One of the innovations in educational technology is the "WordUp" application, which offers an interactive and adaptive approach to learning English vocabulary. Additionally, this study adopts a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design to measure the specific improvement in vocabulary mastery resulting from the use of the WordUp application. By providing measurable and relevant data, this research aims to enrich the understanding of vocabulary learning through digital technology in the context of Indonesian secondary education. Utilizing the "WordUp" app in English vocabulary learning could be a potential solution. This app not only helps students understand the meanings of words but also how to use them correctly in sentence contexts. The adaptive and interactive learning approach makes it easier for students to remember and use new words in daily communication (Godwin-Jones, 2018). Furthermore, the use of the "WordUp" app also allows students to learn independently outside of school hours. This provides additional opportunities for students to expand their vocabulary at their own learning pace and according to their individual needs. By integrating technology into vocabulary learning, teachers can also more easily monitor student progress and provide constructive feedback to further enhance their learning process (Rafiq et al., 2024).

The ideal condition anticipated from the use of this app is a significant improvement in students' vocabulary acquisition. With the audio-visual

features and educational games provided by the "WordUp" app, students are likely to be more interested and motivated to learn new vocabulary compared to conventional learning methods Godwin-Jones, R. (2018). To evaluate the effectiveness of using the "WordUp" app on tenth-grade students' vocabulary acquisition, this study aims to compare students' vocabulary abilities before and after using the app. This research is expected to provide useful information for developing more effective and efficient vocabulary teaching strategies in the context of modern education.

In addition, Neda Maenza and Tijana Gajic (2020), this research used qualitative methods to assess the effectiveness of the “WordUp” app in improving English vocabulary. This study concluded that the “WordUp” app could have a positive impact on students' vocabulary development and serve as an excellent digital educational tool for advancing English vocabulary in an engaging and modern way. Another previous study by Nushi, Aghaei, and Roshanbin (2021) explored how this mobile application supports English vocabulary learning by immersing users in authentic and engaging contexts, such as movies, songs, and news programs. This research suggests that the app is highly beneficial for learners at levels above A1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The last previous study is by Idasari and Maknun (2021), this research used a quasi-experimental design, incorporating pre-tests and post-tests to evaluate writing skills in recount texts. The study focused on assessing the impact of the “WordUp” application on students' writing abilities. The results showed that the “WordUp” application was effective in improving students' writing skills. This study differed from

others in its methodology and focus. While previous research utilized qualitative methods, this study used quantitative methods. The earlier studies demonstrated WordUp's effectiveness in writing improvement, whereas this study aims to investigate the application's impact on enhancing students' vocabulary mastery.

In addition, quantitative research that evaluates the effectiveness of the WordUp application in improving high school students' vocabulary mastery is still very limited, especially at the secondary education level in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by investigating the effectiveness of the WordUp application in improving vocabulary mastery among tenth-grade students at SMAN 6 Kediri. Considering the various perspectives presented above, this research seeks to provide a realistic and data-driven solution to the issue of limited vocabulary among students. The implementation of the WordUp application is expected to lead to a significant improvement in students' vocabulary mastery, which in turn enhances their overall competence in using the English language.

## **B. Research Problem**

In line with the research background, the researcher formulates the following research question "Is the use of the WordUp App significantly effective in improving vocabulary mastery among tenth-grade students?"

## **C. Research Objective**

This research is conducted to determine whether the use of the WordUp App is significantly effective in enhancing vocabulary mastery among tenth-grade students.

#### **D. Research Hypothesis**

This research hypothesis analyzes the effectiveness of the wordUp application in improving the vocabulary mastery of tenth-grade students. The hypothesis is as follows:

1. The null hypothesis (H0)

There is no significant differences on vocabulary mastery between students taught by using WordUp application and students taught printed dictionary.

2. The alternative hypothesis (H1)

There is significant differences on vocabulary mastery between students taught by using WordUp application and students taught printed dictionary.

#### **E. Scope and limitation of the Research**

The scope of the problem is important to avoid misunderstandings. The issue raised in this study is limited to understanding how the use of the WordUp application influences learning and how its use enhances the comprehension of English vocabulary.

The limitations of this research focus on the use of the WordUp application in learning and its potential to influence students' vocabulary mastery in report text, specifically nouns and adjectives. Therefore, the researcher conducted a study titled “The Effectiveness of Using WordUp Application Towards Students’ Vocabulary Mastery at SMAN 6 Kediri.”

#### **F. Significance of the Study**

1. Theoretical Significance

There are two theoretical significances that can be obtained from this research. Here are the significances:

- a. This study can contribute to enriching vocabulary learning theory, especially in terms of how effectively the WordUp application helps students in enhancing their vocabulary mastery.
- b. This research has the potential to make a significant contribution to the understanding of the effectiveness of digital applications in the context of learning, particularly in terms of testing and strengthening theories related to the use of the WordUp application in the language learning process.

## 2. Practical Significance

- a. For Students: This research can serve as a valuable resource for students, demonstrating how the WordUp app can be an effective tool to enhance their English skills, particularly in vocabulary acquisition.
- b. For Teachers: This study provides insights for English teachers and educators interested in language learning, illustrating the potential benefits of using the WordUp app to improve vocabulary mastery among tenth-grade students.
- c. For Future Researchers: This research can be a useful reference for future studies focusing on vocabulary mastery, offering a foundation for exploring further research on the effectiveness of digital applications in language learning.

## **G. Clarification of the Key Terms**

### 1. Vocabulary Mastery

Mastery of vocabulary plays a very important role in the language learning process because it significantly affects various language skills. A broad vocabulary not only helps with understanding texts and effective communication but also contributes to reading, speaking, writing, and listening abilities. Additionally, a rich vocabulary can enhance speaking and writing skills by allowing for more varied and precise expression of ideas. Vocabulary also plays a crucial role in second language learning, where the ability to recognize and use new words greatly impacts student success. Therefore, efforts to expand students' vocabulary through various methods, including educational technology, can have a substantial positive impact on their overall language skills.

## 2. WordUp Application

Vocabulary learning applications like WordUp offer an innovative approach to enhancing vocabulary mastery in an interactive and enjoyable way. In addition, WordUp is a vocabulary learning application that not only uses rigid text descriptions to teach English words but also employs various engaging methods, such as thousands of songs, movies, famous quotes, and much more. Additional features such as progress tracking and instant feedback help users monitor their development and address areas needing improvement. Research indicates that the use of digital applications in education can boost student motivation and engagement, contributing to better learning outcomes. With this technology-based approach, modern vocabulary learning apps provide an efficient solution to challenges in vocabulary instruction.



