

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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

A. Background of The Study

In the last decade, the rapid growth of digital technology has significantly transformed the way people interact, communicate, and learn. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have become integral components of daily life, especially among adolescents and students. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as a group of internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. This technological shift has changed social behavior and learning patterns, creating new opportunities and challenges for education. According to the *Global Digital Report 2024*, social media penetration among Indonesian youth has reached more than 80%, indicating that students today spend a substantial amount of time engaging with digital content across various platforms (We Are Social, 2024).

Despite the massive use of social media in everyday life, the educational impact of this phenomenon remains a subject of debate. Some scholars argue that social media can enhance learning by providing instant access to authentic materials, enabling informal learning, and increasing student motivation (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Godwin-Jones, 2018). Others highlight the negative consequences, such as distraction, reduced attention span, and excessive screen

time that may hinder academic performance (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017; Rosen et al., 2013). This contradiction indicates a theoretical gap regarding how social media influences students' learning outcomes, especially in language learning.

Among the many social media platforms, TikTok has emerged as one of the most influential, particularly among teenagers. Originally known as a platform for entertainment and short videos, TikTok has developed into a space for micro learning, where educational content is presented in short, engaging, and easily digestible formats. TikTok's algorithm, which personalizes content based on users' interests and viewing habits, makes it possible for students to encounter a wide range of English language videos, including vocabulary lessons, pronunciation tutorials, grammar explanations, and daily conversation expressions (Li, 2021). One example of educational English content popular among Indonesian learners is the account *Kampung Inggris LC* (@kampuninggrislc), which consistently uploads videos related to English vocabulary, grammar, and expression.

However, the use of TikTok for educational purposes among students is inconsistent. While some students actively seek and follow educational accounts, others primarily use the platform for entertainment, such as comedy videos, dance challenges, or trends. This discrepancy highlights a practical gap between the potential educational benefits of TikTok and how students actually use it. In many cases, prolonged use of the platform does not necessarily lead to learning, as the majority of content consumed may not be related to education or language acquisition. Thus, the question arises: *Does the duration of TikTok use have a meaningful relationship with students' academic vocabulary mastery?*

Vocabulary plays a central role in language learning. Wilkins (1972) emphasized that “without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed,” demonstrating its fundamental importance. Nation (2001) affirms that vocabulary knowledge supports all four language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing making it a key component of English proficiency. More specifically, academic vocabulary holds an essential function in school contexts. According to Coxhead (2000), academic vocabulary refers to words that frequently appear in academic texts across disciplines but are not commonly used in everyday conversation. Students need academic vocabulary to understand textbooks, follow classroom instructions, write essays, and succeed in examinations.

In Indonesian EFL schools, including MTsN 1 Jombang, academic vocabulary mastery remains a challenge for many students. Based on preliminary observations conducted by the researcher, eighth-grade students show significant variation in their vocabulary mastery. Many struggle to understand academic terms appearing in their English textbooks, such as *analyze*, *identify*, *maintain*, *construct*, and *define*, which belong to the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2000). Interestingly, many of these students are active TikTok users accessing the platform daily for long periods. Some students follow English learning accounts that frequently introduce new vocabulary. Others, however, use TikTok exclusively for entertainment.

This raises a central issue: Is there a correlation between the length of TikTok usage and students’ academic vocabulary mastery? Theoretically, exposure to English content on TikTok could provide additional input that supports vocabulary acquisition. Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (1985) argues that

learners acquire language when they are exposed to comprehensible input, especially when the input is interesting and meaningful. TikTok's short and engaging videos may serve as such input. Furthermore, micro-learning research suggests that learning delivered in small, focused segments improves retention and motivation (Hug, 2005). Therefore, from the perspective of language acquisition, TikTok has the potential to support vocabulary learning.

However, practical observations show a different reality. Many students spend long hours on TikTok without engaging in any educational content. According to Junco (2012), the academic benefit of social media depends not merely on the amount of time spent but on how the platform is used. Excessive use for entertainment may reduce time available for studying, resulting in poorer academic performance. Additionally, Rosen et al. (2013) found that high media multitasking among adolescents negatively correlates with attention span and academic success. This suggests that even if TikTok contains educational opportunities, the way students use it may prevent them from gaining benefits.

The inconsistency between theory and practice demonstrates a clear research gap. Theoretical gap: Some studies highlight social media's potential to support vocabulary learning, yet other studies warn about its negative academic effects.

Practical gap: Students spend a significant amount of time accessing TikTok, but the outcomes especially related to academic vocabulary mastery remain unclear and unmeasured.

Furthermore, although international studies on TikTok and language learning have begun to emerge, research focusing specifically on academic

vocabulary mastery in the Indonesian junior high school context is still limited. Most existing studies examine general vocabulary, speaking motivation, or pronunciation improvement not academic vocabulary. Therefore, conducting research on this topic will fill the existing literature gap and contribute valuable insights.

In addition, the researcher's personal experience as a learner and observer further strengthens the rationale for this study. The researcher observes that when English learning at school feels monotonous, students look for alternative learning sources often from social media. When used wisely, TikTok can motivate learners and provide exposure to authentic English. However, when used excessively for entertainment, it can distract students from academic goals. This personal observation reinforces the importance of investigating how TikTok usage relates to academic vocabulary mastery.

Given the increasing relevance of digital media in education, especially among adolescents, examining the relationship between TikTok usage and academic vocabulary mastery is not only important but timely. The findings may help teachers understand students' digital habits, encourage them to integrate social media-based learning in their teaching strategies, and guide students to use TikTok more productively. It may also assist schools and parents in monitoring students' online behavior and promoting balanced digital consumption.

Therefore, based on the theoretical debates, practical observations, research gaps, and the researcher's personal experience, this study aims to investigate the correlation between the length of accessing TikTok and students' academic vocabulary mastery at the eighth grade students of MTsN 1 Jombang.

B. Research Problem

Based on the background of study above, the problem of the study is as follow:

Is there any significant correlation between the length in accessing social media and students' academic vocabulary mastery?

C. Objectives of The Study

Based on the statement of the problem above, the aim of this study is

To find out whether there is a correlation between the length in accessing social media and students' academic vocabulary mastery.

D. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study can be viewed from several aspects:

1. For Students

The findings are expected to raise awareness among students about how their social media habits might affect their academic vocabulary growth. This can help them manage their online time more effectively.

2. For Teachers

This research may provide insights for teachers to encourage students to use social media as a tool for language learning rather than merely for entertainment.

3. For Future Researchers

This study may serve as a reference for further research exploring the relationship between digital behavior and language learning outcomes.

E. Scope and Limitation of Study

This study focuses on the correlation between the length of time students spend accessing social media and their academic vocabulary mastery. The research focuses only on TikTok as the selected platform, because it is one of the most widely used social media applications among junior high school students.

To make the study more specific, the account chosen as the main reference is Kampung Inggris LC (@kampunginggrislc), which consistently provides short English learning videos such as vocabulary explanations, grammar tips, and daily English expressions. This account was selected not only because it has a large number of followers and high engagement, but also because the content is simple, practical, and relevant for junior high school learners. The participants of this study are limited to the 8th grade students in MTsN 1 Jombang, and therefore the findings are interpreted only within this context and not generalized to other schools.

Furthermore, this study only measures the length of time students spend accessing TikTok, without analyzing in detail the types of videos they watch. Vocabulary mastery in this study is limited to academic vocabulary, which will be measured using a test adapted from the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2000) and the students' curriculum related materials.

F. Definition of key terms

Definition of key terms is very important in this thesis. It aims to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation of words in this study. The writer defines the meaning of the following essential terms as follows:

1.Length in Accessing Social Media

The term “length” refers to the amount of time students spend in a given activity. The length in accessing social media is the total duration individuals spend on social networking sites per day. In this study, length in accessing social media is measured in minutes or hours per day that students report using social media.

2.Academic Vocabulary Mastery

Academic Vocabulary Mastery refers to words that are commonly used in academic texts and contexts but are less frequent in everyday conversation. In this study, academic vocabulary refers to students knowledge of words that appear in educational and academic contexts. The mastery of academic vocabulary test designed by the researcher, based on selected items from the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2000) and vocabulary relevant to the students’ curriculum related materials.

3.Kampung Inggris LC

Kampung Inggris LC refers to an English educational TikTok account (@kampuninggrislc) that provides short videos related to English vocabulary, grammar, and daily expressions. In this study, Kampung Inggris LC is used as a reference of students’ exposure to English educational content on TikTok.