

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a wide-ranging description of the study. It contains the background, the formulation of the problem, the operational definitions, the aim of the study, and the significance of the study.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Vocabulary learning is important for people who are learning a language. As stated by Decarrico (2001) that vocabulary learning is central to language acquisition, whether the language is first, second, or foreign. However, in the context of EFL, several students have difficulties in learning English, especially in learning its vocabulary. They tend to find it difficult to remember English words and are less interested in learning vocabulary (Arsana & Maharani, 2021). For this reason, the use of supporting media can overcome the problem that occurs.

There are various learning media that can be used in language learning. One that is often associated with English vocabulary learning is electronic flashcards. Electronic flashcards have been defined as learning media that assist teaching and learning activities, and their use is usually displayed through a projector (Hamer & Rohimajaya, 2018). Pintubatu et al. (2017) assert that the use of electronic flashcards as a learning media is effective in helping students recognize something and know the name of an object with the help of its picture along with its letters. Furthermore, using flashcards in the classroom can make students engaged by gaining their interest and curiosity (Aulia, 2018). This implies that electronic flashcards can be used as learning media to aid English vocabulary learning.

In the meantime, to take advantage of the technology learning media, an English teacher in one of the junior high schools in Tasikmalaya is applying electronic flashcards in the English teaching and learning activities. The use of electronic flashcards is intended to help students in knowing and understanding

vocabulary. Electronic flashcards are usually used to explain new words related to nouns since the students are having trouble recalling and knowing the name of an object. These cards are presented in the form of pictures along with their meanings, and their phonetic transcriptions. The content of the electronic flashcards is matched with the material to be taught. In addition, the use of electronic flashcards is executed in the pre-learning activities to help students understand English material.

Regarding the use of electronic flashcards for learning English vocabulary, several researchers have investigated this issue in their studies. Some of them focused on investigating the effect of the use of electronic flashcards on students' vocabulary mastery by using experimental method (Safira et al., 2021; Alghamdi & Elyas, 2020; Nashir & Laili, 2018), and the others focused on comparing the effectiveness of electronic flashcards and paper flashcards, and teacher's and student's electronic flashcards design by utilizing experimental method (Dodigovic, 2013; Byrd & Lansing, 2016). There is also a researcher who explored the use of paper flashcards for vocabulary mastery which aimed to investigate the perceptions of students by using a qualitative method (Nurmala & Suryaman, 2022). In general, the use of electronic flashcards indicates that these tools are beneficial for vocabulary learning as they can facilitate students in acquiring a variety of words easily.

Although the effectiveness of electronic flashcards has been investigated by many researchers, there is still a gap to investigate students' perceptions about their use at the junior high school level. To fill in the gap, this study intends to investigate the perceptions of seventh-grade students on the use of electronic flashcards for vocabulary learning at a junior high school in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia with a case study as the research design. This research is expected to be beneficial for the teacher and students of the selected school specifically, and all EFL classes in general, in considering the use of electronic flashcards to assist English vocabulary learning.

## 1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Due to the problem mentioned above, the research question of this study is “What are students’ perceptions on the use of electronic flashcards for vocabulary learning?”.

## 1.3 Operational Definitions

The definition of key terms is to prevent misunderstanding of the reader about the term used. Then, the research provides some of the definitions of the key term relevant to the topic as follows:

- 1.3.1 Perceptions** : Students’ thoughts about the use of electronic flashcards for vocabulary learning.
- 1.3.2 Electronic Flashcards** : Electronic flashcards are one of the learning media that assists English vocabulary learning in the form of pictures and text as a means of knowledge. Its use is assisted by a computer through a projector.
- 1.3.3 Vocabulary Learning** : The process of receiving and learning the words and being able to use them in communication comprehensively.

## 1.4 Aim of the Research

Concerning the formulation of the problem above, this research aims to investigate the perceptions of junior high school students on the use of electronic flashcards for vocabulary learning.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

- 1.5.1 Theoretical Use** : This study enriches the literature on students' perceptions toward the use of electronic flashcards as a learning media for English vocabulary learning.
- 1.5.2 Empirical Use** : This study provides empirical insight to the researcher regarding the use of electronic flashcards as a learning media in English vocabulary learning.
- 1.5.3 Practical Use** : This study serves as an overview of electronic flashcards as a learning media in English vocabulary learning activities.