

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

English is considered a global language that is used by several countries. Learning and mastering it is also considered important. Rohmah (2005) pointed out that English is generally used in various contexts around the world. It can be used as the first language, second language, or foreign language in some countries. Teaching English as a foreign language is considered important in Indonesia. It can be started in kindergarten, elementary, secondary, and university settings (Gultom, 2015). Unfortunately, some Indonesian students assume English is a difficult subject. This is the reason why some Indonesian students do not like to learn English and cannot comprehend it. According to Iftanti and Maunah (2021), they pointed out the factors in which English is difficult: memorizing vocabulary, creating sentences, and boring teaching techniques used by the teacher. On the other hand, another student stated that learning English is easy if the learners master its grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, in order to master English, Indonesian students must first master the vocabulary.

In learning new languages, for instance, English, the first thing that has to be mastered is vocabulary. Vocabulary is the basis of communication and can help master other language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Dakhi & Fitria, 2019). Mastering vocabulary is very essential for a beginner who wants to learn a language. Students with plenty of vocabulary will learn other language skills easier (Puspita, 2017). Without vocabulary, learning the English language is nearly impossible (Ali & Anwar, 2021). However, teaching and learning vocabulary tends to be boring because of the monotonous technique and rarely used media (Ambara, 2020). In this era where technology has been developed, teachers must consider teaching media that can be utilized in the classroom to make students interested, comfortable, and enjoyable in learning English. In addition, technology plays an important role in

every aspect of life, especially in language learning (Habibie, 2020). Teachers should use effective strategies to help students learn English, such as using songs, pictures, and games that motivate and encourage the students (Permana, 2020).

Many scholars recommend the utilization of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) as a teaching media to assist the students to learn easily, comfortably, and collaboratively (Butarbutar et al., 2021). Teachers can use MALL as the teaching media in their classroom. Media can enhance language teaching to be meaningful and interesting, and it can bring the outside world to the class (Brinton, 1991). One of the media that can be utilized in the classroom is Duolingo. Duolingo is a game-based language teaching and learning media that enriches users' vocabulary mastery. The vocabulary on Duolingo varies, such as animal, food, clothes, etc. (Ali, 2021). According to Ajisoko (2020), Duolingo is an effective and interesting medium for teaching and learning vocabulary. The material from Duolingo is easily understood by the students, and it can remove boredom.

The use of Duolingo for the students' vocabulary mastery has been investigated by many researchers. The results show that Duolingo has a significant effect on the experimental group who was taught using Duolingo rather than the control group, who was taught conventionally, only using textbooks. The use of Duolingo can help the students understand the material, memorize the vocabulary, and assume that Duolingo is interesting and fun (Ajisoko, 2020; Ali, 2021; Ambara, 2020; Aulia, Wahjuningsih, & Andayani, 2020; Kusumadewi & Widyastuti, 2018). On this occasion, the researcher was concerned about the lack of teaching media in the classroom and students who still lack vocabulary and do not know Duolingo can be used for teaching and learning English. Therefore, this research investigated the influence of Duolingo on junior high school students' vocabulary mastery.

The researcher conducted a pre-research to one of the MTs in Majalengka on 27 February 2023 by interviewing the English teacher. She stated that she rarely uses the media in her teaching activity. She also has not

used Duolingo before. In addition, she stated that almost all of the students still lack vocabulary. The researcher asked one of the students and he said that his teacher rarely uses any media in the teaching activity. The teacher only focuses on the textbook. In this occasion, the researcher wants to investigate the influence of Duolingo towards the junior high school students' vocabulary mastery. To fill the gap from the previous studies, this research conducted six meetings treatment to the experimental class and control class because the previous studies only conducted for two, three and four meetings. The researcher wanted to conduct the research with different amounts of the meetings. In addition, this research has a different research setting. There is no research investigating the use of Duolingo towards students' vocabulary mastery at this school before.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

This research focuses on answering ‘‘Does Duolingo influence Junior High School students' vocabulary mastery?’’

1.3 Operational Definition

- 1.3.1 Vocabulary Mastery** : It is the ability of students when they are familiar with the written form of words, understand the meaning and are able to use the words correctly in the sentences.
- 1.3.2 Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL)** : It is a language learning media commonly used by several people in this modern era. One of the examples of MALL is Duolingo.
- 1.3.3 Duolingo** : It is a language learning application used as instructional media to teach vocabulary. In Duolingo, students learn vocabulary with some exercises like arranging the words to become a sentence, translating the words, and matching the words with their meaning.

1.4 Aim of the Study

This research aims to know the influence of Duolingo application in teaching English vocabulary mastery to Junior High School students.

1.5 Significances of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Use : This research complements previous studies about the influence of using Duolingo towards junior high school students' vocabulary mastery.

1.5.2 Practical Use : This research informs teachers, students and other people about the use of Duolingo as teaching and learning media to learn English vocabulary.

1.5.3 Empirical Use : This research gives insight for other researchers who have the interest to investigate Duolingo and vocabulary mastery.