

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

In learning a language, particularly English as a second language, vocabulary is a crucial element that requires close attention and mastery. By developing a solid grasp of vocabulary, people can effectively convey messages to others, preventing misunderstandings or miscommunications. However, the Indonesian language learner encounters significant challenges in acquiring English vocabulary. Lisa (2019) has stated that some of the challenges that the students encountered included pronunciation, writing, and spelling, selecting the right word meaning and still being confused about how to use it in a given context, and a significant issue that arises when students acquire language is the lack of motivation during the learning process. According to Sullivan & Alba (2010), "Without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed." It means that even if someone has strong grammar, it is pointless if they do not have a large vocabulary. Furthermore, motivation is thought to be one factor affecting how well students learn vocabulary. As a result, teachers must provide media that can motivate students and increase their enthusiasm for learning English vocabulary. In this 21st century, information and communication technology (ICT) can be applied as one of the solutions to these problems.

Mulyasa (2018) mentioned that information and communication technology (ICT) improves the learning activity's effectiveness and efficiency based on the learning principles appropriate to the 2013 Curriculum. Additionally, digital flashcards can be used to supplement vocabulary learning requirements; one such application is Quizlet. Teachers have widely used the Quizlet application as a vocabulary learning media that is believed to motivate students. Users of Quizlet can perform comparable features, such as the flashcards feature, where the users can create customized cards with text, images, and sound, practice with cards, print paper copies of cards, and share cards with other users. Ying et al. (2021) argue that students rely on visual resources to make word-image associations. In other words,

they learn vocabulary based on what they read, hear, and see, so this Quizlet application is a suitable medium for learning English vocabulary.

After observing the teaching and learning process in one of the junior high schools in Tasikmalaya Regency in grade eight, the researcher found that the English teacher started using the Quizlet application as digital flashcards in the English learning process when she discovered that students' vocabulary mastery was still low. Previously, the teacher did not utilize any additional learning media apart from the textbook, contributing to a lack of engagement and interest in the learning process. Most students indicated they found the English language challenging, as evidenced by their responses when asked to read an English textbook. In addition, they also had difficulty understanding the learning material because they did not understand the meaning of the words in their English books. Quizlet is used at the beginning of the learning process before the teacher delves into the material. The teacher provides students with Quizlet links that have been prepared in advance. The teacher believes that using the Quizlet application as digital flashcards is one of the easiest ways to help students learn vocabulary and increase their motivation for the learning process.

In a previous study, Setiawan and Wiedarti (2020), using the quasi-experimental method, showed that using the Quizlet application as a learning media effectively improves students' vocabulary skills. This study also showed that students in high school who used the app to study vocabulary demonstrated a high level of interest since they were more engaged and did not become bored easily. Additionally, they completed the assignments in that application on their own. The researcher will investigate the use of Quizlet in motivating English vocabulary learning in a junior high school at Tasikmalaya in eighth grade, with three selected participants who chose based on their English learning grade. A case study will be used to obtain detailed and in-depth results. Since the English course in the junior high school where the researcher studies uses the Quizlet application as a learning tool, this research aims to discover how the Quizlet application as a digital flashcard motivates students to learn English vocabulary.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

According to the background of the study, there is a problem following it. To clarify the issue that is going to be analyzed, the statements of the problems are formulated as follows:

“How can Quizlet application as digital flashcards motivate students to learn English vocabulary?”

1.3 Operational Definitions

The definition of key terms is to avoid misunderstanding the reader about the terms used. Then, the study provides some of the definitions of the critical terms related as follows:

- 1.3.1 English vocabulary learning Vocabulary refers to the collection of words that a person understands and uses in a particular language. English vocabulary learning at the beginner level is the process by which a person with vocabulary knowledge between 500-1500 words learns, understands, and remembers new words or terms in English. It involves the development of word knowledge, including an understanding of definitions, pronunciation, spelling, and usage, as well as the ability to use them effectively in oral and written communication, especially in English communication, as this beginner-level vocabulary knowledge is still limited to certain things that have been mastered.

- 1.3.2 Motivation in Vocabulary Learning : In the context of vocabulary learning at

the beginner level, motivation refers to the extent to which students pay attention and try to engage in vocabulary learning activities actively. Motivation in vocabulary learning at the beginner level is important to encourage students to learn new vocabulary, given that the beginner level still has limited vocabulary knowledge. Motivation appears thoroughly throughout the vocabulary learning process, appearing at every stage (initiating, maintaining, and evaluating).

1.3.3 Quizlet application

Quizlet application as a digital flashcard, is a learning media that can be used on computers and smartphones. This application has many features, such as flashcards, study mode, class, gamification, collaboration, tracking learning progress, etc. The flashcard feature offers picture cards that have text and can be added with sounds that can help users understand a word, including how to pronounce it. All features provide feedback and error correction, which makes learning more effective. Because of this feature, users, especially students with beginner-level vocabulary knowledge, can benefit from helping them understand the learning material

more easily, and learning activities are more fun and varied.

1.4 Aim of the Research

According to the research question, this research aims to discover how the Quizlet application as a digital flashcard can motivate students to learn English vocabulary.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Uses

The findings of this research will provide additional contributions to existing theories regarding using the Quizlet application as a learning tool to motivate students' vocabulary learning.

1.5.2 Practical Uses

This study contributes to the teachers, students, policymakers, and other related stakeholders by providing new insights and evaluation materials on using digital flashcards to motivate students in English vocabulary learning.

1.5.3 Empirical Uses

This study contributes to the existing studies in implementing digital platforms for vocabulary learning, particularly Quizlet application for English vocabulary learning activities.