

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses the following topics: (1) Background of the study, (2) Problem of the Study, (3) Objective of the Study, and (4) Significance of the Study.

1.1 Background of the Study

English is a global language that is used for communication in different fields, including technology, education, and business. English was the initial foreign language to be introduced into Indonesian institutions, and it continues to be a mandatory subject from the first year of junior high school to the first year of higher education, according to Herlina (2019). English is taught as a basic skill in school, especially in junior high level, and it includes reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

In junior high school English learning tries to give students basic communication skills, comprehension of simple texts, and broader cultural awareness. However, achieving these goals can be challenging if teaching methods do not align with students' learning styles. Mortini (2024) emphasizes the importance of understanding learning styles in English education, especially now with digital technology. Technological advancements have shifted students' learning approaches from traditional methods to more modern and interactive strategies. Therefore, educators need to create a flexible learning environment that

supports a more comfortable cognitive process. The utilization of digital flashcards is a Promising innovation that accommodates a variety of learning styles by means of interactive and multimedia features As a result, digital flashcards not only enhance student engagement but also enable personalized and effective learning tailored to individual needs.

The four main language skill listening, speaking, reading, and writing need vocabulary, which is very important for learning a language. Previous research emphasizes that learners need consistent exposure and meaningful practice to move words from recognition to active use. Tool like digital flashcards can use picture, Technological media such as digital flashcards can integrate images, pronunciation, and spaced repetition to strengthen memory and encourage independent vocabulary practice. With these advantages, digital flashcards can help overcome common difficulties students face in vocabulary learning, including remembering word meanings, spelling, and pronunciation, through interactive and repeated learning experiences. Moreover, Nation (2018) divides vocabulary into two categories: active vocabulary, which encompasses words that are frequently employed in daily communication, and passive vocabulary, which includes words that are recognized but not frequently employed. The growth of vocabulary knowledge can be supported through regular engagement in reading, listening, speaking, and writing activities that expose learners to new words in various contexts. As a fundamental aspect of language learning, vocabulary supports grammar comprehension and communication skills. Lyons (1995) describes vocabulary as a collection of lexical items with distinct meanings, which, when combined, contribute to more complex sentence structures. Similarly, Pinker (1994) emphasizes the necessity of vocabulary acquisition for effective communication, highlighting that early exposure to vocabulary enhances comprehension and speaking abilities.

Mastering English vocabulary gives several problems for students, such as trouble saying words , accurate spelling, comprehension of word meanings, and long-term retention of newly acquired vocabulary. These challenges indicate the need for innovative vocabulary learning strategies that accommodate students' difficulties. One potential solution is the use of digital flashcards, which integrate visual, auditory and interactive

elements to enhance vocabulary retention. Digital flashcards assist students in improving pronunciation through built-in audio features, strengthening word associations with images, and Reinforcing long-term memory through spaced repetition. By incorporating these elements, digital flashcards offer a structured and engaging approach to vocabulary learning, addressing main problems faced by students. Aristya (2018) found that students often struggle with recalling words, grasping their meanings, and encountering difficulties in both writing and pronunciation. Similarly, Salam (2021) point out issues related to vocabulary learning, such as pronunciation errors, spelling mistakes, difficulty in memorizing longer words, and challenges in understanding word definitions. Additionally, Surmanov (2020) observed that students experience problems with pronunciation and understanding various grammatical structures. In line with this, Salawazo (2020) noted that vocabulary learning difficulties often involve pronunciation struggles, grammatical understanding, and the often forget newly learned words.

However, preliminary research and observations at SMP Negeri 7 Palembang show that many seventh-grade students still have difficulty with basic English vocabulary despite the current English curriculum. This is demonstrated by their frequent spelling and pronunciation mistakes, limited ability to use new terms in context, and overall lack of confidence while communicating in English. These problems could result from conventional teaching approaches that don't fully utilize digital tools or accommodate a variety of learning preferences.

There are several good ways, ways that work to help student learn English words ,get better at vocabulary, like crossword puzzles (Moursund, 2018), the Scramble learning model (Kumar, 2020), flannel board media (Putri, 2019), and digital flashcards (Nation, 2019). Among these, digital flashcards are very useful are great for effective tool for helping students memorize and comprehend vocabulary in an fun and hands on way. These flashcards offer a easy and useful way for vocabulary acquisition, particularly in modern learning settings that integrate technology. Compared to traditional approaches, digital flashcards provide distinct advantages. Schmitt (2020) highlights that flashcards significantly enhance vocabulary retention by exposing students to repeated word encounters, aiding long-term memory storage. bisesdes that , digital flashcards have extra

thing like sound to have say word, picture connect word, and adaptive repetition systems tailored to individual learners' needs. Research by Nation (2019) also suggests that using flashcards in independent learning settings increases student motivation by creating a more engaging and flexible learning experience. The integration of gamification elements further enhances digital flashcards by making vocabulary learning more interactive and stimulating, encouraging students to expand their word knowledge with greater enthusiasm.

Digital flashcards are technology-based learning tools that enhance memorization through interactive and flexible methods. Nation (2019) emphasizes that both digital and physical flashcards are effective for vocabulary learning, as they provide repeated exposure and utilize spaced repetition, which strengthens long-term retention. Moreover, Schmitt (2020) points out that digital flashcards surpass traditional ones due to additional features such as audio pronunciation support, visual aids (images and colors), and an adaptive Spaced Repetition System (SRS) that tailors review intervals based on word difficulty. Gamification elements also play a role in increasing student engagement, making learning more enjoyable. Furthermore, digital flashcards offer flexibility and accessibility, enabling students to study anytime and anywhere using devices like smartphones, tablets, or computers. These advantages make digital flashcards a highly effective tool for vocabulary acquisition, enhancing both motivation and retention in language learning.

Seventh-grade students are The focus of this study because they are in a crucial cognitive development phase where they respond well to engaging and interactive learning tools, such as digital flashcards. At this early stage of formal English education, building a strong vocabulary foundation is essential for their language development. This research is targeted at seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 7 Palembang, a school that integrates technology into its learning environment, thereby promoting the use of digital tools in education. Additionally, this study is consistent with the Merdeka Curriculum, which prioritizes student-centered learning and the integration of digital tools to improve educational outcomes.

The Merdeka Curriculum's principles, which prioritize active learning, student autonomy, and technology-enhanced education, are in alignment with digital flashcards. While enhancing retention, these tools encourage students to investigate vocabulary at their own pace by utilizing interactive features such as audio, images, and spaced repetition. Digital flashcards contribute to the curriculum's objective of establishing a more personalized and adaptable learning experience by encouraging engagement and adaptability in the learning process. The Merdeka Curriculum encourages active participation, creativity, and independent learning, making digital flashcards an ideal medium to support vocabulary acquisition. By utilizing interactive features and self-paced learning, digital flashcards offer an approach that aligns with modern educational principles and the objectives of the national curriculum.

Consequently, it is anticipated that this investigation will make practical contributions to both students and educators. In the development of more effective vocabulary instruction strategies, the findings may be a valuable reference for teachers. The utilization of digital flashcards can improve the retention of vocabulary, engagement, and motivation of students. Furthermore, the outcomes of this research may contribute to the advancement of innovative learning media that are consistent with current technological developments in education. **‘THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIGITAL FLASHCARDS IN ENHANCING ENGLISH VOCABULARY MASTERY AMONG SEVENTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT SMP NEGERI 7 PALEMBANG.’**

1.2. Problem of the Study

1.2.1 Limitation of the Problem Scope

A number of boundaries were set in order to keep this research focused and consistent with its goals. The study only included seventh-grade students from SMP Negeri 7 Palembang and was carried out throughout the 2025-2026 school year. Only English nouns related to school spaces and rooms, such as the classroom, library, and restroom, were included in the vocabulary materials. The digital flashcards that the researcher had created and prepared were exclusively given to the experimental group. On the other hand, traditional teaching techniques were used to instruct the control group.

This study, which used an experimental design with two groups control and experimental assessed students' learning outcomes using pre-test and post-test assessments. This study just looks at vocabulary competence; it doesn't look at other language abilities like speaking, writing, listening, or reading.

1.2.2 Formulation of the Problem

The formulation of the problem in this study is there any significant difference in English vocabulary mastery between students who are taught using digital flashcards and those who are not?

1.3. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to find out whether there is a significant difference in English vocabulary mastery between students who are taught using digital flashcards those who are not.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The researcher aspires to provide of both theoretical and practical benefits from this study. Theoretically, the results of this study are anticipated to contribute to the advancement of knowledge, particularly in the field of English vocabulary learning, through the use of digital media. Furthermore, this study is anticipated to serve as a reference in activities that employ digital flashcards as a tool to enhance vocabulary mastery. In practical, this study is anticipated to be advantageous for: English teachers, Can use an alternative learning medium that is interesting to assist students in enhancing their vocabulary mastery. Students, in order to facilitate their comprehension and retention of English vocabulary can do this in an easier , more fun, and better way Future researchers can use it as a reference or foundation for conducting additional research on the use of digital media in vocabulary acquisition, regardless of whether the educational level is junior high or higher.