

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduced the research focus, the study's purpose, and explained the researcher's interest in the topic of study, and discussed the research limitation. This chapter concluded the research contact, research focus, research objectives, research significance, research limitation, and definition of the key terms.

### **1.1 Research Context**

English plays a very significant role in the global context, serving as the primary means of communication among individuals from various countries. This language facilitates connections in various fields, including knowledge, science, technology, politics, academia, and education (Latifah & Saputri, 2020). Therefore, for students who want to achieve proficiency in English, it is very important to master the four basic skills that form the foundation of using the language, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking. In line with the idea, Chiriana (2015) emphasizes that to improve these skills, students need to achieve proficiency in important components such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. The ability of students to express ideas or thoughts in English, both orally and in writing, is greatly influenced by the extent of their vocabulary knowledge and understanding of various subjects, as well as their knowledge of English grammar. In this context, it can be said that without adequate vocabulary knowledge, students will experience difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding a foreign language. Therefore, the higher the level of vocabulary a student possesses, the more

proficient the student will be in understanding and using the four English language skills.

This shows that vocabulary mastery is not just an important aspect of language learning, but also the key to unlocking deeper understanding and effective communication skills in English. Thus, efforts to enhance students' vocabulary should be a priority in the English language learning process, so that they can achieve the desired level of proficiency and be able to actively participate in global communication. In line with the idea, Surmanov & Azimova (2020) mastering vocabulary is a crucial component of foreign language education, as the definitions of new terms are frequently highlighted in both literature and instructional settings. It is essential to language instruction and critically important for a language learner. According to Susanto (2017) the acquisition of vocabulary is crucial for language mastery, an individual with a limited vocabulary will struggle in all facets of language. This statement is reinforced by Syamsidar et al. (2023) by developing one's vocabulary, it becomes effortless to communicate ideas and concepts, and conversely, it will be challenging if the vocabulary is limited.

However, Kondo and Triasta (2024) argued that the acquisition of vocabulary is a significant challenge for adolescents and children, as they struggle to comprehend newly acquired words. Supported by Lelawati (2018), young learners find difficulty to know abstract thing because they have a limited knowledge about the word. Similar research was also conducted by Hartingsih (2022), some problems in mastering vocabulary in students are very diverse ranging from errors in spelling, pronunciation, and choosing the right words in writing and speaking. In line with the idea, Pradini and Adnyayanti (2022) although young learners are

capable of acquiring and assimilating new information at a rapid pace, educators still encounter certain challenges when teaching them. According to Idrus et al. (2021) educators teach vocabulary through memorization, causing boredom for students. Based on the explanation, it can be concluded that the current learning approach tends to make students bored or uninterested. The statements of several experts above can be concluded that, designing and implementing a more engaging learning process and utilizing enjoyable educational resources are crucial for enhancing student motivation and involvement in teaching and learning activities.

Therefore, a teacher must create effective and efficient teaching and learning strategies if they want their students to acquire a broader vocabulary knowledge. This statement is reinforced by Kurniawati (2023), the teaching and learning process does not function effectively if the teacher continues to lack a strategy. Students have great potential to encourage and significantly accelerate the development of their vocabulary by using well-designed teaching approaches or methods. This is because these strategies help students understand, remember, and use new words more effectively in various learning contexts. Therefore, according Syamsidar et al. (2023) the selection of appropriate media is a crucial factor in achieving success in learning. It can be said that media plays an important role in aiding learning, especially vocabulary. The utilization of contemporary informational and pedagogical technologies in educational institutions has become increasingly prevalent, signifying not only advanced technical tools but also innovative methodologies in the educational process (Terletska, 2020). That's why teaching vocabulary is not simple. Teachers must pay attention to the most effective media for teaching English vocabulary.

The use of media in vocabulary learning, especially technology-based media, has become one of the effective methods to enhance students' interest and understanding. Supported by Roca & Gagné (2008, cited in Nincarean et al., 2013) the use of technology in the learning process has proven to be able to increase student engagement and deepen their understanding of the material being taught. Media such as learning applications, interactive videos, educational games, and online platforms allow students to learn in a more engaging, dynamic way that suits their individual learning styles. This is in line with government policy through the implementation of a technology-based curriculum, which emphasizes the importance of integrating technology into the learning process. Similar to the Merdeka Curriculum, it can encourage the use of technology as a tool to support more contextual, relevant, and student-centered learning.

Vocabulary learning at the senior high school level faces various obstacles that affect the effectiveness of the learning process. Based on research Holidazia and Rodliyah (2020), boarding school that implements language learning inside and outside the classroom, students still tend to use traditional strategies, such as memorization and using dictionaries, to improve their vocabulary mastery. Meanwhile, based on research Yudha and Mandasari (2021), at SMKN 9 Bandar Lampung, teachers face a significant challenge in motivating students to learn English, as students often feel bored with conventional teaching methods. This condition highlights the importance of implementing innovations in teaching methods and media to enhance students' motivation and ability in mastering English vocabulary.

To support effective vocabulary learning, according to Cross, (1993) the importance of vocabulary teaching is divided into two, namely presenting and practicing. Presenting is provide students with new vocabulary, that there are several ways to clarify the meaning of a word and they can be used alone or in combination, are as follow ostensive means, verbal definition, audio presentation, and running context. Therefore, in accordance with the theory proposed by Cross, teachers can integrate several presenting methods to plan vocabulary learning in the classroom. Teachers can also integrate practicing into vocabulary learning implementation. Meanwhile, according to Brown (1980), vocabulary learning assessment can be divided into two types: formative assessment and summative assessment.

However, the lack of facilities, limited use of technology media, and conventional teaching methods become obstacles in achieving those goals. In the context of Cross's theory, these obstacles affect students' ability to understand and communicate effectively in English. Therefore, innovation in teaching methods and media is essential to expand students' vocabulary and support their communication needs in a more relevant and effective manner.

Significant issues related to the vocabulary learning process at SMAN 1 Srengat were found, the integration of digital media is one of the strategic efforts to overcome monotonous vocabulary learning methods. One of the tools widely used by English teachers, particularly in Grade X, is Wordwall, a web-based platform that offers various interactive activities such as quizzes, word-matching games, and vocabulary puzzles. Wordwall not only provides enjoyable learning activities but also allows students to learn flexibly, both in the classroom and at home. Miss

Shelley, an English teacher for 10th graders at SMAN 1 Srengat, emphasizes the importance of utilizing technology in vocabulary learning:

“The role of technology, the first one definitely increases interactivity. Because vocabulary is learned perhaps just as memories and students will definitely get bored, so we need to balance it with the digital technology available in this era. And also, there is flexibility so that children don't just learn at school but can also learn at home.”

This statement shows that the use of technology in English language learning can overcome students' boredom in memorizing vocabulary in a conventional manner. Technology enables learning that is more interesting, contextual, and accessible independently outside the classroom. One of the media chosen by teachers is Wordwall, as it is considered the most effective and suitable for the characteristics of today's students.

In the same interview, Miss Shelley mentioned several digital learning media that are used:

“There's wordwall, Storyboard, and also the British Council can be used. There's also something called Flora, it's new but I rarely use it.”

Although there are various digital media available, Wordwall is mentioned first and most prominently in teaching practice. This shows that Wordwall is the main medium used in vocabulary learning, while other media are only used as supplements or alternatives.

The reasons for choosing Wordwall as the primary learning medium were further explained by the teacher, Ms. Shelley, who explained that,

“In my opinion, Wordwall itself has an interactive and attractive interface, making it easier for students to understand and remember vocabulary. Additionally, this platform is flexible. It can be used not only in schools but also in their respective homes.”

This statement reinforces that Wordwall is not only visually appealing, but also supports vocabulary comprehension and retention through a fun approach. Teachers

can customize the use of Wordwall based on the learning needs and challenges they face.

For example, Wordwall is often used as a follow-up to reading material that students find difficult to understand:

“It depends on their individual needs, Winda. So, when they encounter reading comprehension questions with difficult vocabulary, Miss Shelley will create a quiz the next day or at the next meeting, using Wordwall, to help them think about the meaning of those words.”

This shows that Wordwall is not used rigidly or strictly according to a schedule, but rather responds to students' needs, especially when they have difficulty understanding vocabulary in reading texts.

Although Wordwall has many advantages, teachers also acknowledge several challenges in implementing technology in the classroom:

“The first is definitely student motivation, especially for students who don't like English...the second is probably internet availability...there are also slow learners and fast learners...those are our main challenges.”

These challenges emphasize the importance of teachers adapting their use of technology so that they can reach all students with diverse backgrounds and abilities.

As a comparison, the situation at SMAN 1 Pongkok presents different challenges. An English teacher at the school stated:

“From my observations, the current trend among students is due to the digital era. On average, they are passive. If taught through lectures, they are passive. But if taught through digital means, using advanced technology, they grasp it very quickly. But if it's manual, like textbooks, they get bored after reading for five minutes. But if it's combined with digital, they're very enthusiastic. The challenge lies with the teachers. As I mentioned earlier, the teachers aren't tech-savvy. That's the main issue. They understand, but they're not very advanced in that regard.”

This statement indicates that although students at SMAN 1 Pongkok show interest in digital-based learning, its utilization is not maximized due to the teachers' limited ability to use technology. This is different from SMAN 1 Srengat, where teachers

not only understand the role of technology but also actively implement it in vocabulary learning. Considering these factors, SMAN 1 Srengat was selected as the research location because it demonstrates a combination of teachers' readiness to use digital media and students' active involvement in the learning process. Wordwall, as the primary medium consistently used by teachers, is a key focus of this research.

Based on the research conducted by Idrus et al. (Idrus et al., 2021) the use of Wordwall media for English language learning is considered effective because it can enhance vocabulary. Another previous research findings state that an effective wordwall is beneficial for learning English and increases vocabulary mastery by 73.5% (Syamsidar et al., 2023). Other previous researcher state that wordwall increases students' motivation to learn English by providing them with entertaining activities to help them acquire vocabulary (Pradini & Adnyayanti, 2022). Although there has been research on the use of Wordwall in vocabulary learning, there are still gaps, such as how Wordwall is used by teachers as a pedagogical tool. Especially how teachers prepare materials and evaluate vocabulary learning through Wordwall. Further research is needed to understand how the use of Wordwall can be employed as a pedagogical tool to enhance vocabulary learning in various educational contexts.

Observations and previous research indicate challenges in using Wordwall as a pedagogical tool for teaching vocabulary. This study aims to explore how Wordwall is planned, implemented, and evaluated to address these challenges. Thus, in this research, the researcher chose the title WORDWALL AS A

PEDAGOGICAL TOOL FOR TEACHING VOCABULARY in the X-11 grade at SMAN 1 Srengat.

## **1.2 Research Focus**

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How do teachers planning the use of Wordwall as a pedagogical tool for teaching vocabulary in class X-11 at SMAN 1 Srengat?
- 2) How do teachers implementing Wordwall in their vocabulary teaching practices in class X-11 at SMAN 1 Srengat?
- 3) How do teachers evaluating the effectiveness of Wordwall in teaching vocabulary in class X-11 at SMAN 1 Srengat?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study are:

- 1) To describe how teachers plan the use of Wordwall as a pedagogical tool for teaching vocabulary in class X-11 at SMAN 1 Srengat.
- 2) To narrate the implementation of Wordwall in vocabulary teaching in class X-11 at SMAN 1 Srengat.
- 3) To analyze how teachers evaluate the effectiveness of Wordwall in enhancing students' vocabulary skills in class X-11 at SMAN 1 Srengat.

## **1.4 Research Significance**

This research is expected to provide multiple primary advantages:

- 1) Theoretical Contributions

This research is to enrich knowledge in the field of science.

## 2) Practical Contributions

### a) For Teachers

The study's findings may motivate educators to embrace technological tools like Wordwall and develop more diverse and engaging instructional strategies for students.

### b) For Students

The findings of this study are expected to help students learn vocabulary in a more effective, interactive and fun way, thus supporting the improvement of their overall learning outcomes.

### c) For Future Research

The results are expected to serve as an initial reference or comparison in their studies of similar pedagogical tools or other technologies in language education.

## **1.5 Research Scope and Limitation**

The study explores Wordwall as a pedagogical tool for teaching vocabulary to 10th grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Srengat, Indonesia. This research focuses on how Wordwall is used as a pedagogical tool to teach vocabulary, including features such as quizzes, interactive games, and word-matching exercises. This research has several limitations that may affect the findings, this research involved one teacher and a single class of students, specifically classes X-11. Due to this limitation, it cannot encompass the various learning styles and backgrounds of the entire population of X grade students at SMAN 1 Srengat, thereby affecting the generalization of the results. Additionally, time constraints limited the duration of the preliminary phase, making it difficult to further assess the application of Wordwall on vocabulary comprehension.

## 1.6 Definition of the Key Terms

### 1) Wordwall

Wordwall is a cutting-edge learning platform created to improve learning via dynamic and captivating exercises. It enables teachers to design exercises and games that are adaptable to different subjects and learning goals. Teachers may create quizzes, matching games, and flashcards with ease thanks to its user-friendly interface, which makes it a flexible tool for reviewing grammar, vocabulary, and other important ideas. To accommodate various learning preferences and styles, the platform offers a variety of formats, such as word searches, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and multiple-choice questions. Teachers can create a dynamic classroom environment that promotes student participation and collaboration by integrating Wordwall into their lessons.

### 2) Pedagogical Tool

Pedagogical tools refer to any methods, strategies, or instruments used by educators to facilitate learning and enhance students' knowledge. These tools can take various forms, including textbooks and worksheets, as well as innovative approaches such as interactive games, multimedia presentations, and technology-based applications, all designed to support the teaching and learning process. The main objective of pedagogical tools is to actively engage students, promote critical thinking, and encourage a deeper understanding of the subject matter. For example, Wordwall, which is the focus of this study, serves as a versatile pedagogical tool that can be used to reinforce vocabulary acquisition through repetition and active recall. They allow students to engage with the material dynamically, both individually and in groups.

### 3) Vocabulary

The variety of words that students must comprehend and employ proficiently in both written and spoken communication is referred to as vocabulary. Because it has a direct impact on writing ability, reading comprehension, and general language fluency, a strong vocabulary is crucial for academic success. Teachers concentrate on teaching vocabulary by giving students opportunities to experience new words in context in addition to directly teaching word meanings. This can entail reading a variety of texts, having conversations, and taking part in exercises that encourage the meaningful application of newly learned words. Teachers assist students in laying the groundwork for critical thinking and effective communication by highlighting the value of vocabulary.

### 4) Teaching Vocabulary

Teaching vocabulary is also very important for improving students' language and communication skills. A strong vocabulary allows students to communicate their ideas and thoughts more clearly and accurately. This is crucial for academic success and effective communication among people. Educators can use various teaching strategies to enhance students' vocabulary, such as flashcards, word games, and technology-based applications that encourage active participation. Encouraging students to read widely and explore various genres can also help them enrich their vocabulary with new words. In the end, a comprehensive approach to teaching vocabulary not only enhances students' language skills but also helps them become more confident and articulate communicators.