

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the discussion on the background of the research, research questions, objective of the study, research significances, research scope, and conceptual framework.

A. Background of the Study

Learning English vocabulary has an important role when EFL students listen, speak, read and write to their interlocutors in English. Concurring to Hao et al. (2019), cited from Cameron (2001), vocabulary may be a basic component of language composition and language information and abilities development. That is why students need to learn vocabulary in learning English. Acknowledge more words helps students to communicate with other people.

Vocabulary is essential in English language lessons because pupils cannot comprehend others and share their own thoughts without it (ELTD Vocabulary.) The importance of mastering vocabulary is also conveyed by Baharudin. et. al (2019) who state that mastering vocabulary makes students able to communicate in any kind of form be it in speaking, writing, listening, or reading. Just as Bintz (2011) asserts that vocabulary was identified as the words we need to master in order to communicate successfully, such as in speaking (expressive) and listening (receptive). Vocabulary assists students in conveying themselves through speaking, reading, writing, and listening.

However, learning English is not easy since learners need to learn many aspects, especially memorizing many vocabularies. According to Abrams (2014) in Fudhla (2019), Vocabulary learning is recognized as one of the toughest issues for language learners. English has a lot of vocabulary and language rules that differ significantly from Indonesian. Based on preliminary observation at a senior high school in West Java, many students have difficulty learning English due to a lack of knowledge about their English vocabulary. Furthermore, when the teacher asked the students to speak in English about the material, it was hard for some of them because the students did not know the English vocabulary. Sometimes students

could not catch up with what the teacher said when the teacher talked in English. As research conducted by Dewi (2020), one of the issues that cause pupils to catch less or listen poorly is a lack of vocabulary. Many students listen well to what is said, but students cannot grasp words or sentences uttered in English, resulting in misunderstandings due to a lack of vocabulary.

With this problem, a preliminary survey was conducted to test students' English vocabulary mastery in senior high school. In the survey, students were given a vocabulary exercise with 20 questions using multiple-choice. Based on the interview with the English teacher, it is known that the standard of the minimum score, especially for the eleventh grade, is 73 out of 100. Meanwhile, the survey showed most students have problems finding the correct answer. The survey revealed that most of the students who filled out the vocabulary test scored less than 73. This result can indicate that many students have a lack English vocabulary mastery.

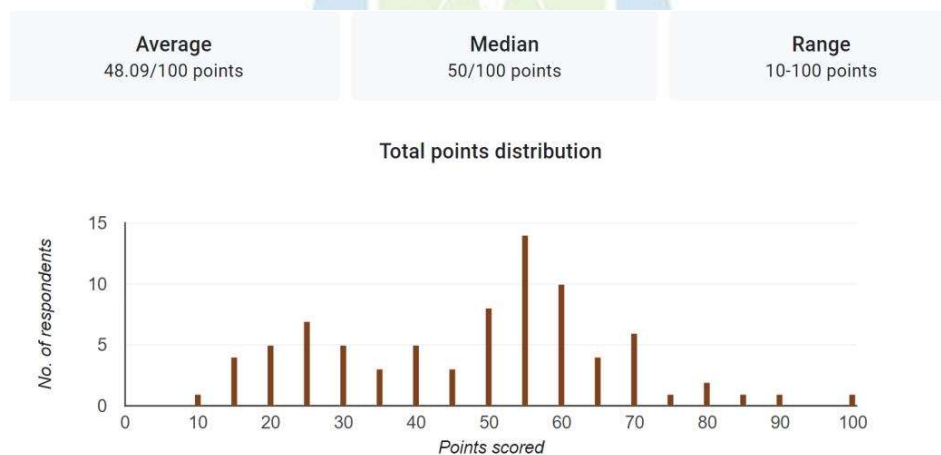


Figure 1.1 Student vocabulary test results

In another case, learning English in traditional necessitates a high level of student concentration due to the presence of many materials, assignments, and practices. Therefore, traditional classroom activities will cause tedium. It is not enough to

learn English vocabulary just by using books and dictionaries. It makes them bored and not interested to learn.

To overcome those problems, English teachers must have innovative ways to help their learners master English vocabulary and become interested in learning them. One way to attract learners' attention in learning and mastering vocabulary is by using mobile application media in teaching. According to Pilar et al. (2013), the term mobile learning, also known as m-learning, refers to the use of mobile devices for educational purposes. Mobile learning becomes an alternative learning choice that empowers learners to have simple access to education. According to Kukulska-Hulme (2020), Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) utilizes smartphones and other portable innovations to assist individuals in learning language, especially in settings where portability and contextual learning are beneficial.

The research uses interactive media Cake application. Cake application is an English learning application medium played on mobile phones. In this application, users can learn English through short and fun conversations. This English learning application presents short videos with various categories such as vlogs, films, and podcasts equipped with subtitles and translations. The learners can interestingly learn vocabulary with the application.

There are some previous studies related to the research. The first is conducted by Finardi et al. (2016) examined the affordances and limitations of Duolingo targeting students, professors, and staff of a university. This study intended to analyze how mobile-assisted foreign language learning (MALL) can help with foreign/second language learning (L2). This study revealed that Duolingo promotes the development of vocabulary and grammar. The second study is conducted by Hao et al. (2019) evaluated the effectiveness of the mobile application "NEWDetectiveABC" developed as part of cognitive training to help students learn English as a foreign language (EFL). The study found that most pupils' overall vocabulary test scores improved. The research shows that the application can assist

pupils in learning the spelling of English words. The results show that the use of the application improves EFL learning.

However, the previous studies are different from the current research. This study focuses on examining the process and students' perceptions of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning "Cake Application" as supporting media for vocabulary mastery.

B. Research Questions

According to the background of the research, the questions of the research are as follows:

1. How is the process of using the Cake application as a support for learning English vocabulary?
2. How are the students' vocabulary mastery through Cake application?
3. What are students' perceptions toward the use of the Cake application as supporting learning English vocabulary?

C. Purposes of the Research

This particular study aims to:

1. Describe the process of using Cake applications as a support for learning English vocabulary.
2. Describe the students' results of using Cake applications on their English vocabulary mastery.
3. Analyze students' perceptions toward the use of the Cake application as supporting learning English vocabulary.

D. Significances of the Research

The outcome of the research is hoped to be used theoretically and practically:

1. Theoretical significances

The result of the study can be utilized as a starting point for individuals who want to analyze the usage of a mobile application in

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning as an acquisition support for English vocabulary learning activities.

2. Practical significances

a. For the English teacher

This research can give additional contributions to English teachers. Teachers can find out what students can get from the Cake application. So, teachers can use mobile software, particularly the Cake application, to develop unique and engaging classroom activities.

b. For the students

The findings may urge students to be competent in using the mobile application as the learning support and to learn more about the Cake application for learning English.

c. For the future researchers

The research can be utilized as a starting point in conducting further research related to this research.

E. Research Scope

This research focuses on the process and students' perceptions of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning "Cake Application" as supporting media for vocabulary mastery. This research is conducted to describe the process and find out the students' perceptions toward the use of Cake application in vocabulary learning. The research involved eleventh-grade students of SMAN 1 Cikampek in Karawang.

F. Conceptual Framework

Vocabulary is a crucial element of language composition and language knowledge and skills development (Hao et al. 2019.) Cameron (2001) cited in Hao et al. (2019) states that vocabulary as a field of knowledge in language plays a significant function in language acquisition. It means you cannot be separated vocabulary from the language. Besides, without vocabulary, people cannot

maintain all information in language. When learners acquire and learn vocabulary, they can express themselves through language.

Since language is word-based, teaching words is an important aspect of language learning. Learning a language without words is almost impossible. Even person-to-person communication is word-based (Alqahtani, 2015). Harmer (1991) cited in Urgessa (2019), compared the structure of language with the framework of language, providing vocabulary-critical organs and bodies. However, there are so many vocabularies for every language, including English. Learners mostly feel challenged to memorize and understand thousands of English vocabulary. Besides, the English word has a different way when it is written and pronounced. Therefore, teachers need to prepare and identify the appropriate techniques for their students. A good teacher needs to prepare a variety of the latest techniques.

One way to make learners interested in learning and mastering vocabulary is to use mobile application media in teaching. According to Pavlik (2015) in Shahbaz & Khan (2017), the teaching and learning process has changed with recent mobile technology developments. Mobile learning has become one of the alternative learning options that give learners easy access to education. According to Kukulska-Hulme (2020), Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) uses smartphones and other wearable innovations to assist individuals in language learning, especially in environments where portability and contextual learning are beneficial. Hulme (2020), stated that mobile learning could meet the needs of authentic learners as they emerge and provide a more flexible model of language learning. From the explanation above, Smartphone applications have considerable potential for enhancing vocabulary and the English learning process. As put forward by Hao et al. (2019), mobile learning applications not only increased students' vocabulary proficiency, but also enhanced spelling, reading, and listening comprehension. Therefore, it is hoped that by applying this interactive media, Cake application, learners can master vocabulary quickly and motivate learners to improve English vocabulary.

According to Young (1956) in Psychologimultitalent (2015), perception is a sensory process that involves integrating and judging physical and social objects. The feeling is influenced by the physical and social cues present in the surroundings. Environmental feelings integrate with previously learned information in expectations, values, attitudes, memories, and other factors. McDonald (2011) states that perception is an individual's view that makes it a strong driving force for action. Therefore, the teacher needs students' perceptions to decide whether the method or media is beneficial. If the students' have a good perception, it can lead them to better learning material and develop their vocabulary mastery.

This research uses the Cake application as media. Cake application is an English learning application that provides short and fun conversation videos, vlogs, films, and podcasts equipped with subtitles and translations. The learners can interestingly learn vocabulary by the application. The research aims to know the learners' perceptions of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning "Cake Application" as supporting media for vocabulary mastery.

G. Previous Studies

There are several previous studies regarding students' activities in vocabulary mastery using MALL. The first study conducted by Kim et al. (2013) examines the perception and experience of students in learning on mobile devices. The study aimed to understand how learners perceive mobile devices to create personalized learning experiences outside of the classroom. According to the study, mobile technologies can deliver alternative learning experiences. Students can participate in learning processes outside of class more regularly, opening up additional opportunities for interaction and learning. This study contributes to defining mobile user characteristics in Mobile Language Learning, and the findings illustrate how MLL presents new educational frameworks. However, this study does not discuss in more detail the applications used in language learning and how students process using specific mobile devices.

The second previous study conducted by Alhadiah (2020), investigate EFL learners' experiences with a MALL-based vocabulary learning tool, the Quizlet

application. This study shows that pupils had good attitudes toward the use of Quizlet for vocabulary acquisition. This study encourages using MALL-based vocabulary learning tools, especially Quizlet, which is considered a helpful tool that can be used both inside and outside the classroom based on students' experiences. In this study, Alhadiah (2020) suggests that more research investigating student attitudes towards MALL-based tools is still needed, especially considering the age of the learner, gender, learning style, and language ability.

The third study conducted by Darsih and Asikin (2020), conducted a study on mobile-assisted language learning, exploring EFL students' perspectives of using mobile applications such as YouTube, Zoom, U Dictionary, and others to learn English. The study shows that students had a positive perception and considered MALL useful and helpful in learning. However, in this study, Darsih and Asikin (2020) only explained the students' perspective on MALL in language learning. This study does not explain in detail how students' perspectives on the use of MALL in improving language skills.

Another study is conducted by Gurkan (2018), who discusses the effects of MALL on Vocabulary learning. This research aims to determine students' perspectives on the impacts of a mobile-assisted vocabulary learning (MAVL) application (VocaStyle) and the effect of students' learning styles on students' perspectives. According to the study results, students considered the MAVL application efficient, inspiring, and beneficial. The data also revealed that video and graphic annotations were more valuable to students, and students' opinions shifted based on students' learning methods. Unfortunately, this study only focuses on visual and auditory perceptual learning styles. As a result, the results cannot be generalized to all learning styles.

Nevertheless, the previous researches have a different focus from the current study. In comparison, two of five studies discussed students' perceptions or attitudes of mobile applications such as YouTube, Online discussion apps, Online dictionaries, etc. in language learning. Two of the four previous studies revealed more about students' perceptions, attitudes, or responses to certain learning

applications Quizlet and VocaStyle as tools to improve student's English skills. Meanwhile, the current research focuses on discussing the students' perceptions of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning "Cake Application" as supporting media for vocabulary mastery.

