# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the research's background, research questions, the study's objective, research significance, research scopes, and conceptual framework.

## A. Background of Study

Teaching a language to young learners requires considering not only their linguistic requirements and learning objectives but also their cognitive and social needs (Hughes, 2000). One of the most intricate policy decisions impacting young learner classrooms revolves around teaching methods (Copland et al., 2014). Learning English has four aspects: reading, listening, speaking, and writing to master English, including vocabulary. According to Cameron (2001) vocabulary is a fundamental element of language structure and is crucial to developing language knowledge and skills. Therefore, effectively teaching English vocabulary is essential to help students build a strong foundation in the language and improve their communication skills.

Teaching English at the primary school level is important because it provides children with English language skills at a crucial time in their development when they can absorb knowledge more easily (Deni, 2020). One of the basic key aspects of mastering English is understanding the importance of expanding vocabulary (Latifah A. et al. 2022). According to Silalahi et al. (2019) students who lack sufficient vocabulary often struggle to comprehend the meanings of what they hear and read and articulate their thoughts effectively, hindering their ability to communicate with others.

Engaging young learners in English classes is crucial for the success of classroom learning. As mentioned by Mukhtorkulovna (2022), engagement is an important element for the success of any learning endeavor. This can happen if English teachers can arouse young learners' interest in learning during the

learning process. Students inclined to learn tend to invest time and effort in pursuing their goals (Ginting, 2021).

To take advantage of this, along with the rapid development of technology, English teachers can use technological media to create interesting learning for young learners through gamification. Damanik et al. (2023) Gamification is a learning technique that engages and motivates students by incorporating games, thereby enhancing their learning experience and fostering happiness. Using interesting learning media can also support the realization of meaningful learning (Paksi et al., 2023). Using gamification to teach English to young learners benefits teachers, especially in education. In education, gamification involves turning existing learning activities or content into game-like experiences (Chandross & DeCourcy, 2018).

One of the gamifications that can support learning media is the Wordwall Application. The WordWall application integrates various multimedia elements, including modes of speech, images, colors, moving images, sound, and music, to create a visually engaging and interactive learning environment (Ilahiyati et al., 2023). The primary goal of teaching vocabulary using the WordWall program is to help students acquire a comprehensive English vocabulary. It has been widely recognized that when students engage in fun activities, they tend to understand and retain information faster compared to traditional methods (Firliantama & Rokhayani, 2023).

Based on my initial observation when I participated in the Field Experience Practices, it was revealed that teachers face several challenges in teaching English vocabulary in the classroom to young learners such as a lack of interest in learning due to the lack of varied media. Teachers need to comprehend the limited attention spans of young learners, which can be sustained only through a range of engaging activities, games, and visual aids (Pinter, 2017). To further explore the challenges of teaching vocabulary to young students and increasing their engagement in the learning process, this study will examine these issues.

Several studies have been conducted on using Wordwall media to enhance English vocabulary acquisition. For instance, Sipayung, (2018) study aimed to enhance the vocabulary skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 5 Pematangsiantar, focusing on antonyms of adjectives. The results suggest that incorporating the Wordwall strategy in teaching can effectively improve students' vocabulary mastery.

Another study by Fatimah (2020) investigated the effectiveness of the Word Wall strategy in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery at SMPN 44 Surabaya. The research used a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach and found that the strategy had a positive impact on improving vocabulary mastery, particularly in online learning contexts. Additionally, observations showed high engagement and understanding among students throughout the teaching and learning process.

Lastly, Jannah & Syafryadin (2022) investigated students' attitudes toward Wordwall, a game-based web tool, for English vocabulary acquisition. The study found that most students viewed Wordwall positively, enjoying its collaborative and competitive aspects, and considering it an engaging and motivating tool for vocabulary learning. Students eagerly anticipated using Wordwall in their learning experience.

The similarity between the current study and previous research focuses on using media as an English language teaching tool to enhance vocabulary mastery. However, the key difference is that the previous studies focused on improving learners' mastery of English vocabulary. In contrast, the current research explores the perspectives of young learners on the effectiveness of Wordwall media in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and student engagement in English classes.

## B. Research Questions

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

1. What is the process of using the Wordwall Application to support learning English vocabulary in 7th-grade EFL Indonesian students?
2. What is 7th-grade EFL Indonesian students' vocabulary mastery using the Wordwall application?
3. What are the responses of 7th-grade Indonesian EFL students to learning English vocabulary using the Wordwall application?

## C. Research Purposes

Derived from the issues outlined earlier, the objectives of this research can be articulated as follows:

1. To describe the process of using the Wordwall Application to support learning English vocabulary in 7th-grade EFL Indonesian students.
2. To find out the result of using the Wordwall application on their English vocabulary in 7th-grade Indonesian EFL students.
3. To find out the responses of 7th-grade Indonesian EFL students in learning English vocabulary using the Wordwall application.

## D. Research Significances

This research is expected to be useful information for readers. The benefits are theoretical and practical.

1. Theoretical significance

   The results of this study are expected to have benefits in providing information to readers about the benefits of using Wordwall media in teaching English and the impact of its use on interactions between teachers and students.

2. Practical significance

a. For the English teacher

This research will contribute to perceptions about how Wordwall media is used and how teachers and students interact in the learning process.

b. For the students

These discoveries may motivate students to develop proficiency in utilizing technology as a tool for learning and to engage in further educational pursuits as a method of mastering the English language.

c. For the future researchers

This research can serve as a starting point for conducting further studies related to this research.

## E. Research Scope

This study examines the process and students' responses to using the "Wordwall Application" as a tool to enhance vocabulary mastery. The research aimed to describe the implementation and assess the effectiveness of the Wordwall application in vocabulary learning among seventh-grade students at SMPIT Wasilah Intelegensia in Garut.
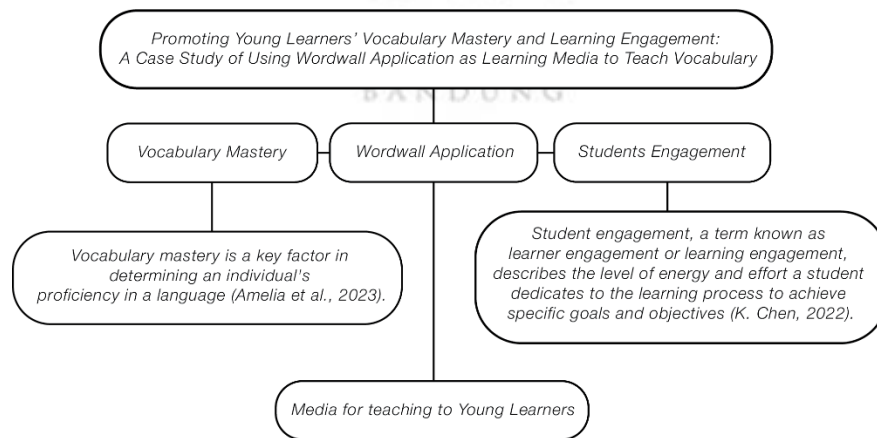
## F. Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1.1 Figure** Conceptual Framework

Vocabulary mastery is a key factor in determining an individual's proficiency in a language (Amelia et al., 2023). It is the foundation upon which language skills are built, enabling individuals to understand and use words correctly, effectively, and accurately in various situations. Vocabulary plays a crucial role in the process of language acquisition and is essential for effective communication in a language (Jacobs, 1998). By expanding their vocabulary, students can improve their communication skills, express themselves more effectively, and comprehend complex texts more easily, also, in their academic field.

Student engagement in academic settings is a multifaceted concept associated with numerous positive educational outcomes, encompassing a range of desirable results (Ruiperez-Valiente et al., 2020). Educators need effective strategies, methods, and resources to support their goals when teaching vocabulary to create materials tailored to student's specific needs and learning styles (Lelawati et al., 2018). This ensures that students receive targeted instruction and can absorb and retain new vocabulary effectively.

Teaching English to young learners requires extra effort in terms of strategies and specialized approaches to meeting their needs. Harmer (2007) mentioned that they typically lose interest in anything after ten minutes due to their short attention spans. This statement is consistent with Slattery and Willis (2001), who say that younger students require variety and have short attention spans. In this case, teaching requires indirectly being able to enter their world to find out the knowledge they have. In line with this, according to Harmer (2007), the reason is that young students enjoy discussing themselves and finding out about topics that are relevant to their own lives. This is consistent with Juhana's (2014) assertion that children love lessons that relate to their daily lives and naturally make connections between what they are learning and their own experiences. Other than that, Gamification is an approach to learning using elements in games or video games to motivate students in the learning process

and maximize the feeling of enjoyment and engagement with the learning process, and media can be used to capture things that interest students and inspire them to continue learning (Jusuf, 2016). According to Raftopoulos (2015) in Landsell (2016), gamification can be both a product, a mindset, a process, an experience, a design approach, and a system.

Wordwall is a versatile educational tool that offers a range of interactive features and templates, including quizzes, matching, anagrams, random words, word searches, and more Az Zahrah & Anwar, (2023). This program allows students to engage creatively with educational content through its interactive features and handouts, which can be used in classroom lessons. Wordwall can be accessed on various devices, and its output can be printed directly or downloaded in PDF format. Users can easily switch between activity templates, with 18 templates available for free use.
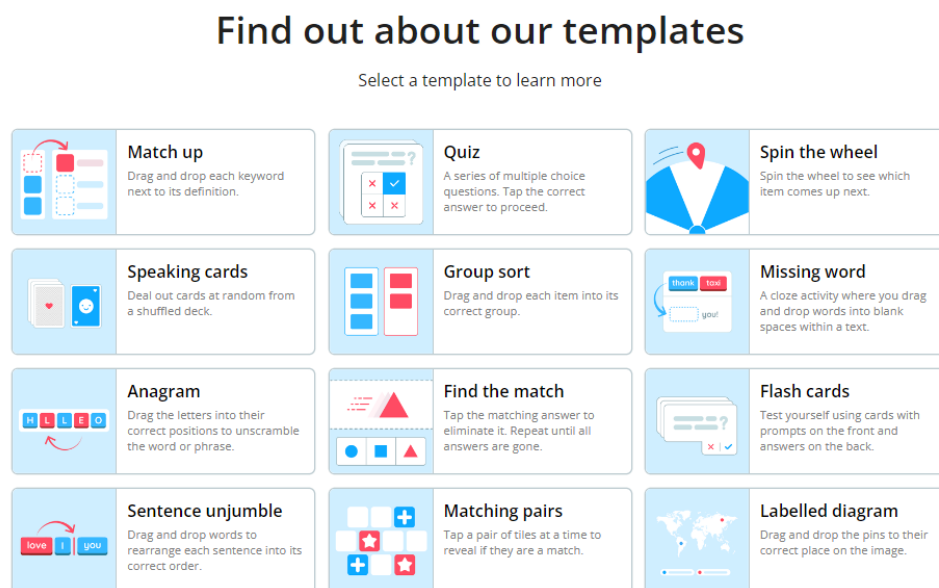


**Figure 1.2** Game mode or features in the Wordwall application.

This research uses the Wordwall Application as media. WordWall is a digital educational platform that provides engaging interactive games that cater to diverse educational requirements and content. The learners can interestingly

learn vocabulary and can be engaged by the teacher while using this media in the classroom. The research aims to know students' vocabulary mastery and perceptions of using the Wordwall application as supporting media in their engagement.

## G. Previous Study

Previous research has investigated the effectiveness of the Wordwall Application in enhancing vocabulary mastery through various activities. These studies have explored the impact of different approaches and strategies on students' vocabulary acquisition and retention, providing valuable insights into the optimal methods for improving vocabulary skills using this digital tool. The first study was conducted by Syamsidar et al. (2023) we conducted a one-shot case study to assess the impact of Wordwalls on vocabulary acquisition. The results showed a significant improvement in vocabulary mastery by 73.5%, indicating the effectiveness of Wordwalls in enhancing English learning.

Another study conducted by Sari & Aminatun (2021) At Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia in Bandar Lampung, students' attitudes towards using movies to enhance vocabulary skills were explored. The study found a positive perception among students, indicating that incorporating movies into the curriculum can improve vocabulary mastery and enhance spoken and written English communication.

Lastly, Paksi et al. (2023) investigated teachers' perceptions of using Wordwall.net to teach English vocabulary at SDN Makassar 06, East Jakarta. The study used a descriptive quantitative approach and found that teachers have positive perceptions, indicating high satisfaction with the tool.

The previous research studies focused on vocabulary enhancement through media in English language teaching and acquisition. In contrast, this study focuses on exploring the process and students' responses to using the "Wordwall Application" as a tool for vocabulary acquisition.