

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter offers a comprehensive theoretical foundation, discussing the background, research questions, and research purposes. It also provides a conceptual framework and highlights the significance of the research. A synopsis of earlier research is included at the end of the chapter.

#### **A. Background**

One of the most critical aspects of learning English is expanding one's vocabulary. Nation (2001) emphasizes that vocabulary acquisition is central to language learning, while Allen (1983) asserts that students must learn thousands of words to master a language. In addition, Wilkins (1972) states that very little can be conveyed without grammar, but nothing can be conveyed without vocabulary. This emphasizes that vocabulary is the cornerstone of communication. Students who have a large vocabulary will be better able to read, write, speak, and listen.

Vocabulary richness directly affects learners' ability to comprehend and produce language. According to De Groot (2005), the depth of a learner's vocabulary not only enhances communication and understanding of a second language but also facilitates the learning of other languages. However, vocabulary acquisition remains one of the most pressing challenges for English language learners, particularly at the middle and high school levels. Salam and Nurnisa (2021) identified vocabulary deficiency as a significant cause of students' inability to speak English well, with problems such as pronunciation, spelling, memorization, and understanding of meaning. Similarly, Salawazo et al (2020) found that students frequently forget new vocabulary due to limited exposure and a lack of motivation.

Several studies have also emphasized that limited vocabulary knowledge significantly hinders communication in foreign language contexts (Toy & Buyukkarci, 2019). Akçelik and Eyüp (2021) found that vocabulary acquisition plays a central role in the formation of coherent spoken and written texts. Despite

students learning grammatical structures, the lack of vocabulary often remains the most significant barrier to practical expression.

Among various vocabulary categories, verbs play a particularly crucial role in sentence formation but are often perceived as difficult by learners. Verbs are complex in terms of meaning, form, and usage, including many irregular patterns and exceptions (Hlaing, 2020). In Indonesian, students frequently struggle to identify and use different types of verbs appropriately, which affects their overall language proficiency (Paputungan et al., 2022). This difficulty can lead to anxiety, reduced confidence, fear of making mistakes, and hesitation in communication (Saefudin, 2020).

In the 21st century, English teachers face increasing challenges in keeping students engaged, especially with the rapid advancement of technology and innovation. Thornbury (2002) warns that inadequate vocabulary hinders both comprehension and production. To address this, teachers must adopt engaging strategies to motivate learners. One such strategy is the use of educational games, which not only entertain but also teach essential skills that are otherwise difficult to acquire through traditional methods (Michael & Chen, 2006). Susanti et al. (2022) highlight how incorporating games into classroom management helps maximize student learning in an enjoyable and meaningful way.

Game-based digital platforms such as Quizizz, Socrative, and Kahoot have gained popularity in modern classrooms (Aini & Setiawan, 2023). Among these, Socrative stands out as a practical tool for facilitating interactive learning. It enables teachers to administer quizzes, engage students, and gather feedback in real time (Dervan, 2014). Faya et al. (2019) found that students viewed Socrative positively when gamification elements such as points and leaderboards were included. Similarly, Balta (2018) reported that students demonstrated a positive attitude toward Socrative, particularly when used for homework assignments.

Based on the findings above, many studies have explored the use of digital games, including Socrative, in vocabulary learning. However, few studies have focused explicitly on using Socrative to teach verb vocabulary in junior high school settings. Considering the importance and complexity of verb learning,

along with the potential of Socrative as an engaging learning tool, the purpose of this study is to determine how junior high school students' use of Socrative affects their verb vocabulary achievement.

#### **B. Research Questions**

The application of variable X (Socrative digital tool) on variable Y (verb vocabulary achievement) is the main subject of this study. There are three questions in this study. The following research questions are developed based on the preceding study background:

1. What is the student's verb vocabulary achievement before using the Socrative digital tool?
2. What is the student's verb vocabulary achievement after using the Socrative digital tool?
3. How significant is the student's verb vocabulary achievement before and after using the Socrative digital tool?

#### **C. Research Purposes**

From the research questions above, the research objectives were developed as follows:

1. To determine students' verb vocabulary achievement before using the Socrative digital tool.
2. To determine students' verb vocabulary achievement after using the Socrative digital tool.
3. This study aims to determine the significance of the students' verb vocabulary achievement before and after using the Socrative digital tool.

#### **D. Research Significances**

The theoretical significance of this research is expected to investigate how Socrative makes learning and assessment more interactive, creative, and engaging. This research extends the theoretical foundations of digital tool-based learning. As educational approaches are rapidly evolving and the use of technology in learning environments is growing, this research offers important insights into the efficacy of digital assessment. The results are expected to advance further research into the

use of technology to enhance learning and advance the conversation about innovative educational techniques.

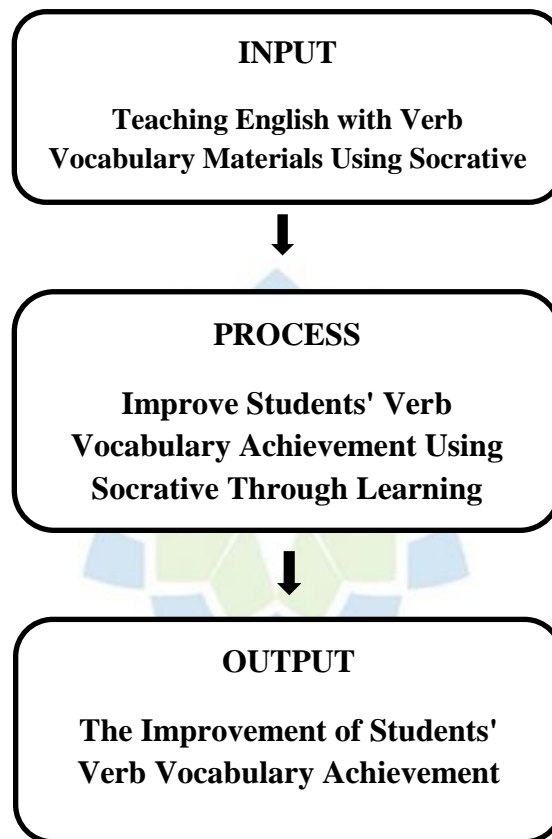
The practical significance of this research is expected to be a valuable guide for educators to use Socrative-based digital tools to improve classroom management and learning strategies. By using this platform, educators can create more dynamic and productive classrooms, which can improve student engagement, understanding, and retention. In addition, this research underscores the importance of educational technology in promoting more effective teaching approaches, which will ultimately benefit both educators and learners by making the teaching-learning process more dynamic and outcome-focused.

#### **E. Research Scope**

This study focuses on determining the effect of using Socrative as a digital tool on students' verb vocabulary achievement in the context of recount texts. The scope of this study covers past tense verb vocabulary (simple past tense), both regular and irregular, taught in grade VIII recount texts in accordance with the Freedom Curriculum. This study does not cover all aspects of language, but rather focuses on vocabulary achievement, particularly in terms of mastering the meaning and use of verbs in the context of sentences and texts. The research subjects were eighth-grade students at SMP Tunas Harapan. The treatment in this study involved the use of Socrative to provide interactive quiz-based exercises and assessments in the form of multiple-choice questions, word matching, and fill-in-the-blank exercises. This study does not include measurements of speaking, listening, and writing skills in general, nor does it examine long-term retention of the vocabulary taught. It involves the use of Socrative to administer interactive quizzes (multiple-choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank tests) as a form of formative assessment and gamified learning. Long-term retention of vocabulary is also outside the scope of this study.

## **F. Conceptual Framework**

This study focuses on the effect of verb vocabulary achievement using Socrative digital tools. It supports this research using constructivist and behaviorist learning theories, with the following conceptual framework.



**Figure 1. 1 Conceptual Framework**

This study adopts a conceptual framework based on the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model, as proposed by Fraenkel (2012), which is commonly used in pre-experimental research designs. The framework provides a structured basis to examine the impact of work-related vocabulary instruction—particularly English verbs—on junior high school students’ vocabulary acquisition. Each component of the IPO model plays a vital role in shaping the study: the input forms the foundation of the intervention, the process involves the implementation of learning strategies and tools, and the output reflects the measurable results of vocabulary improvement.

### 1. Input

The input component of the study involves the instructional materials and activities focused specifically on work-related English verbs. These materials serve as the foundation of the intervention, aiming to enhance students' productive language skills. As Nation (2001) states, vocabulary knowledge—particularly the mastery of high-frequency verbs—is essential for effective communication and contributes significantly to learners' overall language competence.

### 2. Process

In the process phase, the researcher applies specific learning strategies that aim to enhance students' verb vocabulary. A key component of this stage is the integration of digital learning tools such as Socrative, which allows for interactive, engaging, and formative vocabulary activities. Research by Susanti & Nurkamto (2020) supports the idea that digital platforms in English language instruction can increase student motivation, provide immediate feedback, and facilitate vocabulary retention, especially when consistently used in the classroom. Through this intervention, students engage in dynamic vocabulary-building exercises that are both collaborative and technology-enhanced.

### 3. Output

The output refers to the improvement in students' verb vocabulary as a result of the treatment. This is typically measured by comparing pre-test and post-test results to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), vocabulary acquisition serves as a measurable indicator of language development, particularly when instruction targets specific lexical categories like verbs. The expected outcome is a significant increase in students' mastery of verb vocabulary, demonstrating the effectiveness of the instructional approach used.

### 4. Theoretical Support

Vocabulary plays a central role in language learning and communication. Amelia et al. (2023) emphasize that a strong vocabulary

foundation directly supports learners' language skills, enabling them to comprehend, use, and apply words accurately and effectively across different contexts. As Jacobs (1998) notes, vocabulary growth facilitates better oral communication and reading comprehension. Neuman (2009) defines vocabulary as both receptive (listening) and expressive (speaking) words that are essential for effective communication. Thornbury (2002) further describes vocabulary as the core of foreign language teaching. In addition to traditional instruction, innovative strategies such as the use of games have been recognized as effective in enhancing vocabulary learning. According to AlNatour & Hijazi (2018), vocabulary instruction should be supported by appropriate strategies, and game-based learning is considered a modern and engaging approach. The Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (Richards, 1995) defines a game as a structured activity involving rules, objectives, competition, and communicative interaction—all of which contribute to meaningful vocabulary acquisition.

#### 5. Technological Integration

Digital tools, particularly mobile applications like Socrative, support active learning environments. Socrative enables teachers to monitor student progress in real time, provides opportunities for collaborative knowledge sharing, and enhances both communication and teamwork. As Awedh (2015) explains, such platforms contribute to improved student engagement and academic achievement.

This conceptual framework presents a clear cause-and-effect relationship, where the input (work-related verb vocabulary instruction), combined with an engaging process (digital tools and active learning strategies), leads to a measurable output (improved verb vocabulary acquisition). Grounded in both theory and practice, the framework supports the study's goal of enhancing students' English vocabulary in a meaningful and systematic way.



## **G. Hypothesis**

The hypothesis used in this study focuses on the effect of using Socrative digital tool as learning media on English vocabulary achievement during learning. The central claim of this study is formulated as follows:

1. H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis): Using the Socrative digital tool does not affect verb vocabulary achievement in Tunas Harapan Junior High School students.
2. H<sub>a</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis): Using the Socrative digital tool affects verb vocabulary achievement in junior high school students at Tunas Harapan Junior High School.

## **H. Previous Study**

According to research from Awedh (2015) conducted at King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia, Jeddah, the study's primary goal was to investigate how students' learning performance was affected when Socrative was used in conjunction with cellphones. The sample was taken from 38 students enrolled in a computer architecture course. The result of this study is that the Socrative tool increases students' motivation to learn, helps them realize what they know, and helps them understand concepts, significantly improving their learning process. This tool also enhances students' communication with their classmates and teachers and supports the collaborative exchange of information, which enhances communication skills and the spirit of cooperation.

From Dakka, S. M. (2015), conducted in the Department of Engineering & Math, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom. The experiment was carried out in the second semester of the one-year engineering program. The findings of the experiment were examined both numerically, based on student performance, and qualitatively, using questionnaires. The findings demonstrated that students' performance can be enhanced by using the Socrative evaluation method. According to the findings, 53% of pupils performed better, whereas 23% performed poorly or not at all. According to qualitative findings, students' educational experiences improved. Overall, the findings demonstrate the benefits of utilizing this technology in the classroom.



According to research by Mohamad (2019), the aim of this study was to find out how Indonesian students and their instructors at the Islamic University of Riau Islamic University felt about using Socrates in grammar lectures, particularly when it came to tenses. The study's conclusions demonstrate that most respondents had favorable opinions on Socrative. Regarding the "perceived usefulness and ease of use" of Socrative in grammar class, both students and lecturers provide good answers.

Rabu and Talib (2017) conducted a study on rural national elementary schools in the Penaga district of North Seberang Perai, Malaysia. The purpose of this study is to find out how well two learning approaches—digital game-based learning (DGBL) and interactive multimedia learning (IML)—improve the vocabulary achievement of fourth-grade students in English and how open the children are to the DGBL approach. The findings of this study suggest that digital game-based learning methods offer a more fun and effective way for students to learn English vocabulary. In addition, the findings of this study indicate that digital games are highly preferred and beneficial to students. The researchers argue that digital game activities are ideal for enhancing and developing students' abilities in primary school learning, especially in English as a second language.

From Susanti (2024). This study was implemented in the fourth grade of SDN 88, Bengkulu City. This implementation aims to train and assist the fourth-grade teachers of SDN 88 Bengkulu City in implementing cultural literacy and citizenship based on GLS to improve literacy activities in the classroom. The method used is training and mentoring. This study found that students who used Quizwhizzer-based educational game media and those who did not had differences in average learning outcomes. This game-based learning media, designed for second-grade students, was assessed to increase students' knowledge of Pancasila Education, particularly about law, and improve their legal literacy.

According to research by Fadila (2024), twenty-five tenth-grade students made up the sample for the study, which was carried out at MAN 1 Karawang. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the students' speaking abilities both before and after they used the Cake Application and any notable variations in their

speaking abilities between the two periods. The pre-test and post-test in this study, which use Cake Application media to enhance speaking abilities, show how Cake Application media can help EFL students' speaking abilities. The purpose of this study is to ascertain whether or whether students' speaking abilities significantly increase before and after utilizing the Cake Application media. According to the study's findings, pupils' speaking abilities may be enhanced by using the Cake Application media.

The research titled “Improving Students’ Vocabulary Achievement through Word Game“ by Hidayat (2016) shows that word games can improve students' vocabulary acquisition and are an effective strategy for teaching English. The game makes memorizing vocabulary easier and makes students enjoy and be motivated to learn. In addition, the game encourages competition and cooperation in the teaching and learning process, making it a good strategy for teachers to teach students English. The results of this study can also help readers develop English materials related to pedagogical games.

Currently, there are many studies that have explored the use of digital tools in English language learning, many of which focus on general academic performance, student motivation, or speaking skills. Applications such as Socrative, Quizwhizzer, and Cake have been widely researched in various educational contexts; however, there are not any that have specifically investigated their effectiveness in teaching verb vocabulary. In addition, most of the previous studies were conducted at the elementary or high school level, or in an international context, so there is a gap in research at the junior high school level in Indonesia. Furthermore, although game-based learning has been shown to increase student engagement, there is limited empirical evidence evaluating how Socrative, in particular, affects verb vocabulary acquisition in the EFL classroom. Therefore, this study addresses the apparent gap by examining the specific effect of the digital tool Socrative on students' achievement in learning verb vocabulary in an Indonesian junior high school context.