

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the background of the study, research questions, research purposes, research significances, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

A. Background

Vocabulary mastery is a key component in learning English as a foreign language (EFL), because it serves as the foundation for developing other language skills, such as writing, reading, speaking, and listening (Harmades, 2025). Students may encounter significant difficulties in understanding and expressing themselves in English if they have a limited range of vocabulary (Maharani et al., 2023). Despite its importance, vocabulary learning in EFL classrooms, particularly at the senior high school level, still faces persistent difficulties. EFL students often experience problems such as difficulty remembering new words, limited ability to use vocabulary in meaningful contexts, and lack of confidence when applying vocabulary in speaking or writing tasks (Alifah & Wijirahayu, 2025).

Furthermore, previous studies have shown that these difficulties are closely related to conventional vocabulary teaching methods, such as memorizing word lists and teacher-centered explanations, which offer minimal opportunities for meaningful practice and student interaction (Zedri et al., 2025). As a result, vocabulary learning is often perceived as monotonous, leading to low student engagement and passive classroom participation. These findings indicate that vocabulary learning problems are not only related to students' abilities but also to instructional practices that are still dominated by conventional media and teacher techniques in EFL classrooms.

In many EFL contexts, teachers frequently rely on conventional memorization methods such as asking students to memorize lists of target words and their meanings to build vocabulary knowledge. However, this traditional approach has proven to be less effective in fostering student engagement or long-term vocabulary retention. This aligns with Gantari (2024), who argued that traditional

memorization-based approaches can often make lessons boring and uninteresting for students. Additionally, Fathoni et al. (2024) state that integrating digital learning tools is essential for creating a more active, student-centered learning environment, which helps students achieve a better understanding of vocabulary. Faced with these challenges, EFL teachers have increasingly turned to digital media, specifically Quizlet Flashcards, as an alternative to conventional vocabulary teaching practices. This aligns with the findings of Setiawan and Wiedarti (2020), who found that digital flashcards are effective in increasing student interest and participation in learning new words.

To overcome these pedagogical challenges, in the current EFL context, integrating technology into education is an urgent necessity. Digital tools offer multimodal learning experiences that suit today's students' diverse learning styles, including audio, visual, and interactive formats (Pratiwi & Trisanti, 2025). Flashcards remain a widely used tool for vocabulary learning because they help students recognize and remember new words through repetition (Lei & Lee Reynolds, 2022). In this digital era, Quizlet offers digital flashcards with audio, visual, and gamified features, accessibility across various devices, and collaborative learning opportunities, making it well-suited for learners today (Fahmi et al., 2025).

However, teachers' perceptions and acceptance also influence the effective use of technology in the classroom, as the success of technology does not depend solely on the tool's features (Akram et al., 2022a). In the classroom, teachers play a key role. Their beliefs about the usefulness and ease of use of a tool determine whether the technology is meaningfully integrated or merely used as an additional supplement to learning (Chun & Yunus, 2023). Despite its potential, digital technology in EFL is not always seamlessly integrated. EFL teachers often encounter practical challenges, such as limited internet access and device availability, as well as difficulties with pedagogical integration (Khoirunnisa Harahap et al., 2025). These challenges suggest that the success of digital media-based vocabulary learning depends not only on the availability of technology but also on how teachers interpret, accept, and use it.

Therefore, this study contributes to filling the gap by focusing on how teachers perceive the use of Quizlet Flashcards in vocabulary learning at Islamic Senior High School in Karawang. Using a qualitative case study design, this research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how teachers perceive Quizlet Flashcards and the challenges they face in using them in their pedagogical practice.

B. Research Questions

This study explores the use of Quizlet Flashcards for vocabulary teaching at Islamic Senior High School in Karawang. Based on this focus, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How do EFL teachers perceive the use of Quizlet Flashcards in their vocabulary teaching at Islamic Senior High School in Karawang?
2. What challenges do EFL teachers face when using Quizlet Flashcards for vocabulary teaching at the school?

C. Research Purposes

In line with the research questions, this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the use of Quizlet Flashcards for vocabulary instruction in an EFL classroom. Specifically, this study aims:

1. To investigate EFL teachers' perceptions of using Quizlet Flashcards in vocabulary teaching at Islamic Senior High School in Karawang.
2. To identify the challenges that EFL teachers face in using Quizlet Flashcards for vocabulary teaching at the school.

D. Research Significances

Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching by expanding the literature on the integration of digital tools in vocabulary teaching, particularly in relation to Quizlet Flashcards. This study complements existing research by exploring teachers' perceptions and the real challenges they face in the classroom. Thus, this study provides a deeper understanding of how digital technology supports vocabulary teaching based on real classroom practice in the context of high schools in Indonesia.

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to provide insights and reflection material for teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) regarding

the use of Quizlet Flashcards. These insights can help teachers utilize digital media to enhance vocabulary learning in a more engaging way. Additionally, this research also serves as a practical reference for school administrators, particularly at Islamic Senior High School in Karawang, in making informed decisions regarding technology integration and developing professional development programs for teachers to overcome the challenges of digital learning.

E. Research Scope

This study is limited to exploring EFL Teachers' perceptions and the challenges they face when using Quizlet Flashcards in vocabulary teaching for the eleventh-grade (XI) students at Islamic Senior High School in Karawang, Indonesia. The focus is explicitly on how teachers perceive the usefulness and ease of use of the tool, as well as the external and internal challenges that shape their pedagogical practices in the classroom. There is no aim to measure improvements in student learning outcomes, the quantitative effectiveness of the media, or students' long-term vocabulary mastery. Furthermore, this study is limited to the Quizlet Flashcard feature and does not discuss other digital platforms or other language skills (e.g., listening, speaking, or writing) outside of vocabulary acquisition. Using a qualitative case study design, this study aims to provide an in-depth and contextual understanding of teachers' authentic practice in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL).

F. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research is based on three main theories: the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), Vocabulary Teaching Principles (Nation, 2001) and Barrier theory (Ertmer, 1999). These theories complement each other to explain the use of Quizlet Flashcards from the perspectives of technology acceptance, pedagogical appropriateness, and the challenges faced during the use of Quizlet Flashcards.

First, Nation's (2001) Principles of Vocabulary Teaching will be used to provide a pedagogical context for the use of flashcards. Nation emphasizes that effective teaching must include three aspects: form, meaning, and use. In this study, Nation's theory will be used to assess whether teachers view Quizlet Flashcards as a tool that

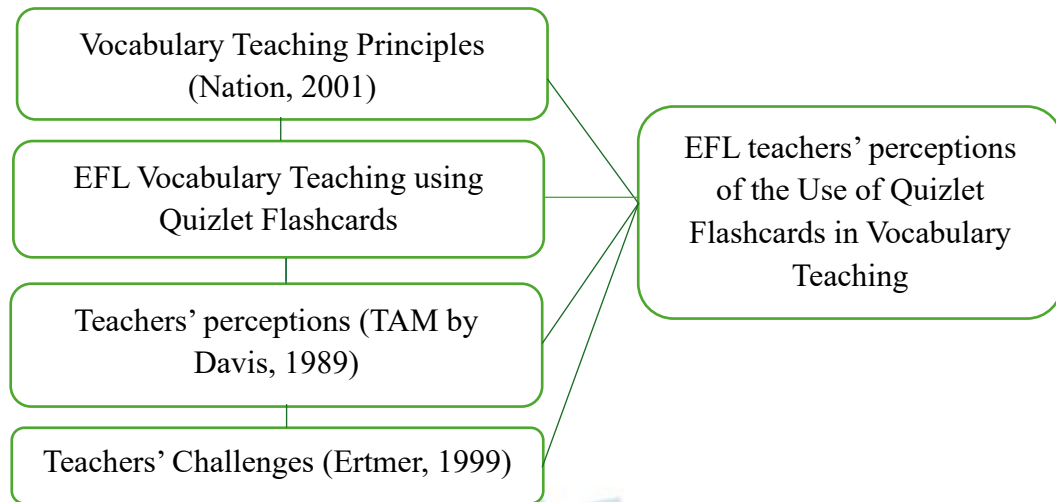
is suitable for these three aspects, for example, how the “flip” function connects the word with its meaning (definition/image). This study also evaluates whether teachers view these digital cards as a medium for deliberate learning, which is one of Nation's main aspects in vocabulary acquisition.

Second, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) will be used as the main framework to explain teachers' perceptions. This model focuses on two main concepts: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). Perceived usefulness (PU) refers to the extent to which teachers believe that Quizlet Flashcards can improve vocabulary teaching, such as helping learners memorize words and increasing motivation. Meanwhile, perceived ease of use (PEOU) reflects teachers' views on how easy Flashcard features are to use, including the process of creating word sets and managing digital cards.

Finally, this study will use Ertmer's (1999) barrier theory to address the challenges. Ertmer categorizes challenges into first-order barrier (external) and second-order barrier (internal). In the context of Quizlet Flashcards, First-order barriers include technical issues such as unstable internet connections or limited access to devices while Second-order barriers relate to internal factors such as teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and confidence toward technology integration.

The relationship between these three theories shows that teachers' perceptions are influenced by whether flashcards fulfil language teaching standards and are hindered by specific practical challenges.

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework



As illustrated in Figure 1.1, these three frameworks are interconnected with pedagogical principles by Nation (2001), which provide the foundation, TAM by Davis (1989) explains teachers' internal perceptions and Barrier Theory by Ertmer (1999) identifies the external and internal factors that influence overall implementation. Therefore, integrating these three theories provides a comprehensive understanding of EFL teachers' perceptions and challenges in using Quizlet Flashcards, including technological, pedagogical, and practical aspects.

G. Previous Studies

Several previous studies have examined the use of digital media and learning technology in teaching English vocabulary in an EFL context. In general, these studies show that integrating digital technology, including flashcard-based applications and digital games, positively affects vocabulary learning, both in terms of student engagement and learning outcomes.

A study by Toy & Buyukkarci (2020) examined *The Effect of Quizlet on Vocabulary Teaching in Turkey*. This mixed-methods research involved 50 teachers, with data collected through class implementation and perception surveys, which were analyzed both quantitatively (descriptive statistics) and qualitatively (narrative interpretation). The study found that the majority of teachers rated Quizlet as an effective, practical, and interesting tool for vocabulary instruction. In addition, teachers highlight several challenges (e.g., internet access, devices) and

stress that Quizlet should be combined with traditional methods to be more optimal. However, the study focused on EFL teachers' perceptions of the use of Quizlet in vocabulary teaching, it did not specifically address the features of flashcards or local Indonesian contexts.

Research by Harmades (2025) explained *The Use of Quizlet-Based Digital Flashcard Media in enriching the English Vocabulary of Grade VIII Students at MTsN 17 Tanah Datar*, which used a descriptive qualitative approach with a teacher and 28 students. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. Results showed that Quizlet supported student engagement and motivation, but teachers were positioned mainly as informants, so their perceptions were not prioritized.

A quantitative study by Sarantika et al. (2025) examined *Using Quizlet Application with Flashcards Feature to Teach EFL Vocabulary*. This study used a quantitative, pre-experimental design with 30 eighth-grade students from SMP Negeri 26 in Pontianak City as participants. This study used a divided instrument, with a pre-test and a post-test. The researcher collected data using a test instrument divided into two stages, namely the pre-test and post-test. The researcher analyzed the data using a quantitative approach; a pre-test and post-test, tested the hypothesis, and carefully determined the size of the data analysis. The study found that the effect of using the Quizlet application was 1.94, higher than 1.00. The results showed that students achieved significantly better vocabulary performance after learning through the Quizlet application. accomplished much higher achievement than those who used the application before.

Another study by Urnila et al. (2024) discussed *Teachers' Perceptions on The Use of Digital Games to Support Young Learner Vocabulary Learning*. This qualitative study examined how digital games support vocabulary acquisition through data collected through interviews and observations. This research was conducted at 3 elementary schools in the city of Kediri, including: SDN Negeri Kaliombo, SDN Ngronggo 3, and SDN Ngronggo 6. This study shows that Quizziz and Wordwalls can be used to support young learners' vocabulary learning. In addition, several problems were also found, including limited time, a slow internet

connection, and differential management of students. However, the study did not specifically address the use of Quizlet Flashcards nor the context of learning at the high school/madrasah level.

Another study was conducted by Sudarsih (2025) titled *Persepsi Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Terhadap Penggunaan Media Digital dalam Proses Pembelajaran*. This study used qualitative descriptive methods. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis, and then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. This study was conducted in several purposely selected Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The study found that most teachers viewed digital media positively because it helped create more effective, interactive learning that could increase student involvement and facilitate material delivery. In addition, there are some challenges, namely limited technological facilities and a lack of teacher training. However, this study only highlighted the perception of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers towards the general use of digital media in learning, the study did not specifically address the use of Quizlet Flashcards nor the context of vocabulary learning at the high school/madrasah aliyah level.

From several previous studies, it can be concluded that the general use of digital media supports involvement and improves vocabulary learning. However, most previous studies focused more on digital media in general, student learning outcomes, or teacher perceptions outside Indonesia, and were conducted first at the primary or secondary school level. Thus, research at the Madrasah Aliyah level is still limited. Therefore, this study will be conducted to fill the gap by examining EFL teachers' perceptions of the use of Quizlet Flashcards in their vocabulary teaching at Islamic Senior High School in Karawang. Therefore, this research is expected to make a new more specific contribution to the local context of Indonesia and the level of high school education.