

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This section discussed the background, research questions and purposes, research significance and research framework.

A. Background of the Study

It is undebatable that vocabulary plays an important role to learn a foreign or second language. It is an essential aspect of language abilities, providing much of the basis for how effectively students speak, listen, read, and write (Richards and Renandya, 2002). In other words, vocabulary is one of the most basic and important pillars to master English, as a foreign language (Endarto and Subekti, 2020).

In fact, several students have difficulty with pronouncing words, writing and spelling, and accurately applying grammatical patterns. Meanwhile, without a broad vocabulary and strategies for expanding it, learners frequently fall short of their potential and may be discouraged from participating in language learning activities such as listening to the radio, speaking with native speakers, using the language in various contexts, reading, or watching television (Richards and Renandya, 2002). Consequently, students may struggle to develop effective writing or oral communication. Students who have difficulty reading typically have a limited vocabulary (Susanto, 2021).

Developing the vocabulary of English Foreign Language learners is essential since lack of vocabulary affects all other language skills (Al-Dersi, 2013). We do not learn a word in a single meeting. Palmer stated that the natural method by which a child learns language could be defined in four words: perception, recognition, imitation, and reproduction (Frisby, 1970).

However short that process becomes with practice, it is certain that, to be learnt and become a part of our language repertoire, a word must recur in practice several times; almost immediately after we have made its acquaintance, and thereafter at not-too-distant intervals (Frisby, 1970: 98). Then, there are two ways of regarding a word, when considering its selection for language learning- its validity and

frequency; or its usefulness for the purpose in hand and its general popularity as a word in a language. “Each way of considering a word has its place” (Frisby, 1970: 99). In this situation, when learning vocabulary mastery, students must change their learning style, approach, and media usage to develop their vocabulary mastery (Wahyudin and Rido, 2020).

It is generally assumed that story can help EFL learners develop their vocabulary. As claimed by Dersi (2013), story, - especially short stories, can play an important role in the development and enrichment of EFL learners' vocabulary. Many ELT researchers accept the idea of using short stories to help EFL learners expand their vocabulary (Wright et al., 1984). Wright et al., (1984) believe that using stories to learn vocabulary in an EFL context is effective. This is because, by using stories, teachers can create a variety of situations in which students must communicate, share knowledge, and voice their perspectives. There are several ways for students to read stories. Students are able to read stories not only through conventional books but also through a variety of media applications. *Wattpad application* is one of the most popular and entertaining media for helping students develop vocabulary.

It is an application that offers interesting stories. This means that users can write or read information content related to cyber literary stories on *Wattpad* (Ahmadi, 2018). Students should be able to master various English vocabulary with the *Wattpad application*. In line with this, Rahman and Iwan (2019) who stated that *Wattpad* is one of the online technology applications that can be utilized in paired with the learning process. *Wattpad application* provides digital stories in various literary genres, including fantasy fiction, teen fiction, romantic fiction, thrillers, and many more, without requiring readers to read weighty books to enjoy the story. Students open the *Wattpad application* to gain access to it at any time and from any location. The *Wattpad application* could assist students in developing not only proficiency in reading but also their writing, vocabulary, grammatical structures, and speaking abilities, making it an excellent resource for EFL classrooms.

Students can use *Wattpad application* to conduct extensive reading activities. It has been widely acknowledged that extensive reading enables learners to have a

broader range in their reading materials because they are able to read genuine literature from many kinds of resources such as daily newspapers, weekly papers, tabloids, books, articles, stories, novels, short fiction, publications, magazines, and websites. It is also used outside the classroom because most people consider it joyful reading (Harmer, 2007). Some studies have found that extensive reading increases reading speed and understanding. It results in substantial vocabulary comprehension, and students improve spelling and vocabulary understanding. Extensive reading enhances students' affective aspects, including enthusiasm and mindset toward reading (Shen, 2008).

Various research on vocabulary mastery through *Wattpad application* has been conducted. Bal (2018) conducted semi-structured interviews and diaries to study middle school students' reading and writing experiences inside and outside of school in the digital technology era, namely *Wattpad*. Besides, Anggitasari et al. (2020) investigated EFL college students' enjoyment of short stories using *Wattpad*, and their experiences and perception and of reading short stories on the platform. In addition, Syaifudin (2020) compared students' vocabulary mastery taught using *Wattpad Applications* to those taught using traditional methods. Last, Adiningtyas (2020) this study was conducted to determine whether *Wattpad* assists students in developing their writing skills, and it only focuses on writing recount text.

Unlike previous research, which linked strategies, techniques, and media with vocabulary mastery through *Wattpad application*, this research focus on students' experiences and the students' strategies to comprehend new vocabularies. In this study, the researcher used the qualitative method. It used to reveal the students' experiences in developing vocabulary mastery through *Wattpad application*.

B. Research Questions

From the background above, this research is intended to answer the two following questions:

1. What are students' experiences in developing vocabulary mastery through *Wattpad application*?
2. What are students' strategies to comprehend new vocabulary that make reading both easy and fun?

C. Research Purposes

From the research questions above, this research is aimed at the two following purposes:

1. To describe students' experiences in developing vocabulary mastery through *Wattpad Application*.
2. To identify students' strategies to comprehend new vocabulary that make reading both easy and fun.

D. Research Scope

This study aims to understand the experiences of sixth-semester students majoring in English education at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung while using *Wattpad application* to develop their vocabulary. The study only consider students who have completed their Extensive Reading course during their fourth semester and utilized *Wattpad application* as a component of their weekly reading progress.

E. Research Significances

The result of this research is expected to give both theoretical and practical benefits as follows:

Theoretically, in line with the increasingly widespread use of gadgets, particularly among students, this research is expectedly to provide theoretical benefit by uncovering alternative teaching and learning medium that allow the students to make rapid progress in acquiring vocabulary and to prevent student from forgetting them.

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to be helpful to teachers and other researchers. The present study would like to highlight the significance of the study below:

- a. For EFL Teachers

This study highlights the potential of *Wattpad application* as a tool for EFL teachers to enhance vocabulary acquisition and diversify teaching techniques. Teachers can create a more dynamic and effective learning environment by showcasing its effectiveness in language instruction by integrating this digital platform into their teaching methodologies.

b. For other researchers

The findings of this study provide a foundation for further research in vocabulary acquisition and digital learning platforms. The study shows how *Wattpad application* can improve English vocabulary, which could lead to similar alternative mediums being explored for their impact on language learning outcomes. Researchers can use these findings to investigate effective vocabulary instruction and contribute to the progress of language pedagogy.

c. For Institutions

This study's results significantly impact educational institutions, especially English language education. By incorporating platforms like *Wattpad application*, institutions can expand their resources and encourage innovation in language education techniques, better-equipping students and educators to achieve proficiency in the English language.

F. Conceptual Framework

This study examines students' experiences developing vocabulary through *Wattpad application*. Furthermore, this study identifies student's strategies for comprehending new vocabulary, making reading easier and fun. The theoretical framework was designed by using the following scheme:

UIN
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI
SUNAN GUNUNG DJATI
BANDUNG

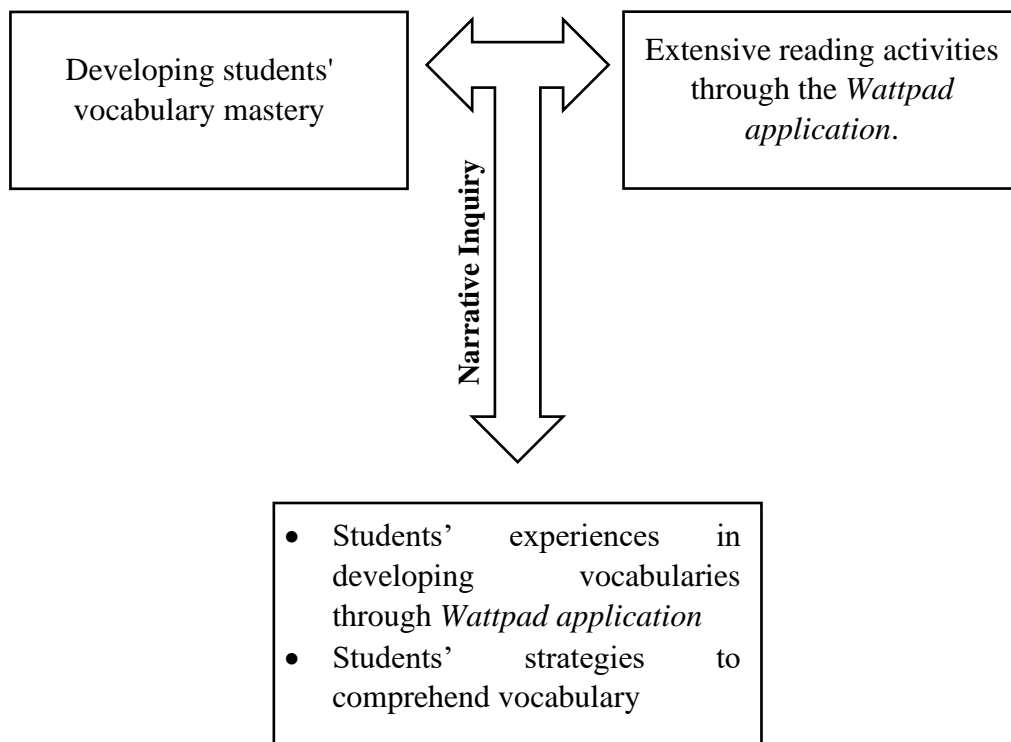


Figure 1. 1 Conceptual Framework

Vocabulary is a crucial language aspect when learning English. Vocabulary is a collection of English terms presented to students during the process of education and learning, and it is linked to all four English skills. According to experts, vocabulary has numerous definitions. Hiebert and Kamil (2005) argue that vocabulary effectively conveys meaning. Recognizing the communicative value of vocabulary, a student may reasonably seek to acquire a working knowledge of many words. The more words learners comprehend and can utilize, the more meanings they can convey in different contexts.

Secondly, Schmitt (2000) stated that vocabulary mastery is the ability to define words and understand their meaning. It is in line with Hiebert and Kamil (2005), who stated that mastering vocabulary does not include memorizing some English words but rather understanding the meaning, knowing, organizing words, and correctly using them. As stated above, vocabulary is knowledge of words with meaning in a language that is used to express meaning. Vocabulary mastery can

also be described as mastering the stock of words and their meanings to communicate one's ideas.

As a result, because vocabulary is so crucial for students, it is essential to develop students' vocabulary. Developing vocabulary can be accomplished in various ways, one of which is through media applications. The *Wattpad application* is one of the applications available to students. According to Kardiansyah (2019), *Wattpad* is a platform application that could improve literary work by offering the ability to read and write services such as stories, novels, poetry, and more. Allen Lau and Ivan Yuen founded *Wattpad* in 2006. It featured stories in 50 languages from around the world. *Wattpad* users spend a total of 23 million minutes each month. When we connect to the internet, we can use this application.

Furthermore, *Wattpad application* has supplied a novel with various genres, and we can read approximately every chapter for free (Miranda, 2021). The *Wattpad application* is used to assist students with their language learning. It makes the class more interesting to learn. Reading English through *Wattpad application* is an intriguing way to improve our English language skills, particularly vocabulary.

Furthermore, Brown (2001) recognized four abilities as crucial to the learning and teaching process: the ability to listen, speak, read, and write. Reading is an essential language skill. Reading assists in improving the learner's other language skills. According to Krashen (1981), those who read more have larger vocabularies, perform better on grammar tests and write better. On the other hand, Richard (1998) stated that extensive reading is reading a simple book and not having to understand every word; the readers are more concerned with general understanding than sentence meaning.

According to the definition of extensive reading as "the independent reading of a large quantity of material for information or pleasure," students can begin with simple and attractive texts and choose what they want to read based on their interests.

G. Previous Studies

Several studies on vocabulary mastery through *Wattpad application* reading activities have been conducted, such as Bal (2018) conducted a study to determine

middle school students' in-school and out-of-school reading and writing experiences in the digital era using *Wattpad application*. The researcher employed phenomenology from qualitative research approaches. Participants in this study were middle school grade 6 students (8 females and four males). The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and diaries, which were subsequently analysed using content analysis. Data show that participants had a negative impression of in-school reading, including feelings of obligation, boredom, and restriction, as well as a perception of the activity being useless. During the in-school writing process, the participants were likewise constrained and under pressure. In contrast, the participants expressed favourable experiences with *Wattpad application* for out-of-school reading and writing. The findings revealed that there was no association between in-school and out-of-school reading and writing experiences.

Furthermore, Anggitasari et al. (2020) conducted a study examining the response of college students learning English as a foreign language towards short stories on *Wattpad application*. The researchers used a qualitative case study method involving 40 college students. Data was collected through observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The study found that all students could access *Wattpad application* at any time and from any location, allowing them to obtain new information quickly. As a result, *Wattpad application* was found to be an effective tool for improving students' literacy skills and vocabulary.

Besides, Syaifudin (2020) compared students' vocabulary mastery taught using *Wattpad application* to those taught using traditional methods. This study's research design was quasi-experimental with a quantitative approach, and the population was first-grade students from SMAN 1 Karang Trenggalek. The samples were chosen using purposive sampling from the X IPA 2 class of 36 students and the X IPA 4 class of 36 students. The finding showed that *Wattpad application* effectively improved the vocabulary mastery of the students in the experiment group.

Another study by Adiningtyas (2020) was conducted to determine whether *Wattpad application* assist students in developing their writing skills or not, and it only focuses on writing recount text. It was held at one of Sidoarjo's Vocational

High Schools. The researcher used a pre-experimental research design and pre-test and post-test methods to collect data. This research only included one class of 25 students. Based on the findings of this study, *Wattpad application* can help students improve their writing skills. It is clear from the results of the students' pre-test and post-test. It was also supported by the students' questionnaire, which revealed that 13 students felt at ease and enjoyed using *Wattpad application* to learn how to write recount text. The other 12 students did not enjoy or feel comfortable using *Wattpad application* to learn how to write a recount text.

In contrast, this study focuses on students' experiences with *Wattpad application* reading activities to help students develop their English vocabulary. The gap between this study and previous studies is the research participants and method. The previous study was conducted in middle and senior high school, whereas this research conduct in the fourth semester of a college student's extensive reading class.

