# CHAPTER I
# INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the study, which consists the background of study, research problem, purpose of the study, hypothesis, scope and limitation, significance of study and operational definition of key terms.

## A. Background of the Study

Learning English vocabulary is one of the most fundamental and challenging aspects for young learners, especially at the elementary school level because it is the foundation of language skills. As a technology-based learning tool, Wordwall Digital Flashcards presents vocabulary material through a combination of visual and audio elements and interactive features, which are designed to increase students' motivation to learn, encourage their active participation, and can provide students' learning experience their ability to remember new words.[1] Wordwall is an online platform that provides interactive learning activities, including flashcard features that can be customized with images, sounds, and text to create engaging vocabulary learning experiences.[2] The use of digital media has been proven to provide significant results in improving vocabulary mastery, which serves as the foundation for listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.[3] Vocabulary

[1] Salwa Dwi Tarishah and Ika Yatri, 'Wordwall as an Interactive Media to Increase Social Studies Learning Motivation', *Edueksos Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial & Ekonomi*, 14.01 (2025).

[2] N Dwiningrum, E Bunau, and E F Rahmani, 'The Use of Wordwall To Enrich Students' Vocabulary', *Jpbii*, 12.1 (2024), 2615–4404 <https://doi.org/10.23887/jpbi.v12i1.3308>.

[3] Samantha Jata Robin and Azlina Aziz, 'The Use of Digital Tools to Improve Vocabulary Acquisition', *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12.1 (2022), 2472–92.

plays crucial role in language learning because it serves as the primary tool that enables students to understand and convey meaning. Students who have a strong vocabulary foundation can understand better what they read and listen, also they can express their ideas clearly in speech and writing. On the other hand, students with limited vocabulary tend to struggle not only with communication but also with academic achievement throughout all aspects of language skills. This is particularly true for young learners in the level of elementary school students in Indonesia, who are still in the process of developing basic language skills and require exposure to concrete and meaningful vocabulary to achieve progress.[4]

However, based on preliminary observations it was found that teachers in the school still use conventional teaching methods, particularly through the use of printed flashcards as the main learning media. This causes problems because it makes it difficult for students to understand the teacher's explanations well. Learning practices in elementary schools still dominantly use monotonous memorization methods which lack context. Teaching English vocabulary is not easy because it is very different from Indonesian vocabulary from spelling and pronunciation. In addition, many English words have multiple meanings. This condition indicates the urgent need for more innovative and engaging teaching media to support students' vocabulary

[4] Setiani Lelawati, Selma Dhiya, and Putri Nurazijah Mailani, 'The Teaching of English Vocabulary to Young Learners', *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 1.2 (2018), 95–100.

learning.[5] Selecting an appropriate teaching method plays a crucial role in students' ability to understand and retain material. Several studies have shown that digital learning tools have a positive impact on vocabulary mastery, as these tools offer a variety of engaging, appropriate activities that attract young students. For example, the previous research proved the effectiveness of using Wordwall games to can provide students' learning experience the vocabulary knowledge and pronunciation of fourth-grade elementary school students in Banjarmasin. On the other hand, several studies using traditional flashcards also show positive results. For example, studies at SDN Sumberjeruk 2 Bondowoso and SDN in Bengkulu concluded that the use of flashcards is effective in increasing the motivation and vocabulary mastery of fourth-grade students.[6]

These results confirm that both Wordwall and flashcards can contribute to vocabulary learning. However, research on the use of Wordwall platforms for elementary school students is still limited especially on the use of Digital Flashcards in Indonesia. Previous studies have shown that digital learning tools and traditional flashcards can help with vocabulary learning.[7] Most of the studies have been conducted at the junior high school, or college levels, while at the elementary school level, many teachers still use memorization methods

[5] Sahar Ameer Bakhsh, 'Using Games as a Tool in Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners.', *English Language Teaching*, 9.7 (2016), 120–28.

[6] Esra Çil, 'The Effect of Using Wordwall.Net in Increasing Vocabulary Knowledge of 5th Grade EFL Students', *Language Education & Technology (LET Journal)*, 1.1 (2021), 21–28.

[7] Farrah Aufa Khasani Putri, Maryam Sorohiti, and Teguh Ariebowo, 'Teaching English Using Flashcards to Improve Elementary School Students' Vocabulary', *Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, 8.2 (2024), 198–215 <https://doi.org/10.18196/ftl.v8i2.21350>.

or print media which often make students feel bored.[8] In fact, fourth-grade elementary school students need engaging, visual, and interactive learning materials so they can enjoy the learning process during class. At this age, students tend to learn better when they can see, interact, and respond to the material directly, rather than just listening to explanations or memorizing words. If the learning activities feel monotonous or passive, students easily lose concentration and interest, making it more difficult for them to remember new vocabulary. Therefore, the use of engaging and visually stimulating media can help students stay engaged and remember vocabulary more effectively.

Based on this gap, this study aims to address the limitations of research on Wordwall Digital Flashcards at the elementary school level by examining their effectiveness in improving vocabulary mastery among fourth-grade students. The uniqueness of this study lies in two aspects. First, this method focuses on vocabulary mastery rather than simple word repetition, which means that activities are designed to present vocabulary in contextual sentences and meaningful tasks. Second, this study specifically examines fourth-grade elementary school students, which is expected to provide direct evidence of the effectiveness of this method for elementary school-aged children. This study not only examines whether Wordwall Digital Flashcards can can provide students' learning experience vocabulary scores, but also investigates how digital flashcard features help students remember and use vocabulary in

[8] Siti Fatimah, 'Students' Vocabulary Mastery through Word Wall at SMPN 44 Surabaya', *JournEEL (Journal of English Education and Literature)*, 2.2 (2020), 22–33 <https://doi.org/10.51836/journeel.v2i2.166>.

sentences. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a significant benefit to elementary school teachers in their teaching, while also contributing to knowledge in the field of language learning technology. As a result, learning English can be more enjoyable and not boring for students. This study is also grounded in Behaviorism Theory, which views learning as a change in observable behavior resulting from the interaction between stimulus and response.[9] Align with Behaviorism Theory this research used Wordwall digital flashcards as the function which produced stimuli that present words, images, and sounds to students, while students' responses appear in their ability to recognize, remember, and use vocabulary correctly. Furthermore, reinforcement strategies such as feedback, repetition, and interactive activities provided by the platform can enhance student learning outcomes. Therefore, Behaviorism Theory is considered relevant to this study.

## B. Research Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the research question is formulated as follows:

Is there a significant difference in teaching vocabulary mastery between students who taught with Wordwall Digital Flashcards and those taught without Wordwall Digital Flashcards?

[9] B.F. Skinner, *Verbal Behavior*, *The Encyclopedia of Child and Adolescent Development* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 2020) <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171492.wecad094>.

## C. Purpose Of the Study

To verify the effectiveness of Wordwall Digital Flashcards in teaching vocabulary mastery between students who taught with Wordwall Digital Flashcards and those taught without Wordwall Digital Flashcards.

## D. Formulation of Hypothesis

**$H_0$**: There is no a significant difference in teaching vocabulary mastery between students who taught with Wordwall Digital Flashcards and those taught without Wordwall Digital Flashcards.

**$H_1$**: There is a significant difference in teaching vocabulary mastery between students who taught with Wordwall Digital Flashcards and those taught without Wordwall Digital Flashcards.

## E. Scope and Delimitations of the Research

In this study, the main focus was on teaching vocabulary to fourth grade students at SDIT Al Husna using Wordwall Digital Flashcards. The vocabulary material is limited to the topic of "Abilities" and taught in four learning sessions over three weeks. Each class typically attends one session a week. However, due to special school activities during the month of Ramadan, the regular schedule was adjusted. As a result, two sessions were conducted in the same week to ensure that all planned learning activities could be completed. The researcher focused on the use of Wordwall Digital Flashcards as a learning media to can provide students' learning experience students' vocabulary mastery. In this study, vocabulary mastery refers not only to students' ability to understand and remember words, but also to use them appropriately. It's mean

that the Researcher would like to giving the usage of vocabulary well. However, the use of vocabulary was limited to simple sentence construction based on the given context. The participants were limited to two fourth-grade classes, and the measurement was conducted through pre-test and post-test. Therefore, these findings were limited to vocabulary mastery within the scope of the selected material and the use of vocabulary appropriately in the context of sentence.

## F. Significance of the Study

### 1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study contributes to the existing literature on vocabulary learning by presenting empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the Wordwall digital flashcards. Different from several previous studies that focused on higher education, this study emphasizes vocabulary learning at the elementary school level, specifically for fourth-grade students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). These findings are grounded in Behaviorism Theory, which views learning as a process of building habits through stimuli, responses, and reinforcement. In this context, the Wordwall Digital Flashcards serve as a stimulus that presents vocabulary through visual and interactive elements, while students' responses are reflected in their ability to recognize, recall, and use words correctly. The repetition and immediate feedback provided by the platform serve as reinforcement, which strengthens vocabulary acquisition and retention.

**2. Practical Significance**

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to provide several benefits for different stakeholders:

a. For English Teachers

This study provides a reference for elementary school English teachers in selecting effective and engaging media for vocabulary instruction. It demonstrates how Wordwall Digital Flashcards can enhance students' vocabulary mastery through interactive and meaningful learning activities.

b. For Students

This study helps students can provide students' learning experience their vocabulary mastery through interactive exercises, visual support, and repetition. It also enhances their motivation confidence and interest in learning English.

c. For Schools

This study offers insights for school on the benefits of integrating digital learning media into English instruction. It encourages the use of technology-based tools to support innovative and student-centered learning.

d. For Future Researchers

The results of this study are expected to be useful as a reference for future researchers who are interested in vocabulary learning and digital media in English teaching. It may be used as a basis for further studies

involving different levels, skills, research designs or digital platforms to gain broader insights into technology enhanced language learning.

## G. Operational Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the title of the research, the several terms are defined as follows:

### 1. Effectiveness

In this study, effectiveness refers to the extent to which the Wordwall Digital Flashcards in this way it can provide students' learning experience in vocabulary mastery. This was measured by comparing students' vocabulary scores before and after treatment, as well as between the experimental and control groups. The medium was considered effective if there was a significant result in students' vocabulary mastery after treatment.

### 2. Wordwall Digital Flashcards

Wordwall Digital Flashcards refer to a technology-based learning medium that presents vocabulary through interactive digital flashcards. This media can be accessed via digital devices such as laptops or smartphones. In this study, it specifically refers to the flashcard feature provided by the Wordwall platform.

### 3. Teaching Vocabulary

Teaching vocabulary refers to the process of providing learners with vocabulary knowledge through appropriate teaching techniques and strategies to support understanding and usage of words.

**4. Vocabulary Mastery**

Vocabulary mastery refers to students' ability to understand, remember, and use English vocabulary correctly in the learning process. This includes recognizing words meanings, identifying words, and using them appropriately in simple sentences. In this study, vocabulary mastery is measured through vocabulary tests, including multiple-choice questions, matching items, and sentence completion tasks, focusing on contextual usage.