# CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the research introduces basic knowledge of the research. The researcher elaborates the research background followed by terminology definition, research problem identification, research objectives, research methodology, and significance of the research.

## Background of the Study

Vocabulary learning is the most crucial aspect of language learning because it creates a long-term memory especially for young learners. As if vocabulary learning mentions the meaning of words, it helps young learners to understand the meaning of words. If young learners did not master the vocabulary learning, it is impossible for them to communicate and comprehend things clearly.

As mentioned before, young learners can be regarded as fast learners since they are able to understand and to explore many lessons or knowledge, as an example in acquiring and learning a language. According to Yule (2010), young learners can acquire language easily by listening and speaking at the same time. Also, they can develop their ability because they have critical thinking to explore what they would like to know (Scargill, 2020). A good learner is a learner who considers learning a language important, not only by performing but also by knowing the rule of the language they are currently learning and is usually motivated to learn more (Krashen, 1981).

In this research, the researcher would like to enhance EFL young learners’ vocabulary. This research is necessary to conduct because this research can be used as a future reference for EFL young learners’ English teaching, such as increasing their ability in English by using technology in an interactive way. By doing this research, the researcher would like to implement technology to increase EFL young learners’ vocabulary.

Therefore, the researcher would like to do experimental research to enhance EFL young learners’ vocabulary by using Duolingo. Duolingo is a language learning media platform that can be installed through smartphones or any devices such as a laptop or personal computer. Learners can use Duolingo anytime and anywhere. Duolingo is free and friendly to use, and it can be adjusted to what learners want to explore or learn about. Duolingo has various games that include four language aspects: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. By using Duolingo, people could easily learn various languages including English.

From the previous research by Matra (2020), it is stated that Duolingo can be an alternative media for EFL young learners’ teaching medium because it can increase students’ vocabulary at seventh and eighth grade. This statement is supported by Habibie (2020) in his findings that Duolingo is an app that anyone can use to begin learning a second language since it pushes them to keep going. In addition, Ambara (2020) concluded that Duolingo's application in English classes has a variety of benefits for learners. It helps learners understand the topic and increases their motivation to learn. Students have the same turn practicing information, which prevents boredom in learning and makes learning and practicing material easier in real life. They also participate in teaching - learning process with enthusiasm. The learners were enthusiastic about the use of Duolingo in the classroom. However, the researcher did not find whether Duolingo is suitable to implement in primary schools since the teachers did not teach English for primary school students.

In this case, Duolingo can be used as a learning medium in schools, including elementary schools. The researcher believes that the features of Duolingo such as spell checking, audio test, fill in the blank, and ‘bubble game’ could be helpful and interesting for learners.

According to the statements above, the researcher believes that Duolingo could help non-English elementary school students to learn English entertainingly. Therefore, the writer takes the problem through the paper entitled “**ENHANCING EFL YOUNG LEARNERS’ VOCABULARY USING LANGUAGE LEARNING APPLICATION”**.

## Reasons for choosing the topic

To begin with, the researcher chooses this topic is because many primary school teachers did not teach English. In addition, the researcher focuses on enhancing EFL young learner’s vocabulary in learning English by using an interactive medium such as language learning application for language learning such as Duolingo. In conclusion, the researcher would like to implement Duolingo as a teaching medium to see if the learners’ vocabulary skill can be enhanced.

## Research Questions

From the background of the research, the researcher includes the following question:

“Does the application effectively improve EFL young learners’ vocabulary?”

## Research Objectives

According to the research question, the researcher focuses on finding out whether Duolingo as a language learning application effectively improve EFL young learners’ vocabulary.

## Research Significance

The results of the research are expected to be beneficial both theoretically and practically to improve the educational system in elementary school. Theoretically, it may contribute to the former literature. Practically, this research is dedicated to enhance EFL young learners’ vocabulary in learning English. If learners’ vocabulary is improved after using Duolingo as a language learning application, especially in English, students can acquire new skills contributing to four aspects of language: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Also, teachers could choose Duolingo as a language learning application for an interactive EFL learning for young learners.

## Limitation of the Study

The research focused on experimenting with Duolingo as a language learning application for English learning in elementary school. The limitation of this study is that this research is conducted for third-grade students at one of the elementary schools in Garut.

## Research Hypothesis

The hypotheses of this research are the null hypothesis (Ho) and alternative hypothesis (Ha). The null hypothesis is Duolingo as a language learning application could not make significant enhancement and advantages to students, and the alternative hypothesis is Duolingo as a language learning application could make significant enhancement and advantages to students.

## Definitions of Terminologies

1. **Duolingo**

According to Loewen et al. (2019), Duolingo is a self-described free, science-based language education platform, which was created by Luis von Ahn and Severin Hacker in 2011. Duolingo offers a fairly convenient, free, and basic mobile learning application which contains motivational DGBL [digital game-based learning] features that give it enough of an addictive edge for many learners to stay engaged.

1. **Young learners**

Young learners are a group of learners from age 6 to 16 years old, and they are ‘early start’ learners who begin to learn at primary schools (Pinter, 2006).

1. **ELT**

According to Shiroza (Shiroza, 2022), ELT is defined as English Language Teaching which includes teaching media, teaching methodology, and educational policies in teaching English.