**CHAPTER 1**

**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the general introduction of the study. It includes the background of the study, the reason for choosing the topic, research questions, aims of the study, research methodology, research design, scope of the study, the significance of the study, and definition of the terminologies.

1. **Background of the study**

In the 21st century, the existence of technology has become commonplace, especially in English teaching and learning. According to Soleimani et al. (2014) and Wang & Hsu (2020), many educational institutions have integrated modern technology into teaching and learning, particularly in language acquisition because technology may help to learn and teach in a variety of ways and allows students to acquire language abilities such as writing, reading, listening, and speaking. One of the potential technologies that are often used and have benefits for students in learning English is a mobile device. According to Kukulska-Hulme (2012), due to the rapid growth of information and communication technology (ICT), a mobile device is one technology that is frequently utilized in learning. So that, the use of the mobile device can help students in language learning.

The use of a mobile device to learn a second language is often known as Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). MALL is the use of mobile technology, such as cellular phones to assist, support, enhance, and broaden the reach of teaching and learning (Pegrum, 2014). So, MALL is a method of language learning that is assisted or enhanced by the use of portable mobile devices and is a sort of m-learning in the language learning process (Kukulska-Hulme, 2012; Valarmathi, 2011). The use of MALL is very beneficial for students to learn outside the classroom such as at home, during travel, park, etc. It is supported by Kukulska-Hulme (2012), MALL is formal or informal learning via handheld media that is potentially available for use anywhere and anytime. Moreover, MALL is considered beneficial in learning a language in terms of being flexible, low cost, small phone size, and friendly to use (Czerska-Andrzejewska, 2017). Hence, MALL has many benefits for students in learning a second language.

One example of the use of MALL in learning a second language is the use of mobile applications. The mobile application is one part of MALL which is a way to help students in the learning process (Kukulska-Hulme, 2012; Valarmathi, 2011). Many mobile applications are used by students to learn a second language, especially learning vocabulary. It is related to a study by Rezaei et al. (2014), as interest in learning vocabulary grows, numerous types of aids are now available for learning, mobile applications being one of the most effective and popular. YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, Duolingo, Quizlet, Memrise, Music Apps, and Dictionary Apps are the mobile applications that are commonly used by Indonesia students to learn vocabulary outside the classroom (Agustin & Ayu, 2021; Anggraini & Fauzi, 2019; Anjaniputra & Salsabila, 2018; Cahyono, 2020; Cesarini et al., 2021; Diniasri et al., 2020; Fahdin, 2020; Izah, 2019; Muslimawati et al., 2021). Using mobile applications is a great approach for students to learn since they allow them to study from any location (Valarmathi, 2011). So that, the use of mobile applications may not only entertain students but also assist them in learning a second language, especially vocabulary.

Moreover, learning vocabulary is very important for students in the English language. According to Perwita et al. (2021), vocabulary is an important component of language learning since it promotes the development of all language abilities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) and has a substantial impact on student learning achievement. Because vocabulary influences the study of all English abilities, various obstacles to learning vocabulary have been discovered. Many EFL students regard vocabulary as the most difficult aspect of language learning and a major obstacle to understanding it (Silverman & Hines, 2009 as in Kassem, 2018). Also, students struggle to master a big amount of vocabulary since they must memorize many words (Seyyedrezaei et al., 2018). Because of the large number of words that students must learn, students believe that formal learning is insufficient to master a wide range of new vocabulary. Therefore, students seek out additional activities outside the classrooms, such as learning tools or aids, that can assist them in improving their English language skills, particularly in learning new words.

Concerning the background, numerous studies about learning vocabulary using mobile applications have been conducted. Some of them focused on the effect of mobile applications on learning vocabulary, such as Agustin & Ayu, (2021); Samimi & Abadi (2016). Some of them focused on the implementation of mobile applications to improve English learning vocabulary, such as Nugroho et al. (2021). Last, some of them focused on the perception when students used mobile applications to learn vocabulary, such as Gafni et al. (2017). These studies found that using mobile applications to learn vocabulary can improve and have a positive impact on students' learning. Students may be able to learn new languages more easily and with fewer challenges. Also, because students can use them wherever they want, mobile applications could be an effective pedagogical tool for self-learning. According to the student’s perception, using mobile applications to learn vocabulary is very frightening because of the ease of use, gamification, and ubiquity of the application. As a result, the use of mobile applications is a useful aid for students to gain new words in learning vocabulary.

Based on the previous studies above, the majority of the studies employ mobile applications that focus on the benefits of learning vocabulary. Also, those studies are only focused on the effect and implementation of mobile applications in specific applications on learning vocabulary and conducted on regular or normal English classroom. This means that mobile applications must be tested on the general pros and cons of EFL students' opinions that can support students in vocabulary mastery outside the classroom.

Therefore, the current study attempts to find out EFL students' opinions of the mobile applications they use, as well as the challenges that occur when using mobile applications to support vocabulary mastery outside the classroom. So that, this study takes up that problem through the paper “Mobile Assisted Language Learning: EFL Students' Voice on The Use of Mobile Applications in Supporting Vocabulary Mastery”.

1. **The Reason for Choosing the Topic**

The reasons for adopting this topic are that mobile devices are an essential technical media used in language learning, especially in learning vocabulary. Additionally, integrating MALL such as mobile applications in learning might make it easier for students to learn English vocabulary outside the classroom. As a result, the purpose of this research is to find out what students think about the use of mobile applications to support vocabulary mastery outside the classroom.

1. **Research Questions**

Based on the background and identification of the study, the researcher wants to find out the EFL students’ points of view on the use of mobile applications in supporting learning vocabulary. As a result, the problem that will be discussed in this study can be started for the following reasons:

1. How did EFL students use mobile applications to support vocabulary mastery outside the classroom?
2. What are the challenges that occurred when EFL students use mobile applications to support vocabulary mastery outside the classroom?
3. **Aims of The Study**

The research aims of this research are to answer all of the problems that have been mentioned in the research questions above. From the research questions, it can be concluded that the aims of this research are:

1. To find out the mobile applications used by EFL students to support vocabulary mastery outside the classroom.
2. To know the challenges that occurred when EFL students use mobile applications to support vocabulary mastery outside the classroom.
3. **Research Methodology**

This study attempts to find out the EFL students’ voices on the mobile applications they use and the challenges that occur when using mobile applications to support vocabulary mastery outside the classroom. This study used qualitative research because the research aims to discover what is happening in real conditions or real social situations for small individual problems. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is frequently used to establish the significance of the key concept, as well as to investigate the topic and generate knowledge of small individuals' problems in society.

1. **Research Design**

This study design will be using a descriptive qualitative design. The use of a descriptive qualitative design because this study focused on investigating EFL students’ voices on the use of mobile applications in learning vocabulary outside the classroom. So that, a descriptive qualitative design is suitable for this research because examines events, conditions, or situations of phenomena from a subjective standpoint. The research design will be described in Figure 1.1:

**Figure 1.1 Steps of Research**

2. Identifying a Research Problem

1. Choosing the Topic

4. Research Instrument

3. Reviewing the Literature

6. Collecting Data

5. Conducting Qualitative Research

8. Reporting the Result of Research

7. Analyzing and Interpreting Data

 (Source: Creswell, 2012)

Based on Figure 1.1 above, a qualitative design was used in this research. There were eight steps used in this study. The first step is choosing the topic. This study used this topic because a MALL such as mobile applications in learning activities may make it easier for students, particularly in learning vocabulary. The second step is identifying a research problem. It arises because this study wants to find out the EFL students’ voices that focus on the mobile applications that students use, as well as the challenges that occur to support vocabulary mastery outside the classroom. The third step is reviewing the literature that is designed to support the study. The fourth step is the research instrument. This study used interviews for collecting the data. The fifth phase is conducting qualitative research. To complete the essential study, qualitative research is used to gather data and obtain a deeper understanding of the data. The sixth step is collecting data. The researchers will prepare the material for the interview and look for students as participants. Then, get the data about the mobile applications use and the challenges that occur in supporting learning vocabulary outside the classroom. The seventh step is data analysis, which is divided into three important steps by Miles et al. (2014), there are data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The last step is reporting the result, which involves explaining the data by structuring the report in the form of brief descriptions and acceptable to the reader.

1. **Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study focused on EFL students’ voices on the use of mobile applications in supporting vocabulary mastery at one of the tertiary institutions in Garut, West Java. From the research site, this study has chosen several students from English Education. The reason for selecting the research site and participants is that the students among them have utilized mobile devices, especially mobile applications as part of the learning activities to learn vocabulary outside the classroom.

1. **Significance of The Study**

This research is significant from a theoretical, practical, and professional standpoint. In theory, this study is expected to make readers increase their knowledge, including the students who will know the mobile applications that can assist them in learning vocabulary and the challenges that will be faced when using the mobile applications outside the classroom. Moreover, this study may be used as a source of information and reference material for obtaining an understanding and comprehension of students' voices on the use of mobile applications in supporting learning vocabulary. In practice, this research can assist teachers in providing a better knowledge of teaching through the use of mobile applications in supporting learning vocabulary. Furthermore, through engaging in MALL such as mobile applications, this study also can assist students in optimizing learning language, particularly in learning vocabulary outside of the classroom. Professionally, this study will serve as a resource and suggestion for future researchers who are interested to examine the same subject.

1. **Definition of Terminologies**
2. Learning vocabulary is the process by which students learn new words in another language after the acquisition of the first language (Wu, 2012).
3. MALL is a method of language learning that is assisted or enhanced by the use of portable mobile devices (Kukulska-Hulme, 2012).
4. Mobile Applications are a sort of application software that is used by students and meant to operate on a mobile device, such as a smartphone (Hamza & Saadalla, 2021).