

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Vocabulary plays an important role in communication and is the most important component in knowing and learning a particular language. In English, vocabulary plays an important role. Vocabulary learning is very important to improve one's language skills (Sri Andayani, 2022). All language learners must master vocabulary, because having a wide vocabulary will make it easier to understand texts, communicate and write correctly (Susanto, 2017). The more vocabulary we know, the better we can interact with others. We can describe and explain things more accurately with more vocabulary. With adequate vocabulary, the listener will be able to understand every aspect of the object we want to describe. Lack of vocabulary becomes an obstacle in learning (Susanto, 2017).

In order to interact with people from different countries, we must master english as a way to communicate around the world. However, many students at different levels of education face difficulties in mastering English vocabulary. One of the reasons is the use of ineffective, rigid and monotonous learning methods. Many traditional approaches in vocabulary learning only focus on memorization or repetitive exercises, without involving interactive activities that can motivate students (Citation, 2018).

Currently, there are many online and offline game applications that can be used by teachers in schools such as word trip, online and offline quizzes, wordscapes (S. Sari & Swondo, 2023). Wordscapes is a word- puzzle game created by PeopleFun that can be downloaded on gadgets like Android (Oktamia Anggraini Putri, 2022). The Wordscapes app is very easy for all ages to play and is certainly very convenient to use. The app gives players the opportunity to choose the time and place to play, which makes players expand vocabulary quickly, even while studying or relaxing. In addition, Saleh stated that games like “Wordscape Game” can help build an effective learning environment, especially for vocabulary development (Instr. Angham T. Saleh J., 2019).

Researcher’s observations at boarding school Al-Um in North Bengkulu on Monday, September 16, 2024, showed that learning activities at the school, especially at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level, were carried out without interesting methods. The teachers only used traditional methods by giving assignments and learning without using semester learning plans. In the learning process, teachers generally follow the *I'dad Amaliyah* book made by the teacher's school. *I'dad amaliyah* is the preparatory stage in *amaliyah tadris* (teaching practice in Islamic boarding schools), which includes making lesson plans (*i'dad*) based on certain guidelines. This plan must be approved by the supervising teacher before participants can

proceed to the next stage. *I'dad* in this context is different from ordinary lesson plans because it follows the standard boarding school guidelines related (R & Maulana, 2022). And there are some teachers who make *i'dad* without using games in their lessons, so students feel bored and consider the lesson monotonous.

The researcher also found that although Al-Um Islamic Boarding School is equipped with facilities such as computers and projectors, the facilities are still limited, English teachers at the school have not fully utilized the available technology or interactive learning media. In addition, the researcher found that students rarely interact in English and frequently make spelling errors in their pronunciation of vocabulary. This is evident from the school's weekly rule that requires students to speak in English every Friday, alternating between three languages: English, Arabic, and Bahasa Indonesia. For instance, this week, students are required to use English, the following week is Arabic, and the next week Bahasa Indonesia, continuing in rotation. However, it was observed that many students prefer to remain silent rather than speak in English.

Furthermore, some students secretly violate the rule by still using Indonesian. The English vocabulary of the students at Al-Um Islamic Boarding School is still underdeveloped. This can be seen from their lack of interaction in English and

their poor vocabulary scores. And although there is a regulation that requires students to speak in English every Friday, many students choose to remain silent or instead use Indonesian. One way that can be used to improve students vocabulary is by implementing game applications in learning. learning with games is not only a fun activity, but also an educational tool that helps students learn and reinforce certain skills. Games create a fun and relaxed environment where students can learn quickly and hone their language skills better (Instr. Angham T. Saleh J., 2019).

Various previous studies have proven that the use of word games is effective in improving students vocabulary acquisition. For example, a research that conducted by Umbolo With the title *“improving students vocabulary by using word game application”* in his journal which shows that word game applications such as Wordscapes can significantly improve students learning motivation and their vocabulary acquisition results. The results showed that students post-test scores improved significantly compared to the pre-test, proving that word games are not only fun but also effective as a vocabulary learning tool (Umbola et al., 2022). Another study was conducted by Vu et al with the title *“Using Word Games to Improve Vocabulary Retention in Middle School EFL Classes”* in their journal which examined the use of word games in middle school EFL classes in Vietnam. This study compared

two classes with different treatments, where one class used word games to learn vocabulary, while the other class used conventional methods. As a result, the experimental group that used word games showed a significant improvement in vocabulary retention compared to the control group (Vu et al., 2022). In addition, Angham T. Saleh also explained on his journal entitled *“Using Wordscapes Game as a Tool to Develop EFL Learners' Vocabulary Repertoire”*, stated that word games such as Wordscape are able to create a fun and interactive learning context. Students who participate in these games become more active and motivated in the learning process, thus improving their vocabulary acquisition (Instr. Angham T. Saleh J., 2019).

The used of games in learning in Indonesia is increasing, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic until now. Both traditional and modern games are being utilized to make learning more interesting and exciting. The use of games, especially traditional games, can help students be more creative, cooperative and more engaged in the learning process (Putranta et al., 2021). In addition, technology-based games that can be accessed online also improve students ability to use technology and provide a fun learning experience (Mursidin et al., 2022). In contrast, english learning process at Al-Um boarding school in North Bengkulu has not used games and does not utilize existing facilities and infrastructure as learning

media. Methods at Al-Um boarding school more focus on traditional approaches such as lectures, memorization, and group discussions, which make students bored and lackluster. Researches that focus on learning innovation in the boarding school environment, especially at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level, is still very limited. Therefore, this study uses Wordscapes application as a learning media to improve students vocabulary in Al-Um Islamic boarding school.

Finally, from the phenomena above, the researcher is interested in using wordscapes application as a learning media to see it is effectiveness on students vocabulary mastery in seventh grade students Madrasah Tsanawiyah at Al-Um Islamic Boarding School in North Bengkulu Regency. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a study with the title The Effect of Wordscapes Application Toward Students Vocabulary Mastery at the Seventh Grade Students MTs at Al-Um Islamic Boarding School of North Bengkulu Regency on academic year 2024- 2025.

B. Identification Of The Problem

Based on the background of the problem as the author has described above, the problem identification is as follows:

1. Limited of use technology and interesting learning media at Al-Um Boarding School in North Bengkulu.
2. Lack of use diverse and monotonous learning methods at Al-Um Boarding School in North Bengkulu.

3. Lack English communication at Al-Um Boarding School in North Bengkulu.
4. Errors in pronunciation vocabulary at Al-Um Boarding School in North Bengkulu.

C. Limitation Of The Research

Based on the identification of the problems above, this research is limited on the implementation of wordscapes application toward students vocabulary mastery at the seventh grade students MTS at Al-Um Islamic Boarding School of North Bengkulu Regency on academic year 2024- 2025. And the use of this wordscapes application is limited to level 8.

D. Research Question

Based on the identification of the problems and background of the research above, then the researcher formulated the research question as follow: Is there a significant effect of wordscapes application toward students vocabulary mastery at the seventh grade students MTS at Al-Um Islamic Boarding School of North Bengkulu Regency on academic year 2024-2025?

E. Research Objective

Based on the research question above, then the researcher is aimed to find out whether there is a significant effect toward students who are taught using wordscapes application and those who are not taught using wordscapes application toward students vocabulary mastery at the seventh

grade students MTS at Al-Um Islamic Boarding School of North Bengkulu Regency on academic year 2024-2025.

F. Benefits of the Research

The results of this research are expected to be useful for the following parties:

1. Theoretical benefits This research is expected to enrich the study on the use of educational games in learning, especially technology-based games such as wordscapes. This study also supports the theory of game-based learning as an effective and fun method to improve students vocabulary.
2. Practical benefits This research is expected to provide practical benefits for the following parties:
 - a. For Teachers: As an alternative to innovative learning media to increase students motivation and involvement in learning language vocabulary. Teachers can integrate the use of Wordscapes application in daily learning.
 - b. For Students: Providing a more interesting and enjoyable learning experience, so that it can effectively toward students vocabulary skills. Students will be more motivated to learn through the use of technology that they are familiar with.
 - c. For Schools: Encourage schools to be more open to the use of technology as a learning medium, and can

be an example of the application of technology in supporting the education process.

- d. For Other Researchers: The results of this study can be a reference for future researchers who want to develop research related to game-based learning or the use of technology in vocabulary learning.

G. Definition Of Key Terms

The following definitions are provided so that readers have the same understanding or perception for some of the terms used in this study. It also aims to avoid misunderstandings between readers and researchers. These terms are explained below:

1. Wordscapes application: A mobile-based word game application designed to hone language skills by arranging letters into words. Wordscapes is a word-puzzle game created by PeopleFun that can be downloaded on gadgets like Android (Oktamia Anggraini Putri, 2022).
2. Game on education: Gamification in education refers to the implementation of game elements in the learning process to motivate students and enhance academic performance. It incorporates dynamics like challenges, rewards, and levels to create engaging and interactive educational experiences that facilitate learning (Santillán et al., 2023).
3. Vocabulary mastery: a student's ability to recognize and

understand a number of words in a given language, as tested through a vocabulary test (Hariati, 2020).

4. Students of Islamic boarding school: Students of Islamic boarding schools, known as santri, engage in intensive religious education, character development, and independence. They participate in routine activities that internalize values, fostering traits such as discipline, social concern, responsibility, and a love for reading (Subur et al., 2024).

