

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The Concept of Vocabulary

1. Definition of Vocabulary

In learning and developing language vocabulary was very necessary, Dewi stated that vocabulary was all the words known or used by a person in speaking about a particular subject in a particular language (Dewi et al., 2019). The more words we understood, the better our speaking, writing and expression skills will become. Stone emphasized the importance of vocabulary by stating that “without grammar, little can be said, without vocabulary, nothing can be said” (Stone, 2019). In language learning, having a large vocabulary helped us understand texts, speak fluently, and convey ideas more clearly. So, increasing vocabulary was one of the keys to being able to communicate effectively and well. Okkan & Aydin explained that vocabulary was the science of words and word meanings, including not only the definition, but also how the word appeared in the world.

In addition to knowing the basic meaning of a word, vocabulary also studied how the word was used in different contexts, including its connotations and nuances. Vocabulary also covered the origin of words (etymology), how words had evolved over time, and the cultural and

historical influences on word usage. Vocabulary was the largest and most uncontrollable element in foreign or mother tongue language learning, due to the wide variety of meanings in EFL contexts (Okkan & Aydın, 2020).

Thus, language acquisition depended on vocabulary. Vocabulary consisted not only of the collection of words that one knows or uses, but also an understanding of their meaning and the context in which they were used. With a rich and broad vocabulary, you could write, speak and convey ideas effectively. According to Wilkins, communication was limited or even impossible without vocabulary, emphasizing the importance of vocabulary in conveying meaning (S. Sari & Swondo, 2023). Every word had a meaning that helped people to understand the message. If a person did not have enough vocabulary, he or she would have difficulty in conveying ideas or interacting with others, because they could not find the right words to express what they mean.

So, vocabulary was very important because without it, communication would have been limited or even unable to happen at all. Without clear and precise words, the conveyance of meaning was hindered, which in turn made social interaction and understanding very

difficult. Therefore, expanding and understanding vocabulary was essential to support language learning .

2. The Importance of Vocabulary

For people learning a second language, vocabulary knowledge was very important. According to Alqahtani Understanding vocabulary was an important part of the ability to speak in another language and was an important part of the language learning process. Alqahtani also stated that the ability to use language and vocabulary knowledge were related (Alqahtani, 2015). That is, the more words we knew, the better we spoke or wrote in the language, and the more we used it, the more vocabulary we learned. In addition, vocabulary knowledge was an important factor affecting students reading comprehension ability, especially those learning English as an additional language (EAL) (Brooks et al., 2021).

Vocabulary was thus a tool for effectively communicating thoughts, ideas and feelings. The more vocabulary we had, the easier it was to communicate and understand what others were saying and thinking. Second language learners could be more confident in using the language in formal and academic situations as well as in everyday conversation. Vocabulary also affected how one reads. A person with a rich vocabulary found it easier to comprehend complex texts and understand their meaning

correctly. Therefore, it was very important for second language learners to constantly expand their vocabulary through continuous reading, interaction and practice. In this way, they improve their language acquisition and overall communication skills.

3. Types of Vocabulary

Phani Kumar identified two categories of vocabulary namely active vocabulary and passive vocabulary. The former included vocabulary that students had to be taught and which they had to use in speech or writing as oral or written expression. Meanwhile, the second vocabulary included words that students might not have been able to pronounce but which they had learned and this form of passive vocabulary was seen in listening or reading content. Haycraft, cited by Phani Kumar,, identified two categories of vocabulary namely receptive and productive (Phani Kumar, 2020), the following explanation:

a. Receptive Vocabulary

Receptive vocabulary was vocabulary that students saw or encountered and could understand when used in context, but they could not create it themselves. It was the vocabulary that students used in speaking and writing (Phani Kumar, 2020).

b. Productive vocabulary

Productive vocabulary were words that students not only understood, but also could use correctly in speaking and writing (Phani Kumar, 2020). Different from simply recognizing words (receptive vocabulary), productive vocabulary involves the ability to use the word when speaking or writing in appropriate situations. In other words, productive vocabulary was an active process where students could produce words to express their ideas and thoughts to others. So, students not only knew the meaning of the vocabulary, but are also were able to use the words fluently and precisely.

4. Techniques of Teaching Vocabulary

Generally, there were many ways to teach vocabulary. However, English teachers should have kept a few things in mind when they taught their students new vocabulary or lexical items. This means that teachers should have helped their students recall new vocabulary. In order for students not to forget, vocabulary had to be learned, practiced, and improved. Here were some techniques of teaching vocabulary as stated by Elmahdi & Hezam (Elmahdi & Hezam, 2020):

- a. Using objects Using objects from everyday life as aids in teaching vocabulary. For example, if you

wanted to teach the word “book”, the teacher have shown the students a real book. This helped students to understand the meaning of the word more easily because they saw a real object.

- b. Drawing objects on the board or using picture cards to help students understand words. For example, to teach the word “car”, the teacher had drawn a car on the board so that students could more easily recognize its shape and associate it with the word being taught.
- c. Using Illustrations and Pictures Pictures could help students associate words with visual images in their minds. For example, when teaching vocabulary about animals, pictures of animals have made it easier for students to remember the word.
- d. Comparison (Contrast) This technique involved a comparison between two opposite words to clarify the meaning of the word. For example, if students were taught the word “long”, the teacher have shown the difference with the word “short”, so that students could more easily understand the meaning of the two words.
- e. Enumeration (List) Enumeration was a way of teaching vocabulary by listing related words. For example, to teach vocabulary about food, the teacher had mentioned lists such as “rice”, “fish”,

“vegetable”, “fruit”, which were all related to the theme of food.

- f. **Mimics, Expressions, and Gestures** This technique uses body movements or facial expressions to help students understand the meaning of words without always using words. For example, to teach the word “happy”, the teacher could have shown cheerful facial expressions and body movements that depicted happiness.
- g. **Guessing from Context** This technique taught students to guess the meaning of a new word based on the surrounding sentences or situations. For example, if students did not know the meaning of the word “agile”, they could have tried to guess from a sentence like “The dog is very agile, he can run fast and jump high.”
- h. **Elicitation** In this technique, the teacher provided an interesting word or situation and asked students to guess or sound out the corresponding word. For example, the teacher could have shown a picture of a tree and ask students to name the different types of trees they knew, which will help students learn a variety of tree-related vocabulary.
- i. **Translation** Sometimes, translating words or sentences into a language that was more familiar to students could have helped them understand new vocabulary, especially if

the word was difficult to understand. For example, if students have difficulty understanding an English word, the teacher could have translated it into Indonesian to provide a clearer explanation.

In learning vocabulary using apps, some methods could have been very helpful. For example, apps could have utilized pictures or illustrations to depict the meaning of words. In addition, apps could have been used to teach several related words in one theme, such as word lists. In these ways, apps could have made the process of learning vocabulary easier and more enjoyable.

B. Definition of Wordscapes Application

1. Definition of Wordscapes Application

Wordscapes was PeopleFun's easy-to-play word puzzle video game available for Android and iOS operating systems. With this app we were expected to create words with the given alphabet. Also, in this app it is required to create multiple words with the same letter. To form a word, slide your fingertip from one letter to the next. If the word created was correct, it will automatically filled the puzzle box. And if not, the player had to generate another additional word.

Founded in 2011, PeopleFun became the world's leading producer of casual mobile games with titles like Wordscapes and similar gaming apps. About one million

reviews were given for the Wordscape app, which had been downloaded more than fifty million times. The game was approximately 166 MB in size and had a 4.5 star rating. According to Angham T. Saleh J. Wordscapes was played by many users and was favored by audiences aged 8 and above, with several comments read (Instr. Angham T. Saleh J., 2019).

2. Advantages of Wordscapes Application

Wordscapes was a free game that could be played by all players at no cost. Also, since the idea of the game was similar to the already popular crossword puzzle, many people may have already know how to play. Wordscapes used the choices or letters available in the circles to form words, while crossword puzzles were played based on the clues given. Wordscapes had its own set of challenges that made it difficult for players to complete. This app was very easy to play for all ages and was certainly very practical in playing it.

The Wordscapes app also provided challenges that increase in a gradual manner, starting with easier words and moving up to more difficult levels. This allowed players to be less overwhelmed. In addition, the app let players choose when and where they wanted to play, which allowed them to expand their

vocabulary quickly, even when they were relaxing or on the go. With the app's attractive and colorful design, the learning process became fun, and the exciting game features encouraged players to keep playing and learning more.

According to Nistor and Iacob, gamification in education increased motivation and engagement, adapted to technological advances, and was more effective than traditional methods. Gamification also had broad applications, including in the fields of health and human resources (Nistor & Iacob, 2018). In addition, Saleh stated that games such as Wordscape Game could help build an effective learning environment, especially for vocabulary development (Instr. Angham T. Saleh J., 2019).

The Wordscapes application had several advantages in improving vocabulary over other game apps. One of the advantages was that the challenges were given gradually, starting from easy words and increasing to more difficult levels, so players did not feel overwhelmed and could learn comfortably. In addition, this application was very flexible as it could be played anytime and anywhere, allowing players to utilize their free time to expand vocabulary. This application had attractive and colorful design also makes the learning process more fun, which increased players' motivation to keep learning.

Wordscapes is also specifically designed to improve vocabulary in an interactive and creative way, in contrast to many other games that may lack focus on vocabulary development. By utilizing gamification principles, Wordscapes encouraged player engagement and motivation to continue playing while learning, making it an effective and fun learning tool.

3. Disadvantages of Wordscapes Application

Apart from having a wordscapes app it certainly had its drawbacks such as ads that appeared after each stage of the game and sometimes when switching apps. Some of these ads could be quite annoying, as they were difficult to close and can take several minutes. Also, this game tended to rely on repetition to help players remember words, which might have felt less challenging to more experienced players, thus making it less appealing, especially to those looking for more of a challenge.

Although players could play the game without ads by purchasing coins or hints, at certain levels, the game's challenges became more difficult and might have required extra help. This could have been frustrating, especially when players relied solely on guesswork and the results were often inadequate. This could have reduced the appeal of the game as an educational tool, as it could have taken the player's focus away from the actual learning objectives.

Porter & Goolkasian found that playing video games can increase players' stress levels (Porter & Goolkasian, 2019). These results are mainly related to games that generated frustration or tension, which increased blood pressure, heart rate and other physiological reactions (Instr. Angham T. Saleh J., 2019).

4. Procedures of Using Wordscapes Application

Here's how to install and use the wordscapes app on android or Ios:

- a. Step one: Downloaded and installed the Wordscapes app on your phone via the Google Play Store.

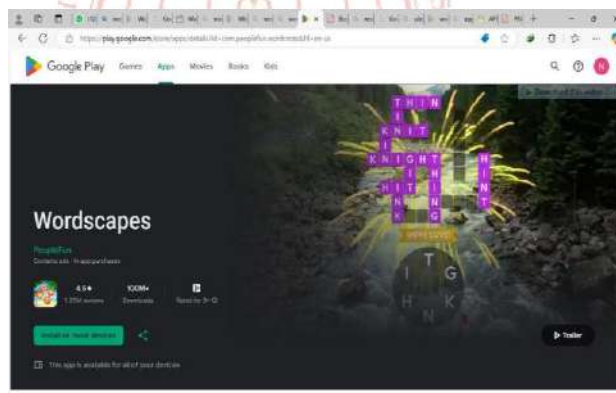


Figure 1. Worsdcapes Account Login

- b. Step two: Once the app has finished downloading, open the file manager or browser on your phone. Located the downloaded Wordscapes.apk file. Clicked on the file to start the installation process. Selected “continue” when prompted, but be sure to read the instructions that appeared on the screen.



Figure 2. Worsdcapes Account Login

- c. Step three: Once the installation was complete, you were ready to started playing Wordscapes and enjoyed the game.



Figure 3. Worsdcapes Account Login

When you start the game, you will encounter the following features:

- a. A series of intersecting empty spaces, resembling a crossword grid.



Figure 4. Worsdcapes Account Login

- b. A shuffle button that randomized the letters on the wheel.



Figure 5. Worsdcapes Account Login

- c. A star counter that showed how many bonus words you've found.



Figure 6. Worsdcapes Account Login

Here's how to play the wordscapes app on android or iOS:

- a. Spelled words using the letters available to you.
- b. Connected the letters by continuously swiping your finger between them.
- c. If the word you created was valid, it will filled the empty space in the puzzle.
- d. A bonus word was formed if you create a valid word, but it did not match the puzzle clues. These extra words earned you Wordscapes coins, which could be used to buy extra power-ups.
- e. There was no deduction if you attempted the wrong word.
- f. Completed the level by filling in all the blanks in the puzzle.

This information should have helped readers to properly install the app on their devices, as well as provided an understanding of how to play Wordscapes, how it functioned, and the role of each option in the game view to complete each level.

C. The Role of Wordscapes Application to Vocabulary

Wordscapes was a fun and engaging app that helps develop vocabulary. The app helped users learn and remembered new words through progressively more complex word challenges. Wordscapes improved cognitive abilities

such as memory and concentration by utilizing word formation and problem solving skills. Repetition of the game reinforced learning, while immediate feedback encouraged players to play longer. This allowed players to expand and deepen their vocabulary acquisition through the application of contextual learning and practical practice.

Playing word games like Wordscapes exercised the brain and tested the player's creativity. Apart from being entertainment, the game was beneficial for education. It improved productivity, problem-solving ability, motor skills, intelligence, and focus. Due to its novel and engaging elements, the game encouraged players to keep playing and learned to interact with others. Wordscapes helped with teaching phonics, alliteration, and repetition by combining literacy, physical activity, and language instruction.

Educational games like Wordscapes played an important role in improving students vocabulary comprehension and retention. Wordscapes, with their puzzle-based structure, enhanced vocabulary recognition, recall, and application, supported multiple language skills, and helped reduce the cognitive load of the memorization process by making the game easier to absorb and remembered vocabulary. This was in line with educational game strategies (Instr. Angham T. Saleh J., 2019). In addition, the interactive elements of Wordscapes increased student motivation and participation. The findings of

educational research showed that this strategy could have improved students vocabulary recall and performance.

1. Teacher Role in Wordscapes Application

Wordscapes was a game-based application, where the teacher played an important role in helping students learned vocabulary. in this wordscapes game the teacher also acted as a facilitator, they should have encouraged exploration and critical thinking, helped students navigate the challenges in the game to improve vocabulary mastery. in addition, teachers could have used this application to introduce and develop new vocabulary to students, provided immediate feedback that helped students understand the meaning of words and how they were used in sentences (Jerry & Yunus, 2021). The use of gamification in the classroom has allowed to increase motivation, raised the participation process, provide emotional security and feedback, as well as favored cooperation and learning achievement (Cornejo-Torres et al., 2023).

The use of the Wordscapes app also provided teachers with opportunities to helped students develop metacognitive skills, Metacognition referred to the awareness and regulation of individual cognitive processes while learning, including self-understanding of cognitive abilities, how to acquire knowledge, and the skills to manage and use that knowledge to improve learning

effectiveness (Imran et al., 2024). When students played Wordscapes, students were shown puzzles that required students to think in wordscapes games. with this the teacher could have helped students solve puzzles by providing grids to students.

Thus, teachers not only helped students play, but also helped them develop more complex thinking skills. Teachers could have helped students use feedback to improve their understanding of the material, assessed their progress, and motivated them to learn the language better. Not only do students enjoy the lessons more, but this method was also more meaningful as it involved them actively in the process of critical thinking and self development.

2. Students Role in Wordscapes Application

The Wordscapes app helped students in many ways, especially in improving critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Not only did students learn new words while playing and solving puzzles in this app, but they also became more creative and logical in their thinking. One of the main roles of students in wordscapes application was to expand their vocabulary (Instr. Angham T. Saleh J., 2019). Students had a better chance of recognizing and learning new words through this app. Students in this game were given a number of letters and

asked to arrange them into a correct word. Each puzzle that students successfully solved will added to their knowledge of new vocabulary. It also encourages students to interact with the words they were learning directly rather than just memorizing them, which improves their ability to remember the words.

In addition, the student's role in the Wordscapes game was as an active player in solving puzzles by arranging the given letters to form correct words. In this process, students not only learned to recognize and expand their vocabulary, but also exercised critical and logical thinking skills. They were challenged to find the right word from the letters provided, which required creative thinking as well as skills in analyzing letter patterns and word possibilities. And each completed puzzle provides a sense of accomplishment and encouraged students to continue learning, remembering newfound words and applying them in a broader context. In this case, students played the role of active learners, enriching their vocabulary while developing problem-solving skills in a fun game atmosphere. Not only did students play an active role in solving puzzles by constructing words from the given letters, but they also exercised their ability to think creatively and analytically. This process provided opportunities for students to remember the words they had

just learned, as well as strengthened their problem solving skills in a fun and interactive way.

D. Previous Study

Several studies on word games and vocabulary acquisition were conducted. Several studies on word games and vocabulary acquisition have been conducted. The first research was by Nguyen Ngoc Vu, Phan Thi My Linh, Nguyen Thi Hong Lien, Nguyen Thi Thu Van entitled *Using Word Games to Improve Vocabulary Retention in a Middle School EFL Class* (Vu et al., 2022). This research was a mixed-methods study involving two 7th grade classes for eight weeks to evaluate the effectiveness of using games in learning at the school under study. Two groups, an experimental class and a control class, with a total of 64 students who had equivalent English proficiency. Data were obtained through pretests, posttests, questionnaires, and interviews. The posttest results showed that the experimental group had a statistically better improvement in vocabulary retention compared to the control group after eight weeks of treatment. In addition, qualitative analysis showed that students in the experimental group perceived word games as a motivating, fun, and effective method. The conclusion of this study is that the used of word games for vocabulary teaching is proven to be effective in English language learning in an intermediate level EFL classroom (Vu et al., 2022). The similarity is that both examine

the application of wordscapes and for the sample, both grade 7 and 2 classes are taken. The difference is the number of samples taken if the research above is 64 samples while this study used 46 students only then from the research method in the research above, namely using mixed methods while this study used quantitative methods.

The second research from Syafrida Sari and Ashari P. Swondo, with the title *A Comparative Study Between The Use Of Wordscapes And Word Trip Applications On Students Vocabulary Mastery* (S. Sari & Swondo, 2023). This study used quantitative methods with a causal comparative design. and the results showed that both applications could improve students vocabulary mastery. However, Word Trip application proved to be more effective than Wordscapes. The average post-test score in the Wordscapes group was 75.67, while in the Word Trip group it was 80.63. The statistical analysis result showed the sig. 2-tailed = 0.003, which means there is a significant difference between the two groups (S. Sari & Swondo, 2023). The similarity is both quantitative research and used the wordscapes application. the difference is the design of the research which used a causal comparative design while this study used a quasi-experimental design.

Third, research conducted by Gilbert Mathew Situmeang, Lastri Wahyuni Manurung, Bertharia Sohnata Hutaaruk, conducted at SMP GKPI Padang Bulan, Medan,

with the title *The Effect of Using Wordscapes Application On Students Vocabulary Mastery At The Eighth Grade Of SMP GKPI Padang Bulan* (Oktamia Anggraini Putri, 2022). this research examines the impact of using Wordscapes application on students vocabulary mastery. This study used a quantitative experimental research design. A total of 50 eighth grade students were selected as samples for this study, with 40 students selected to represent the study population. The sample was divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group, each receiving a different learning approach. Data for this study was collected through a vocabulary test, which consisted of five fill-in questions and 15 word composing questions. Pre-test and post-test were administered to the experimental group and the control group. The results showed that the average pre-test score for the experimental group was 59.75, while their post-test score increased to 76.75. For the control group, the pre-test score was 58.5, and the post-test score was 69.25. Hypothesis testing showed that t_{count} (1.781) was greater than t_{table} (1.686) at the 5% significance level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a), which suggested that the use of Wordscapes had a significant positive impacted on vocabulary acquisition (Oktamia Anggraini Putri, 2022). The similarity with the above research is that both used the wordscapes application and the

same is researched for junior high school and for the difference, namely from the class if this study used grade seven and from the above research used grade eight and the population of the above research is 40 people while the population in this study is 69 people.

The fourth research was conducted by Hertila Umbola, Mister G. Maru, Paula Hampp with the title *Improving Students Vocabulary by Using Word Game Application* (Umbola et al., 2022) . conducted at SMA N 1 Kotamobagu this investigates whether the Word Game Application, Wordscapes, can help students in improving their vocabulary. Used quantitative research methods, the study involved 30 students from class X J, consisting of 13 male students and 17 female students, with an average age range of 15-17 years. Data was collected through a pre-test and post-test design, which used a matching test. The results showed that the post-test mean score (85.83) was higher than the pre-test mean score (63.16). Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the Wordscapes application is effective in improving students vocabulary acquisition, as well as increasing their enthusiasm for learning SMA Negeri 1 Kotamobagu, 2025 (Umbola et al., 2022). The similarities are both used the wordscapes application and used quantitative research for the difference, namely the above research was conducted at the high school level while this research was conducted at the

junior high school level and used 30 samples while this study used 46 samples.

Fifth research by Instr. Angham T. Saleh J. with the title *Using Wordscapes Game as a Tool to Develop EFL Learners' Vocabulary Repertoire* (Instr. Angham T. Saleh J., 2019). this research explored the cognitive benefits of playing puzzle games such as word search, crossword, and scrabble, with a focus on the popular game Wordscapes developed by People Fun. The research highlights how these games stimulate creativity and brain power, making them suitable for educational purposes in addition to providing entertainment. Word games have been shown to improve intelligence, cognitive ability, concentration, motor skills, problem solving, productivity and social skills. "Wordscapes," known for its increasing difficulty levels and over 800 puzzles, is highly engaging and addictive. Although it is considered a common word game, its didactic potential is quite significant, especially in improving vocabulary acquisition (Instr. Angham T. Saleh J., 2019). The similarity is that both used the what's cubs application and for the difference, namely the above research used qualitative methods with 62 samples while this study used quantitative research and there are 46 samples.

E. Theoretical Framework

The following was a theoretical framework arranged in simpler language in accordance with the research title "The

Effect of Using Wordscapes Application in Improving Students Vocabulary of 7th Grade Students of Madrasah Tsanawiyah at Al-Um Islamic Boarding School North Bengkulu". The study has two main variables:

1. **Variable X (Independent Variable)** was the use of the Wordscapes application as a learning tool for students. The main focus of this research was to observe how the use of this application affects students vocabulary mastery. Wordscapes was utilized in the classroom as a learning medium that makes vocabulary learning more engaging and interactive.
2. **Variable Y (Dependent Variable)** was the improvement of the vocabulary of seventh-grade students. This improvement was the outcome measured after students use the Wordscapes application. The purpose of this study is to determine how much wordscapes could help students enhance their vocabulary and whether there was a positive change in their learning results after using the application.

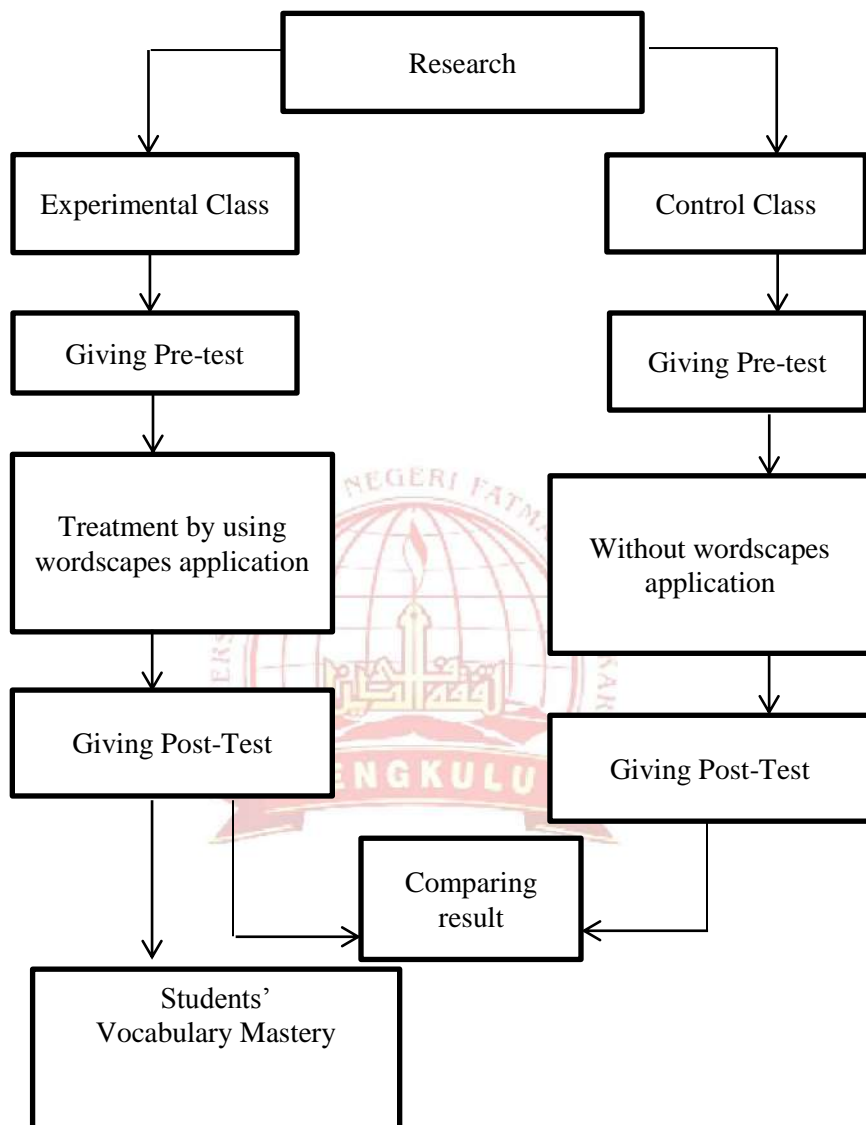


Figure 7. Conceptual Framework

F. Hypothesis

Based on the identified research problem, the researcher formulates the following hypotheses:

1. Null Hypothesis (Ho): There is no significant effect of using

the Wordscapes application on improving the vocabulary mastery of 7th-grade students at Madrasah Tsanawiyah AL-UM Islamic Boarding School in North Bengkulu.

2. Alternative Hypothesis (Ha): There is a significant effect of using the Wordscapes application on improving the vocabulary mastery of 7th-grade students at Madrasah Tsanawiyah AL-UM Islamic Boarding School in North Bengkulu.

