

# Chapter I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Language serves as a fundamental medium of interaction for all societies globally, playing a vital role in various aspects of daily life, from interpersonal communication to academic research and technological advancement. Given its ubiquitous presence in human activities, language is deeply intertwined with societal functioning. Currently, around 7,000 distinct languages exist worldwide, yet English has emerged as the predominant lingua franca (Park, 2023). This widespread adoption reinforces its status as the primary language for international discourse—a linguistic bridge facilitating communication across diverse cultures and nations. Consequently, proficiency in English has become essential, particularly for speakers of non-English backgrounds, necessitating effective acquisition strategies to participate fully in global exchanges.

Indonesia has integrated English as a core component of its national curriculum, emphasizing its significance in global competitiveness. Alongside Bahasa Indonesia, English is a compulsory subject taught from early childhood education through tertiary levels, equipping learners with essential linguistic competencies for international engagement. Proficiency in English is measured through three macro-skills: oral communication (speaking), auditory comprehension (listening), and written expression (writing) (Mapalad & Bautista, 2021). Foundational to these macro-skills are micro-skills—grammatical accuracy, lexical knowledge, phonetic articulation, and orthographic precision (Supina, 2018). A hierarchical mastery of both skill sets facilitates more effective language acquisition, enabling learners to navigate English with greater confidence and capability.

The analysis of English language competencies reveals four fundamental skills crucial for proficiency: reading comprehension, auditory processing, written expression, and oral communication. These interconnected abilities present significant challenges when learners lack adequate lexical knowledge. A robust vocabulary serves as the foundation for developing these skills, enabling students to accurately interpret written material, understand spoken language, produce coherent written work, and engage in meaningful verbal exchanges. Insufficient word knowledge hinders text comprehension, distorts auditory perception, impedes writing accuracy, and restricts conversational fluency. As emphasized by Sujadi and

Wulandari (2021), lexical mastery forms the cornerstone of second language acquisition, providing learners with the necessary tools for both receptive and productive language use across various communicative contexts.

Lexical knowledge plays a pivotal role in fostering students' confidence across various English language domains, including verbal communication, text comprehension, and written expression. Classroom observations, however, reveal a prevalent challenge among learners in achieving English proficiency. This became particularly evident during a simple self-introduction activity, where students could only respond in basic question-answer patterns without demonstrating the ability to elaborate or personalize their responses. These limitations appear to originate from insufficient vocabulary acquisition, which subsequently affects learners' self-assurance in language production. Juliana and Fariska (2021) corroborate this observation, emphasizing that vocabulary serves as the fundamental building block for effective self-expression in both oral and written forms. Recognizing this correlation between lexical limitations and language difficulties, the current study proposes the implementation of Word Wall as an instructional tool to enrich vocabulary acquisition among seventh-grade learners at Kartika 1 & 2 School in Medan.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Drawing upon the contextual framework established in the preceding discussion, this study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of Word Wall as an instructional tool in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among seventh-grade learners at SMP Kartika 1 & 2 Medan. The research question focuses on whether this particular learning medium can significantly contribute to the development of English lexical knowledge for junior high school students at the specified institution.
2. This study examines the pedagogical mechanisms through which Word Wall instructional media facilitates vocabulary development among seventh-grade learners at SMP Kartika 1 & 2 Medan. Specifically, the research explores the cognitive and interactive processes by which this visual-aid strategy contributes to lexical acquisition, retention, and application in English language learning contexts.

### **1.3 Research Objective**

1. This study seeks to determine the most effective implementation of Word Wall as an instructional strategy to improve vocabulary acquisition among seventh-grade learners at SMP Kartika 1 & 2 Medan. The research aims to evaluate various configurations and applications of this visual learning tool to identify which specific approaches yield optimal results in developing students' English lexical knowledge and retention capabilities.
2. This study aims to systematically outline the application of Word Wall as an instructional tool to strengthen vocabulary acquisition among seventh-grade learners at SMP Kartika 1 & 2 Medan. Specifically, the research will document the step-by-step implementation methodology, including preparation, execution, and evaluation phases, to demonstrate how this visual-aid technique can be effectively utilized to enhance students' English lexical development. The process will be analyzed in terms of its pedagogical effectiveness, student engagement levels, and measurable outcomes in vocabulary improvement.

### **1.4 Significance of the Research**

1. Students: Improve their English vocabulary to help students be more confident in using English for speaking, writing, and listening.
2. Teachers: Additional learning media options for teaching English, especially to engage students in learning English and improve their English vocabulary.
3. School: Information for evaluation in improving the quality of education, especially in improving English vocabulary.

### **1.5 Research Scope**

This research was conducted in Grade 7 at SMP Kartika 1 & 2 Medan. There were 65 students in Grade 7, who served as both the research population and sample. The study focused on the influence of Wordwall in improving vocabulary among seventh-grade students. The research used Classroom Action Research (PTK) as the methodology. Three instruments were employed: tests, questionnaires, and interviews (with students and teachers) to collect data on vocabulary improvement at SMP Kartika 1 & 2 Medan.