

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, several sections are explained by the researcher. The first section contains the background of the research, which explains why the researcher is interested to find out the use of Webtoon as a learning medium for improving students' vocabulary size at a Private Senior High School in Cilacap. Furthermore, research questions from this research are presented in this chapter as well as the objectives of the research. The purpose or the goals of this research are explained in detail in the object of the research section. Then, the benefits of holding this research will also be widely presented. Finally, an explanation of the description of each chapter are presented in the organization of the research section.

### **Background of the Research**

English is an international language which is the key to communication between countries. In Indonesia, English is the foreign language after Indonesian which is the mother tongue. Therefore, English is an important language to be mastered, especially for Indonesian students. One of the important things in learning English is acquisition of vocabulary.

Vocabulary is the basic skill for learning a new language. With the acquisition of vocabulary students can improve their language skill. Vocabulary is also something that is introduced first in learning a language. Learning vocabulary is not difficult because there are no grammar rules, but if the vocabulary is not applied in everyday life, it will not be easy to remember. Therefore, the application of the use

of vocabulary is very much needed and it will be even better if the number of vocabulary learned is increased every day.

Limited vocabulary knowledge in a second language inhibits effective communication, so vocabulary knowledge is frequently regarded as an important tool for second language learners (Alqahtani, 2015). This demonstrates that improving vocabulary would no longer only a source of concern but an important obligation in English learning. In addition, mastery of vocabulary will also greatly affect the meaning conveyed by a reading to the reader.

Although vocabulary learning is essential for learning a language, students still face challenges such as a lack of interest in improving their vocabulary size. They also have difficulty learning vocabulary at times, which leads them to believe that vocabulary is one of the most difficult aspects of learning English (Wulandari, Lestari, & Utami, 2019). However, as time passes, this issue can be overcome by presenting something interesting to arouse people's interest in learning English vocabulary, such as using modern technology for language learning.

Fortunately, in today's modern era, many applications have emerged to help students interested in learning English including vocabulary learning. Currently, one of the most popular applications for improving learning vocabulary is Webtoon. Webtoon is a combination of words from 'web' and 'cartoon', which means cartoons or comics that can be enjoyed online in the form of a website. According to Kim (2015), Webtoon is also a free digital comic service and allows people to find web comic content regularly. Webtoon was founded by Kim Jun-koo in 2004 in South

Korea and officially released it in Indonesia in April 2015. Since that time, Webtoon, has received positive feedback from many active users. Webtoon is Indonesia's most popular digital comic platform, with over 6 million active Indonesian users and 35 million active users worldwide (Utami, 2022).

Furthermore, reading Webtoon can be done anytime and anywhere because only by using their smartphones or computers they can read them for free. This makes the Webtoon can attract the attention of students to read which is also equipped with pictures. With the habit of reading Webtoon or doing reading activities using Webtoon, students will get many benefits in their English language skills. In addition, by reading Webtoon they will get used to finding diverse and repetitive vocabulary so that they can increase their vocabulary size.

There have been several studies conducted by previous researchers regarding the effectiveness of Webtoon application for improving students' vocabulary size. Maharani (2021), found from the results of her research that the process of using Line Webtoon succeeded in increasing students' vocabulary mastery. This study also revealed that the students were motivated to read because Webtoon contained a lot of pictures, and they were able to learn a lot of new words by using online media. In addition, according to Efendi (2021), by reading Webtoon English learners can expand their vocabulary and they have positive attitudes toward Webtoon as a tool for English vocabulary mastery. The students from this study also agreed that the visuals or illustrations in Webtoon are the most beneficial because they can understand the storyline even if they do not know the appropriate meaning of the foreign words.

In addition, Sijinjak et al. (2022), also conducted a study entitled “The Effect of Using Line Webtoon Media on Students' Vocabulary Achievement”. The finding of her study revealed that Webtoon medium has a significant impact on students' vocabulary achievement in the eleventh grade of that school. The outcome from the data of this study also demonstrates that using Line Webtoon media to teach English vocabulary can be an effective and enjoyable method.

Although there are several studies related to the topic of this research, most of them focus on the vocabulary mastery. This research is more focused on using Webtoon as online reading material to increase students' vocabulary. The findings of this research are also important for teachers to know how effective Webtoon is to teach vocabulary size, students can acquire a lot of new vocabulary, and this research can be a reference for future researchers. Therefore, the research here is to find out whether the use of Webtoon effective for students' vocabulary size learning.

There are several reasons why this research was conducted by the researcher. First, seeing that the popularity of Webtoon applications has increased a lot in this modern era in Indonesia and other countries among today's millennial generation (Erya & Pustika, 2021). In addition, technology has become an important facility for the teaching and learning environment for teachers and students in everyday life (Ahmadi, 2018). Second, LINE Webtoon has learning benefits, one of which is a great educational medium for raising students' interest in learning and is easily accessible from anywhere (Jati & Nugraha, 2017). Third, reading stories on Webtoon can be done anytime with flexible time and anywhere according to the reader's wishes

through their smartphones, this makes it very easy for students if they want to read and they will feel more comfortable in learning vocabulary. When students are comfortable reading, it can encourage them to continue learning vocabulary and it can become a habit. From this habit, students can find more new vocabulary that they have never encountered before.

Based on the reasons above, it can be concluded that an increase in vocabulary size is needed by students. In addition, the researcher saw that several students were lacking in achieving vocabulary size at the school that would be studied for this research, because previously the researcher had done an internship and attended several classes there. The researcher also observed that some students at school liked the Webtoon application, from this the authors concluded that modern technology can be a source of English learning media for students if it is used properly. Furthermore, Webtoon as a learning medium can be very useful for English learners to improve their vocabulary size because students have flexible time to read. This means that a learning medium can affect students' motivation to get used to reading. From reading Webtoon in English, students can find more new vocabulary as well. Therefore, the researcher tried to find out the significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group on students' vocabulary size after being taught using Webtoon, and the result is to know about the effectiveness of Webtoon on students' vocabulary size.

### **Identification of the Problem**

The use of the Webtoon application is currently very popular with students, especially for high school students. The researcher has conducted observations and interviews with several students who are participants in this study. The researcher found some second language learners who like to read Webtoon in his daily life and it has little effect on his vocabulary size because it is more used to create an imagination or idea for literary works. In addition, the researcher also observed some students who liked Webtoon as an application to learn English, but few of them felt that the size of their vocabulary had increased, this could also be influenced by their lack of confidence to understand what they read correctly and their lack of interest in finding out the meaning of the vocabulary. One of the other problems that affect their reading activities on Webtoon is the presence of Indonesian subtitles which makes it easier for them to understand the story and feel lazy to read the English version. Webtoon currently offers more language versions, including Korean, English, Indonesian, Spanish, French, Chinese, German, and Thai, allowing readers to freely select the language in which they will read the story.

It is impossible to determine whether the use of Webtoon can increase their vocabulary size or create motivation to learn English, willingness to read English, and so on based on these observations and interviews. In another case, the researcher also found several problems in the reading habits of high school students which certainly affect the increase in their vocabulary size, this is because English reading activities are still lacking or rarely applied by students at school and outside of school.

### **Delimitation of the Research**

In this research, the researcher delimits the research focus. Based on the problem identification, the researcher focuses on the pre-test and post-test scores of students' vocabulary size in experimental group after being taught using Webtoon. Secondly, the researcher conducted this research at one of a Private Senior High School in Cilacap. Third, the researchers also limited the number of respondents to this study, one group of eleventh grade students at a private high school in Cilacap were the respondents to this study with a total of 36 students. In addition, the quantitative method is the research method used in this study. The findings of this research present a significant difference between the experimental group's pre-test and post-test scores on students' vocabulary size after being taught using Webtoon. In addition, it is also to find out the effectiveness of Webtoon as a learning medium for improving students' vocabulary size.

### **Research Question**

The research question of this research is:

1. Is there any significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of experimental group on students' vocabulary size after being taught using Webtoon?

### **The Objective of the Research**

Based on the research question above, the objective of this study is as follow:

1. To investigate whether there is any significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of experimental group on students' vocabulary size after being taught using Webtoon.

## **The Significance of the Research**

The finding of this research is expected to give benefits and knowledge for students, teachers, and future researchers:

**Students.** This research will be used to find out whether the use of Webtoon can improve their vocabulary size or not by looking at the pre-test and post-test results from the experimental group of this study. This research can be a solution for students to find out one of the effective ways to learn vocabulary size using English learning application. In addition, knowing the results of this study can provide information for students about the effectiveness of Webtoon as a medium of learning vocabulary.

**Teachers.** Vocabulary is one of the important things that must be mastered by the students in English learning. Therefore, this research can be a solution for teachers to find out an effective way to teach vocabulary size for their students by looking at the results of the difference in pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group. Furthermore, the ability of the use of internet technology such as Webtoon application will increase for teachers, so they will also be encouraged to master digital technology for learning language skills and will find out more about other English learning application.

**Future Researchers.** The results of this study can be used by other researchers who are interested in exploring about the same line with this study. The results of this study are also expected to be a reference from a different point of view for those who will do the research in the same line.



## **Organization of the Research**

Five chapters are included in this research. The first chapter explains the background of the research, identification of the research, research delimitation, research question, research objective, and research significance. This chapter explains the reasons why this research is interesting to be studied by the researcher based on facts, data, and references or findings from previous studies.

Chapter two is a literature review. It explains the development of Webtoon in Korea, Characteristics and Elements of Webtoon, Webtoon as a learning medium, Definition of Vocabulary, Importance of vocabulary mastery, Vocabulary Acquisition in Terms of Vocabulary Size, Vocabulary Teaching and Review of Related Studies will also be discussed. This chapter explains the theory related to the general description of the importance of increasing vocabulary size and the effect of using Webtoon on these skills.

Chapter three is methodology. This chapter describes how the research was conducted by the researcher. This chapter discusses methods, instruments, participants, settings, and data collection techniques. In this chapter, the researcher also explains how to analyze the data of this research.

The findings and discussion are described in chapter four. This chapter presents the results of the data analysis that had been carried out. The research findings are based on data obtained from the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental group, and the discussion is based on the research findings.

The last chapter or chapter five contains conclusions and recommendations. This chapter provides general answers to research questions and suggestions from researcher. Suggestions are given to teachers, students, and other researchers.