CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In this introductory chapter, the background underpinning the study will be provided, along with the overview of the theory. Then this chapter will discuss the purpose of the study derived from the formulation of the research questions. The scope of the study will also be discussed in order to narrow the focus of the study. Then the significance of the study will be discussed in the penultimate section of this chapter. Lastly, to inform the body of the thesis, the outline of the thesis will be provided in the last section of this chapter.

1.1 Background of the Research

Technology is a crucial element in the process of teaching and learning (Robin, 2009; Golonka, 2012; Sad & Goktas, 2013). The technology which later was known as instructional media has a wide coverage. One example is the use of mobile phone in the teaching and learning process (Kukulska-Hulme, 2006; Mtega, Bernard, Msungu, & Sanare, 2012; Moghaddas & Bashirnezhad, 2016). However, most of educators still do not use mobile phones in the teaching and learning process, specifically in language classrooms (Moghaddas & Bashirnezhad, 2016).

As a part of instructional media in language classrooms, the use of mobile phones is often considered negative because its existence has shown so many disadvantages, particularly for the learners in some aspects in their life (Sonevel, 2011; Mustafid, 2015; Sundari, 2015; Gowthami & Kumar, 2016). Studies have shown the negative effects of mobile phone in education (Manumpil, Ismanto, & Onibala, 2015; Kogoya, 2015). Its existence gives negative effects on time-off and brings disruption to the school environment. It also brings possible dangers posted on students. There are so many other reasons that can be stated related to the negative effect of a mobile phone. For instance, in Indonesia the use of mobile phones in the classroom is often considered disturbing to the learning process (Barakati, 2013; Manumpil, Ismanto, & Onibala, 2015; Kogoya, 2015).

On the contrary, mobile phones have a positive side that can be utilized by students in the classroom (Myles, 2013; Hennessy, 2017). For example, mobile phones can be used as a medium of communication, a tool for guiding students, a tool to
calculate, a digital dictionary, a tool to take pictures of learning materials, a time keeper, a small book replacement for keeping records, and as a storage media for schoolwork files. Recently, mobile phone can be equated with a small computer in which it can check emails, perform on-line searches, and record podcasts. As most schools in remote areas are unable to provide computers for each student, mobile phones become one of the alternative tools in the teaching and learning process.

The use of mobile phone can actually be effective for learning (Aamri & Suleiman, 2011; Kim et.al., 2013). Thus, it can be deduced that mobile phones are not always negative because it can be used in the teaching and learning process as explained above. Therefore, this study focused on the benefits of Quick Response Codes as one of the applications on mobile phones.

Quick Response Codes in education have been widely use overseas (Rikala & Kankaanrata, 2014). However in Indonesia, the use of Quick Response Codes is still limited. The reasons underlying it are because teachers do not understand the use of Quick Response Code as one of the instructional media, including how to apply Quick Response Code and how to evaluate the learning outcomes with it.

Regarding the positive results of previous studies, this present study was focused on the use of Quick Response Codes in improving students’ vocabulary mastery. This study was conducted by administering Classroom Action Research in order to find out the benefits of using Quick Response Codes in improving students’ vocabulary.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study stated in the previous section, this study documented the use of Quick Response Codes in improving students’ vocabulary. Therefore, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1) How does the use of Quick Response Codes improve students’ vocabulary mastery?
2) How does the use of Quick Response Codes shape students’ engagement?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

1) To find out the use of Quick Response Codes in improving students’ vocabulary.
2) To find out how Quick Response Codes shape students’ engagement.
1.4 Scope of the Study

In order to narrow the focus of this study, Quick Response Codes were implemented to improve vocabulary mastery for the eleven grade students in a state vocational high school in Cimahi, West Java. In this respect, the study also focused on improving vocabulary mastery based on the syllabus for the eleven grade. The topic discussed was procedural text as one of the basic competences that should be taught to the students.

1.5 The Significance of The Study

1.5.1 For the teachers

The result of this study would be expected to be useful for English teachers:
1) To overcome difficulties in improving vocabulary achievement among the learners of English.
2) To provide additional information about Classroom Action Research.

1.5.2 For the students

This study would be expected to encourage the students in improving their English vocabulary. Quick Response Codes can play a role as an instructional media which is able to help them in improving their vocabulary.

1.5.3 For other researchers

The result of this study could be used by other researchers as a point of reference to conduct a classroom action research with other classes that have similar problems in developing the students’ vocabulary achievement.

1.6 Definitions of key terms

In order to clarify the key terms used throughout this study, the definition of these terms is presented as follows:

1.6.1 Instructional media

Instructional media are the media, which bring important information or message from the information resources (teachers) to the recipients (learners) (Sulaiman, 1985; Adekola, 2008). In this study, instructional media refers to a teaching tool used by the teacher in improving her students’ vocabulary.
1.6.2 Vocabulary mastery

Vocabulary mastery can be defined as a number of vocabularies (words) in a language which contains information about its meaning, form, and practice in the context of communication (Hatch & Brown, 1995). In addition, vocabulary mastery according to Carroll, Crane, Duff, Hulme & Snowling (2011) refers to the entire form and meaning which have been recognized and turns out to be the key element in the reading skill. It is the basic knowledge that learners should master first before mastering English. Swannel (2014) defines mastery as a comprehensive knowledge or the use of the subject or instrument. In this study, vocabulary mastery refers to students’ ability in comprehending English vocabulary.

1.6.3 Quick Response Code

A Quick Response Code is a matrix barcode readable by smart phones and mobile phones with cameras (Law & So, 2010; Rikala & Kankaanrata, 2012). In this study, the Quick Response Codes would be used as an instructional media in improving students’ vocabulary.

1.6.4 The Minimum Mastery Criterion (MMC)

Mastery learning is a students’ highest rank of proficiency or competency of a subject. Minimum Mastery Criterion (MMC) is the minimum level of mastery learning that a student must achieve. It is determined by subject teachers in each school before the school year begins. It is considered by three aspects: complexity (level of difficulty), facilities (schools and teaching materials), and the student intake (students’ competence and background knowledge of the subject). The MMC of a subject in each year is decided by looking at the average score of learning indicators, basic competencies, and key competencies stated in the curriculum. The MMC, which is adjusted up each year, becomes the reference point when teachers are assessing students. Teachers assess students’ work and score it to determine whether the standards set by the school have been achieved or not. Although all schools employ the same aspects in setting the MMC, each school has a different MMC to adjust the different context, school standard (regional and national), and students’ background.

1.6.5 Students’ learning engagement

The term of “student learning engagement” is closely related to attending classes, following the teachers’ directions in class, and submitting required assignment or work
In this study, students’ learning engagement refers to students’ participation in improving vocabulary by using Quick Response Codes.

1.6.6 Classroom Action Research

Classroom action research is a systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to collect information about how they teach, and how the students study (Burns, 2010). Classroom Action Research in this present study was a research design which was used to investigate the use of Quick Response Codes in improving students’ vocabulary mastery.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis was organized into five chapters. As indicated in the earlier sections of this chapter, the first chapter discussed about the background underpinning the study along with the overview of the theory and several relevant studies. Then it discussed the purpose of the study derived from the formulation of the research questions. The scope of the study was also discussed in order to narrow the focus of the study. Lastly, the significance of the study was discussed in the rest of this chapter.

The second chapter explored relevant literature concerning the theories related to Quick Response Codes, Instructional Media, and Student Engagement.

The third chapter outlined the research design, research site and participants, data collection techniques, data analysis, criterion of success, and description of preliminary research.

The fourth chapter was the teaching program. It presented the implementation of Quick Response Codes in improving students vocabulary. It covers four sections which are pre-cycle, cycle 1, cycle 2 and cycle 3. This chapter also includes the findings of the research, which are related to the second chapter, theoretical foundation. This chapter presents the implementation of Quick Response Codes in improving their vocabulary to get insight into the students’ responses of using it. The data were gathered by conducting a classroom observation, a test, and an interview.

The last chapter was the conclusions and recommendations of the research. This chapter was divided into three parts. The first part was concerned with the conclusions of the
research findings. The second part discussed the limitations of the research, and the third part discussed the recommendations from the researcher.