

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter provide information related to the study, including research background, identification of the issues/phenomena, limitation of the research, research questions, aims of the research, and significance of the research.

1.1 Background of The Problem

In Indonesia, the literacy of reading in society has decreased quite alarmingly. Survey data conducted by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2009 ranked Indonesia 57th out of 65 countries, with a literacy score of 402. In 2012, Indonesia's ranking declined to 60th with a literacy score that also declined to 396. Data in 2015, Indonesia's ranking further decreased to 74th. In addition, the results of research conducted by Central Connecticut State University in 2016 ranked Indonesia 60th out of 61 countries in terms of literacy skills (Maruti, 2022, p. 247). In 2018, the results of the PISA study issued by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) showed that the reading ability of people in Indonesia only reached an average score of 371, while the OECD average score was 487. This average score, which is still far below the OECD standard, shows that there are serious challenges in improving literacy in Indonesia.

One of the factors causing the decline in interest and habit of reading among students is the strong influence of audio-visual advances in this era of digital technology development, resulting in a decline in students' reading skills. This has resulted in students being more interested in spoiling their eyes and ears through audio-visual media rather than cultivating their reading skills (Sari et al., 2024, p. 50). In this era, students are called digital natives who are accustomed to using digital technology to access information in their daily lives. Digital natives are people who have known technology since early childhood and are accustomed

to using technology in their daily lives (Kuntari, 2023, p. 92). Thus, teachers need to have creativity in delivering learning materials to students in this digital technology era, especially in reading learning.

Reading plays a very important role in everyday life. Reading is not just an action, but an activity directed at obtaining and improving understanding of information. Therefore, reading can be an effective way to improve students' ability to overcome various problems, including in solving questions in the learning evaluation process (Oktaviani et al., 2023, p. 250). The ability to understand the information contained in the text is one of the main indicators of success in the learning process. Especially in language subjects, reading plays a crucial role. In English learning, reading is not only a means to expand students' knowledge of English materials, but also an essential skill that must be possessed by students. It is required of students to be able to comprehend the texts students are reading, identify words in the English language, and extract information from it. Reading is a process that involves more than just mechanical tasks, it also involves creating meaning by using textual messages or information in order to comprehend (Amanda, 2022, p. 18). Improving students' ability to understand the text and recognize every word in it can contribute significantly to students' reading skills. Reading comprehension is one of the reading skills that students need to acquire.

Reading comprehension is an interactive process where the reader's existing real-world knowledge engages with the information presented directly or indirectly in the text (Elleman & Oslund, 2019, p. 4). Gaining meaning from a text requires the reader to comprehend and interpret the reading material in order to extract the information contained therein. This process is known as reading comprehension (Amanda, 2022, p. 4). In the era of digital technology development, there is a great opportunity to improve students' reading skills. The use of digital learning media can be an effective tool in the classroom learning process. By utilizing technology, learning approaches can be adjusted to better

meet students' needs and learning styles, thereby increasing the effectiveness of reading learning.

In the context of the reading comprehension learning process in the classroom, teachers need to understand and adjust to the needs of students, especially in the use of learning media in today's digital era. The importance of selecting appropriate learning media in delivering material is the key to achieving optimal learning outcomes. The use of learning media is not only a means of transmitting information, but also a stimulant that can stimulate students' attention, interest, thoughts, and feelings during learning activities, with the ultimate goal of achieving learning objectives (Hikmah, 2019, p. 84). The learning and teaching process will be effective if the teacher is able to integrate learning media in accordance with the material content and the level of student understanding (Akrim, 2018, p. 458). In this era of digital technology development, teachers are not only fixated on using traditional learning media but must also use digital learning media. Digital learning media is an integral part of the application of multimedia and technology in education (Khusniyah, 2022, p. 242) (Hikmah, 2019, p. 84). The importance of digital media in learning can be seen from its progressive influence on increasing student engagement during the learning process (Suganda, 2022, p. 103). Learning media is not only a tool but also plays a key role in creating an independent learning environment for students. Digital learning media helps teachers and students obtain various information and knowledge related to the material in the learning process (Devi & Rusdinal, 2023, p. 124). Therefore, it is important to recognize that the use of digital learning media not only increases student engagement but also helps them build curiosity and creativity related to learning materials. Thus, digital learning media plays an important role in helping students build knowledge independently.

In the era of technological development, there are several significant benefits that can be applied in the field of education. The utilization of technology as a means of digital learning represents an innovative step that can improve the

quality of education in Indonesia, so that the country can compete effectively at the global level (Ruddamayanti, 2019, p. 1193). One of the utilizing technology as a learning tool is through digital applications or platforms that can be implemented as digital learning media in the classroom. One of the digital applications or platforms that can be used as digital learning media is Let's Read Asia. Let's Read Asia is a digital library offering reading materials across various story genres to enhance students' reading comprehension. Through using Let's Read Asia, students become more engaged and enthusiastic about learning to read (Amanda, 2022, p. 8). This digital library includes storybooks in foreign, national, and regional languages to boost students' interest in reading. Let's Read Asia is a digital book that provides a multilevel collection of reading materials with various languages and story genres that can be accessed through students' mobile phones.

These are some of the clusters of research exist in this field of learning media for learning English. There is the use of information, communication & technology (ICT) as learning media (Apriliana, 2023). Learning media in mobile application (Chen, 2022). Learning media in platform (Sutrisna et al., 2021). Learning media in pronunciation (Anggaraini, 2022), (Lee, 2021). Learning media in writing (Prasatyo & Gustary, 2023). Learning media in speaking (Wahyuni, 2023), (Simanjuntak et al., 2022). Learning media in listening (Anggriani et al., 2024), (Damayanti, 2022). Learning media in vocabulary (Mardiah et al., 2022), (Mudawamah, 2023). Learning media in reading (Abang et al., 2022), (Amanda, 2022) (Ermerawati, 2019).

There are shortcomings in previous research with a similar study area. There is a lack of discussion about the specific challenges students face in reading comprehension, which impacts on students' motivation and academic performance. Understanding the causes of students' reading comprehension difficulties is crucial to designing effective learning (Stevani et al., 2023). The lack of feedback given by teachers to students regarding the test results has been completed by students. This feedback process plays a crucial role in improving

students' reading comprehension. Therefore, steps need to be taken to ensure that each student receives constructive and detailed feedback in relation to their evaluation results, so as to effectively reinforce their learning process (Samsiyah et al., 2020) (Diana Putri & Savitri, 2022 (Tahta & Pusparini, 2022)). Previous research has not adequately explored the potential learning outcomes or effectiveness of the “Let's Read Asia” program in improving students' reading comprehension. Therefore, in-depth research on the effectiveness of “Let's Read Asia” in the context of the reading comprehension learning process is a major concern in this research and it is very important to do.

Based on the researcher's pre-observation, this study was conducted in a junior high school. In this school, the researcher found many students whose reading comprehension was still low. In addition, students only use textbooks in reading comprehension activities in the classroom. The lack of diverse student reading materials makes students unmotivated in reading activities in the classroom. Researcher use Let's Read Asia as a digital learning media in learning reading comprehension in the classroom. This study was different from previous studies that aimed to find students' perspectives and benefits in implementing Let's Read Asia, this study was conducted to find out the effectiveness of using Let's Read Asia and how students' reading comprehension skills before and after using Let's Read Asia. The researcher was interested in knowing how effective the use of Let's Read Asia is on students' reading comprehension. The researcher found that Let's Read Asia was effective in improving students' reading comprehension skills. Therefore, the researcher formulated a study entitled "***The Effectiveness of Using Let's Read Asia on Students' Reading Comprehension in Narrative Text at SMPN 1 Talun Cirebon***". This research is expected to provide a more comprehensive insight into the extent to which Let's Read Asia can contribute to the success of the teaching-learning process.

1.2 Identification of The Issues/Phenomena

Based on the background of the study, the pre-observation throughout the teaching practice program, and the journals that the researcher read, the researcher found the following kinds of problems:

1. The low level of students' reading comprehension skills. It can be seen from the students' scores in reading comprehension.
2. Students only use textbooks in reading comprehension activities in class.
3. The lack of interesting and diverse content or reading materials contributes to students' disinterest in reading.

This research focused on the problems related to low reading comprehension skills experienced by a large number of students. Reading comprehension is the most important aspect of the English learning process. Currently, most students are limited to the use of textbooks in reading comprehension activities in class. This raises concerns about the lack of variety and uninteresting reading materials presented to students. These factors lead to students' lack of interest in reading activities. Therefore, understanding and improving students' reading comprehension skills needs to be a major focus, given the importance of these skills in facilitating cross-cultural communication and preparing students to face the demands of an increasingly globalized world.

1.3 Limitation of The Research

In this study, the researcher focused on assessing the effectiveness of using the Let's Read Asia application or platform on reading comprehension of narrative text with a focus on a group of grade nine students at SMP Negeri 1 Talun Cirebon. The restriction of this research is done to avoid problems that are too broad. The researcher chose this topic because the researcher wanted to know the effectiveness and impact of using the Let's Read Asia application or platform when it is used for learning English reading comprehension in the classroom.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the background of the research above the researcher formulates the research questions as follows:

1. How is students' reading comprehension before and after using Let's Read Asia as digital media?
2. Are there any significant effects of using Let's Read Asia on students' reading comprehension?

1.5 Aims of The Research

Based on the statement of the problem above, it can be figured out the purpose of the study as follows:

1. To examine students' reading comprehension before and after using Let's Read Asia as digital media.
2. To examine the significant effects of using Let's Read Asia on students' reading comprehension.

1.6 Significance of The Research

The result of this study is expected to be useful information and give contributions for educational instructions. The significances of this study are:

1.6.1 Theoretically

The result of this study is hoped to develop teaching learning process using digital learning media, especially using Let's Read for reading comprehension.

1.6.2 Practically

The result of this study hoped to be contribution:

1. For The Teachers

This study is expected to help English teachers use new learning media such as digital learning media. The result of this research can be significantly important that English teachers will know the learning

process uses Let's Read. Moreover, this study can enrich the teachers' knowledge to develop learning process by using e-learning better.

2. For The Students

The result of this study will be very beneficial for the students, Hopefully the result of this study will make the students interest during the learning process and it can increase student's motivation in English learning.

3. For Future Researcher

The future researchers get new information related the effectiveness of using Let's Read Asia application or platform toward students' reading comprehension. This study can be reference to conduct another study and motivate them to make a something new from this research.

