

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

Learning materials encompasses everything that is intended to help the teacher convey information to students. Tomlinson (2011) defines learning materials as everything that can facilitate language learning in the classroom. Learning materials play an important role in language teaching (Graves & Garton, 2014). They are considered the heart and center of teaching in learning activities. Learning materials can make it easier for teachers to carry out learning and improve students' understanding. According to Ocak, Özçalışan, & Kuru (2010), the presence of learning materials in learning will make learning more effective and enjoyable that can improve the quality of learning. With such an important role, it cannot be denied that learning materials have a special place in the teaching and learning process. Learning materials are necessary in teaching and learning activities. Without the right learning materials, teachers will find it difficult to convey information to students, especially young learners.

Young learners have different development and characteristics, even though they are in the same age range. As a teacher, it is important to know about the characteristics of young learners and how they think and learn. McKay (2006) says that the characteristics of young learners from 5 to 6 years old are that they have a short attention span. They can only focus for 10 to 15 minutes before they are distracted by something else. Young learners have different characteristics than adult learners when they learn. The way young learners and adults learn is different because their understanding and way of capturing the material are very different. Young learners are described as more enthusiastic and passionate about learning when compared to adult learners. Young learners like to be involved in an activity, even if they do not understand what they are doing or how to do it. In addition, young learners are less shy when speaking a foreign language, which helps them learn a language faster than adult learners (Cameron, 2001). Therefore, teachers

must provide learning materials that are suitable for the needs and levels of young learners.

In addition, Tomlinson & Masuhara (2018) said that teachers should understand the needs of their students. This also allows teachers to be the designer of relevant and interesting learning materials for their learners that suit the needs of their students. In developing these learning materials, Tomlinson & Masuhara (2018) provides fifteen criteria that can be used as guidelines in developing learning materials that will provide opportunities for positive feedback. So, a good English textbook is designed by a writer who understands the needs of students by paying attention to the principles of language acquisition.

There are many types of learning materials used by teachers and students for learning. Over the years, the use of textbooks as learning materials has remained the number one most widely used in facilitating learning. When talking about learning materials, they cannot be separated from technological developments. With ever-changing needs, the latest trend in language learning is using modern tools. The rapid development of technology helps students understand language better in real-life contexts. Teachers, as facilitators, can use technological tools such as digital audio and video that are relevant to learning. By addressing this, there is another way to address material development, namely by using digital textbooks in the learning process.

The concept of a digital textbook is described as digital content that can enhance student learning. Digital content includes digital forms of traditional textbooks and learning materials that can be accessed through websites. Gardiner (2010) defines digital textbooks as books published in digital form consisting of text, images, and other elements that are easily accessible through electronic devices. In fact, digital textbooks still have similarities with printed textbooks only developed in digital or electronic form, where the goal is the same: to increase student understanding of learning. Self-learning certainly requires more than just a textbook, and digital textbooks can help further enhance student understanding through videos, animations, and other audio-visual combinations.

Currently in Indonesia, students have the right to choose the topics they want to study which is in accordance with the regulations of the new curriculum, that is the emancipated curriculum. The emancipated curriculum is implemented to provide freedom not only for students but also for principals and teachers in determining the topics they want to study. There are several characteristics in this curriculum, namely (1) project-based learning in accordance with the Pancasila learner profile, where students are expected to be able to have character and instill Pancasila values. (2) focus on essential content where students are expected to be able to have more understanding of information. (3) flexibility, where teachers have an obligation to develop differentiated content by including cultural sensitivity. With these characteristics, it is very suitable for the development of digital textbooks.

The emancipated curriculum demands differentiated learning to suit the needs, interests, and learning styles of different students. In differentiated learning, teachers can modify the content, learning process, product, and learning environment in teaching and learning activities. Through differentiated learning, students are not required to be the same in everything with others, which can help students learn according to their interests. Tomlinson (1999) classifies four types of differentiated learning, namely: (1) differentiating content, covering what students learn, where teachers control the content of learning materials by adjusting to students' needs. (2) The differentiating process includes different activities used by teachers in learning to activate learning. (3) differentiating products, which includes tests or product assignments that can help students expand what they understand from the learning that has been done. (4) differentiating the learning environment includes how the teacher organizes the classroom atmosphere and expectations from the learning. From these four elements, teachers can use one or more to implement differentiated learning. With differentiated learning, learners can get the information in their own style.

Learning style is one of the strategies used to find out how a person is most comfortable in a learning process. Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford (2003) argues that learning styles are related to student interactions in providing statements and responding to the environment. During teaching and learning activities, with a

learning style, students are able to combine, organize, and process information easily (Albeta , Haryati, Futra, Aisyah, & Siregar, 2021). Learning styles reflect how students are able to understand and use information obtained in certain situations. Generally, in a lesson, students have different learning styles. There are students who easily understand learning visually, some through practice, and some through the lecture method. By knowing students' learning styles, teachers are able to develop the right strategies for creating effective learning.

In addition, cultural sensitivity also needs to be emphasized in making learning materials in accordance with the emancipated curriculum. Cultural sensitivity needs to be applied from an early age. Zhu (2011) argues that cultural sensitivity is the basis of communication. Cultural sensitivity is divided into two elements: sensitivity to one's own culture and sensitivity to other cultures. In other words, one must be able to recognize a culture not only from one's own perspective but also from the perspective of other cultures. By learning about intercultural sensitivity, students can have a broad understanding and communicate with people from different cultures without losing their own cultural identity and avoid misunderstandings.

The emancipated curriculum is expected to be able to respond to the demands of the 21st century. This is also adjusted to the needs of the community that existed at that time. There is no exception to the need for education, including English learning, which is a necessity for the community, especially students. In this curriculum, at the elementary level, English is used as an elective subject and is a compulsory subject for junior and senior high school. English language learning at the elementary level is returned to the readiness of each educational unit, but if it is not ready to be a subject, the educational unit must strive by implementing it in extracurricular. This is a good step because students can learn English earlier.

With the revival of foreign language subjects at the elementary level, it will be easier for young learners to prepare themselves and improve their abilities before entering the next level of education because, at a young age, foreign language learning will be much better. English for young children is very important in increasing the number of years of learning the language. This means that young



learners will have a better understanding of a language because they have started learning it from the beginning, so that in the future it can be used as a provision to continue to the next level.

Previous research conducted on textbook development for elementary school students includes: Abidasari, Sabgini, Inayati (2021) developing learning materials in the form of an English textbook with the title “Bright English”, which provides benefits for teachers and students in improving learning in Batu City; Surtikanti (2019) developing learning materials in the form of video-based English textbooks for elementary school students to help students improve pronunciation and increase vocabulary; and Zuhdi (2019) developing English textbooks to be given to PGSD students who will teach elementary school students English. However, all of the relevant research did not focus on the implementation of the emancipated curriculum in the development of learning materials for young learners, which facilitated differentiated learning and cultural sensitivity.

Based on the results of preliminary observations and interviews that have been carried out at the two schools, researchers obtained information that at school A, there is an English subject as an elective subject that is only handled by one English teacher, while at school B, English learning is diverted into extracurricular activities that are held once a month for one level and are carried out in rotation because the previous English teacher has switched to being a class teacher and extracurricular activities are taught by another English teacher who is also an Open University student. From the results of interviews conducted with teachers at school A, the English teacher has understood and implemented her learning according to the emancipated curriculum, but the extracurricular teacher at school B has not had many teaching opportunities so far due to the teacher's personal affairs. Interviews were also conducted with grade 5 students of school A, and the students' responses were generally that English learning there was fun and the teacher provided varied learning materials. Meanwhile, interviews with grade 5 students at school B revealed that the teacher only relied on the textbook. The results show that teachers at school A have a strong willingness to implement learning in accordance with the emancipated curriculum, which adapts to the needs and interests of students.

Whereas at school B, teachers lack teaching time in the classroom, which still has not prepared interactive strategies and learning materials.

Based on those problems, this research aims to develop a learning material in the form of digital textbook. The researcher hopes that the learning materials in the form of digital textbooks developed can help teachers and students learn English. Therefore, it is very important to develop learning materials for young learners since now is the golden time for them to learn a foreign language.

### **1.2 Problem Identification**

Based on the background above, these are the result of preliminary observation in schools in Denpasar City:

1. Lack of varied learning materials used in learning process by the teachers.
2. Students still have difficulties understanding learning due to a lack of using differentiated learning styles.
3. Lack of group work activities, which still depend on independent learning,

### **1.3 Research Limitation**

Based on the background and problem identification above, the limitation of his research is analyzing the needs of students and teachers in the English learning process and how to develop learning materials in the form of differentiated materials based on an independent curriculum that suits students' needs, interests and learning styles.

#### **1.4 Research Question**

Based on the background and problem identification above, the research questions of this study are:

1. What are the needs of the teacher and students in learning English based on emancipated curriculum for fifth grade students of elementary school?
2. How to develop emancipated curriculum learning material for fifth grade primary school on first semester?
3. How is the quality of emancipated curriculum learning material for fifth grade in primary school?

#### **1.5 Research Objective**

Based on the research questions, these are the objectives of this study:

1. To identify the needs of the teacher and students in learning English based on emancipated curriculum for fifth grade students of elementary school.
2. To develop emancipated curriculum learning material for fifth grade primary school on first semester.
3. To find out the quality of emancipated curriculum learning material for fifth grade in primary school.

#### **1.6 Research Significance**

The significant of the research can be seen from the theoretical and practical significance. Theoretical significance covers the significance of this research in the educational process. While, practical significance is expected to be useful for students, English teacher, and the researchers.

##### **1.6.1 Theoretical Significance**

This research is expected to contribute to the development of English learning materials, especially textbooks that suit students' needs, interests and learning styles accordance with the characteristics of emancipated curriculum that include the differentiated learning and cultural sensitivity. In addition, this research is expected to be able to provide good quality in English learning to create quality students.

### 1.6.2 Practical Significance

#### 1. Students

The benefit of this research for students is that it is hoped that it will be able to help students learn English and improve their understanding of English through the learning materials developed. Apart from that, it is hoped that it will be able to help students increase their learning motivation by developing different content so that they are able to master four language skills, namely reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

#### 2. Teachers

The benefit of this research for teachers is that it is hoped that it will be able to help make it easier for teachers to explain the material through the learning materials developed.

#### 3. Other researchers

The benefit of this research for other researchers is that it is expected to be able to provide new knowledge, and the results of this study are expected to be able to provide information that helps researchers out there who are conducting similar research.

