CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Research Background

Among the primary measures of schooling is literacy. The ability to comprehend and use spoken, written, and visual languages for interaction and communication with others is known as literacy, according to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). To improve skills, literacy is necessary in all facets of life, including Indonesia. Still, Indonesians have extremely low reading and writing skills. Based on findings from a 2019 UNESCO assessment, Indonesia's population literacy rate remains below Southeast Asia's regional average of 0.001%. In actuality, only 96% of Indonesians, or 4% of the country's 273.8 million inhabitants, are illiterate, according to figures from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) for 2020 (Ratminingsih, 2016)

According to Rusmono (2019), students with high reading literacy skills had the ability to find new ways to connect with existing knowledge and understanding compared to those with low reading literacy skills. This was possible because those with high reading literacy are more likely to acquire and capture subject matter. Conversely, those with low reading literacy skills will have difficulty in the learning process because their knowledge was limited. The key to literacy is students' reading ability. One factor that played an important role in increasing literacy was the availability of dictionaries. Dictionaries play an important role in helping people understand the meanings of words and enrich their vocabulary. However, many dictionaries available in Indonesia are still limited and do not support the development of literacy skills in various contexts.

In today's digital era, digital dictionaries are becoming increasingly popular and easily accessible to the public. However, few digital multilingual thematic dictionaries are available in Indonesia. Such dictionaries can help users learn foreign languages more easily and effectively as well as improve literacy skills in Indonesian and foreign languages. Therefore, research on " digital multilingual thematic dictionaries to improve literacy in Indonesia is very important. According to a number of studies on digital multilingual thematic dictionaries, including one by Ratminingsih et al. (2021), multilingual dictionaries—both printed and digital— that have vibrant illustrations to aid in learning are highly valued by both educators and students. According to research by Siantari et al. (2023), fourth-grade students' literacy skills were much improved by the use of digital multilingual thematic dictionaries as opposed to paper thematic image dictionaries. The research conducted by Shen (2013) proved that research on dictionary usage was so limited that it was conducted to know more about dictionary usage during reading (Shen, 2013). The use of a dictionary is also effective for enhancing vocabulary knowledge while reading, and even better when using an electronic dictionary compared to a printed one.

The creation of multilingual topic digital dictionaries was investigated by Parmawati et al. (2022) in an effort to assist pupils in advancing their literacy abilities. The study's findings suggest that multilingual thematic digital dictionaries fall under the category of engaging materials that support students' literacy development. Based on earlier research, this study aims to shed light on how the Digital Multilingual Thematic Dictionary enhances students' literacy in the fourth grade at SDN 3 Banjar Jawa. This will create avenues for enhancing educational

quality and bolstering the country's competitiveness in the contemporary globalization era.

1.2 Problem Identification

As per the findings of a 2019 UNESCO assessment, Indonesia's literacy rate is still lower than the regional average of 0.001% for Southeast Asia. In 2020, the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS) released data showing that the country's literacy rate was just 96%, meaning that 4% of its 273.8 million inhabitants were still illiterate. The high rate of illiteracy in Indonesia correlates with a low level of literacy interest, so we must start emphasizing the culture of literation early on. Looking at the condition of fourth graders in elementary school, a level of literacy was decreasing. If this problem was not addressed immediately, there will be a literacy crisis in the field of Indonesian education, especially among fourth grade students at SDN 3 Banjar Jawa.

1.3 Research Scope

The focus of this study was on how fourth grade students at SDN 3 Banjar Jawa may enhance their reading skills by using the Digital Multilingual Thematic Dictionary.

1.4 Questions

Can fourth grade students in SDN 3 Banjar Jawa become more literate through the use of the Digital Multilingual Thematic Dictionary?

1.5   Research Objectives

The purpose of this study was to investigate if using the Digital Multilingual Thematic Dictionary may help fourth-grade students at SDN 3 Banjar Jawa with their reading skills, based on the research question.

1.6   Research Significance

Based on the objectives of the study, this study was expected to obtain the following benefits:

a)   Theoretical Significance

It was anticipated that the study's findings will add to our understanding of education, particularly with regard to enhancing students' literacy through the use of the Digital Multilingual Thematic Dictionary. As far as we know, fewer Indonesian students are literate. Dictionaries are one type of media that can be utilized to help pupils become more literate. We must create a dictionary that meets the requirements of pupils during their education. Additionally, this study offers details on the benefits and drawbacks of digital multilingual thematic dictionaries for enhancing students' literacy abilities.

b)   Practical Significance

1)   For Students

Increasing students' literacy using a Digital Multilingual Thematic Dictionary

2)   For Teachers

Helping educators to apply a creative learning media to improve students' literacy using a Digital Multilingual Thematic Dictionary.

3)   For Other Researchers

Assisting other researchers develop studies on digital multilingual thematic dictionaries that can improve students' literacy and can be a solution to increase students' literacy skills.