

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

English has emerged as the global "Lingua Franca," extensively used across numerous sectors such as tourism, commerce, and education (Khan, 2011; Pustika, 2021). Its popularity stems from being a modern language that encapsulates a broad spectrum of scientific, technological, and global knowledge (Khan, 2011). The British Council (2013) reports that 1.75 billion people worldwide use English for professional purposes, indicating its role as a functional language. The ratio of native to non-native English speakers is approximately 1:2 or 1:3, highlighting the predominance of second-language speakers globally (Harmer, 2007). This underscores the importance of English proficiency as a crucial skill in today's world, relevant to a wide range of professions such as business, academia, and governance (Hasibuan et al., 2013). In the digital age, the rise of technology and the internet has accelerated the spread of English, reaching more developing nations, including Indonesia (Roza, 2013).

In Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language and is not used in daily conversations (Mandasari & Oktaviani, 2018). To meet the global demand for English proficiency, the Indonesian government has made English instruction a mandatory subject in schools (Mandasari & Oktaviani, 2018; Roza, 2013), beginning at the elementary level and continuing through university. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in Indonesia aims to enable students to

communicate effectively with English speakers worldwide.

According to Kepmendiknas No. 23 Tahun 2006, the primary goal of EFL instruction is for students to master four core competencies: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Additionally, students are expected to develop communicative competence, both oral and written, to achieve informational literacy, understand the connection between language and culture, and become globally competitive (Misdi, 2013). However, achieving these objectives is challenging.

Many students perceive English as a difficult subject and face barriers in mastering it, leading to suboptimal performance in English classes (Suryanto & Sari, 2021; To'ifah & Sari, 2022). This is partly because English is primarily taught in classrooms and rarely used outside of them, limiting students' exposure to the language. As a result, the teacher's role as the main facilitator of EFL learning becomes essential for achieving the learning goals (Sulistiyo, 2016). Teaching is defined as facilitating students' understanding of concepts, providing guidance in learning, and helping them acquire knowledge (Brown, 2007).

English teachers need to be skilled in teaching English and use engaging teaching materials and strategies to enhance student learning (Kassing, 2011). At SMPN 2 Singaraja, preliminary observations revealed that over half of the seventh-grade students were not meeting the expected learning outcomes. The observations indicated that student participation was minimal due to the teacher-centered approach to instruction, where the teacher primarily used lecture methods. Although technological aids such as PowerPoint and videos were incorporated, these tools did not adequately cover all four language skills, resulting in limited student engagement with English. Furthermore, the tasks assigned by the teacher were based on textbooks and lacked communicative or interactive components, leading

to fewer opportunities for students to practice their communicative skills. A brief interview with the teacher confirmed that students struggled with speaking and listening, mainly due to insufficient practice and limited access to suitable facilities.

Although the teacher used technology in the classroom, the teaching materials and methods were not fully aligned with the goal of integrating all four language skills. This lack of a comprehensive plan resulted in a teaching approach that was not communicative, hindering students' exposure to the language. These issues contributed to passive learning and decreased student interest in the subject (Liu, 2014). Traditional language learning methods, which focus on form and structure, are increasingly viewed as ineffective (Butler, 2017). Research suggests that optimal language acquisition should involve real-world contexts and emphasize communicative interaction to develop communicative competence (Hymes, 1972; Swan & Walter, 1990).

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach aligns with these views, prioritizing interaction in language learning to enhance communicative competence (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The primary goal of CLT is for learners to communicate fluently and be understood by listeners, rather than focusing on grammatical accuracy (Brown, 1994; Ratminingsih, 2021). This study seeks to enhance the teaching-learning process by focusing on the integration of the four language skills. Building on the principles of CLT, this research adopts Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), a method that emphasizes meaningful tasks to facilitate language acquisition (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). TBLT promotes natural language use in the classroom by prioritizing communicative tasks over grammatical instruction (Barokah, 2018; Fakhira, 2021). It is regarded as effective in improving academic performance, communication skills, and learner autonomy

(Barokah, 2018).

In addition to the TBLT approach, this study employs digital storybooks as innovative, technology-based learning materials. Digital storybooks, which convert traditional print textbooks into electronic formats, offer greater accessibility and can enhance the learning process (Jones & Brown, 2011; Puspitasari et al., 2020). Digital storybooks support language development by extending vocabulary and enhancing comprehension (Sari, 2023). Previous studies have shown that digital storytelling-based tasks improve students' narrative writing, vocabulary, and listening skills (Fitri et al., 2021; Tabieh et al., 2021).

This study aims to combine TBLT with digital storybooks to create a TBLT-based digital storybook that enhances students' English learning experience. While earlier research has explored digital storybooks and TBLT separately, no study has combined the two to examine their impact on English learning. This research fills that gap by developing a TBLT-based digital storybook for English instruction at SMPN 2 Singaraja. By addressing the identified challenges, this study aims to create a more communicative and engaging learning environment that promotes active participation and comprehensive language skill development.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is essential for enhancing communicative competence in language learners, as it emphasizes meaningful communication through real-world tasks. Research indicates that TBLT significantly improves language acquisition and promotes learner autonomy, with studies by Barokah (2018) and Fakhira (2021) demonstrating its effectiveness in boosting academic performance and communication skills. By engaging in collaborative tasks, students experience language in context, leading to better retention and practical application. Complementing TBLT, digital storybooks serve

as innovative, technology-based learning materials that offer greater accessibility and interactivity. They enhance vocabulary and comprehension while catering to various learning styles. Previous studies have shown that digital storybooks improve narrative writing, vocabulary acquisition, and listening skills (Fitri et al., 2021; Tabieh et al., 2021). The urgency of this study lies in its aim to fill the research gap by integrating TBLT and digital storybooks for English instruction, creating a more engaging and communicative learning environment that promotes active participation and comprehensive skill development at SMPN 2 Singaraja.

1.2 Problem Identification of the Study

In SMPN 2 Singaraja, more than half of seventh-grade students were unable to acquire the needed competences in the learning goal. After conducting preliminary research by observing the learning process in the classroom and determining the problem, it is clear that the root of the problem is that the teacher did not plan to incorporate the four English skills into English learning, and the activities provided by the teacher in the classroom are less communicative. Other factors contribute to these issues, such as the fact that the learning process is still concentrated on the teacher, which limits students' participation in the learning process. Then, the task given is simply a written task that is collected and assessed later by the teacher, implying that the teaching-learning process was less communicative and students were less practicing their communicative competencies; it was also discovered that the variety of tasks given by the teacher was less authentic and appeared to only refer to the textbook.

The challenges in English language instruction at SMPN 2 Singaraja stem from a teacher-centered approach that limits student participation in the learning process.

Tasks assigned to students often consist solely of written exercises, which are collected and graded later, leading to a less communicative environment where students have minimal opportunities to practice their communicative competencies. Furthermore, the tasks provided tend to lack authenticity and primarily rely on textbook content. Although technology-based learning media are used, they do not effectively address the four essential English language skills, resulting in limited exposure to the language. In response to these issues, this study aims to develop a more comprehensive teaching-learning process that integrates all four English competencies by employing an extension of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) strategy through the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) method. This integration will take the form of a TBLT-based digital storybook, designed to align with TBLT concepts and phases, thereby fostering a more engaging and communicative learning environment that promotes active participation and skill development.

While technology-based learning media cannot address those four English language abilities, students are exposed to less English. Based on this issue, the study tries to make an effort to create a teaching learning process that covers the four English competency abilities by using an extension of the CLT strategy and principle known as the Task-based language teaching (TBLT) method. Those two items are integrated in the form of a TBLT-based digital storybook, which is essentially a digital storybook organized according to the TBLT concepts and phases.

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the tasks provided tend to lack authenticity and primarily rely on textbook content. Although technology-based learning media are used, they do not effectively address the four essential English language skills, resulting in limited exposure to the language. In response to these issues, this study aims to develop a more comprehensive teaching-learning process that integrates all four English competencies by employing an extension of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) strategy through the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) method. This integration will take the form of a TBLT-based digital storybook, designed to align with TBLT concepts and phases, thereby fostering a more engaging and communicative learning environment that promotes active participation and skill development.

1.3 Limitation of the Research

This study aims to investigate the implementation and evaluate the effects of a TBLT-based Digital Storybook on English learning among EFL students at SMPN 2 Singaraja, with consideration of certain limitations in its implementation:

1. TBLT-based digital storybook is only implemented to 7th Grade students in SMPN 2 Singaraja
2. The materials and digital storybook are developed based on the 7th Grade students English Syllabus

1.4 Research Question

Given the background above, this research seeks to address the following questions:

1. Are there significant differences in English competencies between

students taught with a TBLT-based digital storybook and those taught using traditional teacher methods and media?

2. Are there significant differences in students' listening comprehension when comparing those taught through a TBLT-based digital storybook to those using the teacher's methods and learning media?
3. Are there significant differences in reading comprehension between students taught with a TBLT-based digital storybook and those taught with the teacher's method and media?
4. Are there significant differences in writing competencies between students using the TBLT-based digital storybook and those taught with the teacher's method and media?
5. Are there significant differences in students' speaking skills when comparing the TBLT-based digital storybook approach to the teacher's method and learning media?

1.5 Objective of the study

Addressing the issues mentioned above, this study aims to:

1. Investigate the differences in English competencies between students taught using a TBLT-based digital storybook and those taught through traditional teacher methods and media.
2. Investigate the differences in students' listening comprehension between those using the TBLT-based digital storybook and those taught with the teacher's methods and learning media.
3. Investigate the differences in students' reading comprehension between

those taught with a TBLT-based digital storybook and those taught through the teacher's method and media.

4. Investigate the differences in writing competency between students who use the TBLT-based digital storybook and those instructed with the teacher's method and media.
5. Investigate the differences in students' speaking skills when comparing those taught with the TBLT-based digital storybook to those using the teacher's method and media.

1.6 Significance of the research

The findings of this study are expected to provide both theoretical and practical value, as outlined below:

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

The study results are contributed to providing additional insight into the theoretical concept of task-based language teaching (TBLT) and the concept of digital storybook as a technology that is integrated with TBLT.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

- a. For Students

This study aims to enhance students' learning experiences through the use of a TBLT-based digital storybook. It encourages students to strengthen their English language skills and actively engage in English learning by completing various activities.

b. For Teacher

This study aims to support English teachers in adopting a TBLT-based digital storybook approach. This method enhances teaching by incorporating structured phases and fosters student engagement through an effective, interactive teaching style and resources.

c. For Other Researchers

This study is intended to be a resource for future researchers interested in assessing the impact of TBLT-based digital storybooks on students' English learning by providing comprehensive empirical evidence. It can act as a reference or knowledge base for scholars aiming to advance their own research in this area.

