

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Research Background**

In the 21st century, literacy skills require individuals to think critically, creatively and communicate effectively. Literacy skills are not limited to listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Basic literacy is the ability to read, write, and count, which needs to be mastered by every individual, and it becomes an essential requirement in the following education (Anwas et al., 2022). Literacy skills, which are foundational learning, aim to cultivate a culture of reading, writing, counting, and creating innovations that are close to personal well-being, economic stability, and future success (Anwas et al., 2022; Setiawan et al., 2019; Singh et al., 2023). In the era of rapid development of technology and information, literacy is a skill that must be acquired by all individuals (Fitria, 2023). A nation with a high level of cultural literacy shows that it can collaborate and think critically, creatively and communicatively to compete in global challenges (Halimah et al., 2020). It can be concluded that good literacy skills will provide a broader opportunity for children to compete in the world of work.

Student's low literacy skills in learning and daily life activities precipitate the problem of low-quality education (Devi & Rusdinal, 2023). According to the Decree of the Head of Standards, Curriculum and Education Assessment Agency of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology No.008/H/KR/2022 regarding Early Childhood Learning Outcomes, including religious values and character, identity, literacy basics, mathematics, science,

technology, engineering, and art. Basic literacy is one of the outcomes for students. Suppose students have not reached the expected level of proficiency in learning to read strategies in the early years of school. In that case, there will be little or no improvement in reading ability without intervention or remediation (Long & Bowles, 2024). Literacy is crucial for young learners, as early proficiency in reading is crucial. Students may struggle to improve their reading skills later on without timely intervention. Choosing a primary school to instil literacy by habituating reading activities from an early age will give students a significant opportunity to acquire literacy habits as a provision for their future (Setiawan et al., 2019). In addition, reading describes the level of basic literacy skills in children and learning to read at an early stage for foreign language learners is essential (Artini et al., 2020). Reading is reading letters into words and understanding the context of the text.

Reading comprehension is an important cognitive skill for students to understand, analyze, and extract meaning from text by actively engaging with the text and using their background knowledge to gain new insights (Kasmiri et al., 2023). Reading comprehension involves identifying factual information, recognizing main ideas, understanding the meaning of contextual vocabulary, identifying references, and making inferences. However, students often face challenges in reading comprehension, especially when dealing with texts in a foreign language such as English. In addition, the non-existence of a strong reading culture in Indonesia, coupled with the lack of encouragement from schools and families, creates an environment where students do not see reading as an important or enjoyable activity (Suada et al., 2025). World Most Literate

Nations data from Central Connecticut State University shows that Indonesia's literacy level is 60th out of 61 countries (Nurhasanah et al., 2023). The average 15-year-old in Indonesia scores 359 points in reading, while the average in OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries is 476 (NCES, 2024). This shows that the average reading score in Indonesia is lower than the average in OECD countries. Based on the PISA survey in 2022, the average 2022 results were down compared to 2018 in math, reading, and science.

In addition to traditional skills such as communication, critical thinking, and creativity, new skills are also emerging as needed, including the ability to collaborate, keep up with information technology, and have technological literacy to adapt effectively and use it in various contexts (Özer & Kuloğlu, 2023). The researcher conducted a preliminary observation in one public primary school in Tabanan, focuses on the students' reading aspects. Teacher stated the students' overall reading comprehension was not good. Based on the minimum competency assessment conducted by the Batch 7 Kampus Mengajar, the students average scored was 42% below the standard which is 50%. The data identification shows that the teachers mostly used traditional textbooks and integrated technologies as learning media, limited to YouTube videos. Even though, students were willing to learn things through technology and the school are equipped by modern facilities, including LCDs, Chromebooks, and internet access. However, there are several aspects that make students have low reading skills, one of which is the lack of learning media that can be used to help support their learning activities (Sari & Santosa,

2024). One potential solution for English learning activity is applying interactive learning media to attract young students to be more active. Interactive technology-based media can be a suitable solution to increase students' participation in the learning process.

Interactive media in teaching reading comprehension to learners is crucial to increase their learning motivation. The rapid development of technology has had a significant impact on the world of education, especially in the context of English language learning (Laksana et al., 2024). Interactive media can increase students' interest in learning, create a positive atmosphere in learning activities, and improve students' cognitive outcomes (Sartono et al., 2022). Since elementary school students are in the acquisition phase, student learning situations should be designed with interesting, interactive, and meaningful activities (Hanif, 2020). By using interactive media, students can use their knowledge to become more meaningful learners through product creation projects (Untari et al., 2020). Interactive media can make the teaching-learning process more interesting and interactive, increase learning motivation, increase focus, and attention on learning (Kustyarini et al., 2020). With the demand for technology-based learning media, various interactive digital learning media have been developed, one of which is LKS.

Topworksheets is a platform to create and manage interactive worksheets for students. Developing digital teaching materials with top worksheets is easy and learning evaluation will be interesting if you use the top worksheet platform (Mahardika et al., 2023). Topworksheets can be access in [www.topworksheets.com](http://www.topworksheets.com). Teachers can create learning media by choosing the

existing worksheets or design the media with ownself and make it directly interactive in the website. Topworksheets have two account option, including free and premium account. If the teacher want to use topworksheets oftenly, it was suggested to subscribe the premium account. Topworksheets can be applied to all level of students, from primary until highest level. The features featured in the top worksheet are word search, drag & drop, draw field, etc. That features are suitable for students to encourage them to participate actively in the classroom.

Another innovative teaching technique is using digital social stories developed by Coral Gray in 1990, which provide social information in a simple visual format that explains what is expected and what constitutes appropriate behaviour (Smith et al., 2021). Social stories serve this function by describing the social situations and perspectives included and answering the questions of what, when, where, and why (Daub & Huber, 2020) Social stories are not only used for children with autism but can also be a valuable tool for teaching reading comprehension and promoting social-emotional learning in children. Students can understand better when the content presented is familiar to their daily lives, and teachers suggest introducing comprehension concepts by using written content related to their daily lives (Lip et al., 2018). Incorporating digital social stories into educational practices can promote social-emotional learning and improve students' reading comprehension.

Based on the above description, the researcher decided to investigate the significant difference of interactive digital social stories on students' reading comprehension score to reflect on literacy issues and previous research. The



integration of technology into reading activities was found significantly improve students' reading comprehension (Alfan et al., 2023). With digital technology, students can get information that needs to be analyzed and compiled into complete knowledge (Lailiyah et al., 2022). Integrating technology into education can improve the teaching-learning process (Nyoman Sari Pratiwi et al., 2024). Interactive media can make the teaching-learning process more interesting and interactive, increase learning motivation, and focus attention on learning (Kustyarini et al., 2020). Interactive media development requires tools that are able to provide interactive features (Wati et al., 2021). The use of social stories that have familiar content with students in reading activity can help them understand text easier (Petnoosed, 2021). Therefore, the combination of interactive digital social stories should have positive impact on students' reading comprehension.

This research conducted because of the combination of interactive digital media with social stories is rarely conducted. The novelty of this study is the use of interactively designed social stories using student worksheets as a reading comprehension learning medium for fourth-grade students in public schools. Previous research has focused on demonstrating digital social stories for autistic students to help them identify specific goals and improve their understanding of situations. In contrast, there has been no research on using interactive digital social stories for students' reading comprehension in public school.

## 1.2 Problem Identification

The identified issues are that students' average score in minimum competency assessment is lower than the standard and the learning media from the teacher still limited to the use of conventional books and youtube videos. Even though, the school was equipped by technology, such as internet access, chromebook, and LCDs for each classroom. As a result, interactive digital social stories had not been used in English lessons, especially in reading activity. Therefore, the researcher implemented this kind of learning media through a study titled *"Implementing Interactive Digital Social Stories as a Reading Comprehension Learning Media on Fourth Grade Students at SD Negeri 3 Abiantuwung."*

## 1.3 Limitation of the Research

This research's limitation is focused on investigating the significant difference on fourth-grade students' reading comprehension score before and after the implementation of interactive digital social stories in SD Negeri 3 Abiantuwung. This study used a pre-experimental method and one group pre-test post-test as a design.

## 1.4 Research Question

Based on the study's background, the research question is "Is there any significant difference on fourth grade students' reading comprehension score before and after the implementation of interactive digital social stories in SD Negeri 3 Abiantuwung?"

### 1.5 Research Objective

Based on the problems above, the research objective is “To investigate whether the use of interactive digital social stories as a learning media had a significant difference on the fourth-grade students’ reading comprehension score in SD Negeri 3 Abiantuwung.”

### 1.6 Significance of the Research

Based on the research background, research question and research objectives, this research has theoretical and practical significances. The research significances are as follow:

#### 1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, the current research is expected to support theories about using interactive digital social stories as reading comprehension learning media for elementary school students. The information obtained in this research is expected to be used to develop the implementation of interactive digital social stories as a reading comprehension learning media.

#### 2. Practical Significance

Practically, this research is expected to give positive significance to English teacher, students, and researchers.

##### a. Teachers

The result of this research will help the teacher preparing appropriate digital learning media for teaching reading comprehension. It can be new insight and knowledge for teachers about using technology in English. The teacher also could know how to integrate the material



with social life and technology, which can help to facilitate students to become autonomous learners in this era.

b. Students

This digital media's development will affect how students learn the material. The development of digital media for learning reading comprehension can help the students acquire the language. The lesson will be joyful and also meaningful, which enhances the students' motivation during the lesson. Students can open this interactive digital social story through their phone so they can learn it anywhere.

c. Researchers

This research is expected to be a reference source or information for further research on developing and implementing interactive digital media-based social stories.

## 1.7 Definition of Key Terms

### 1. Interactive Digital Social Stories

Conceptually, interactive digital social stories refer to adaptations of traditional social stories utilizing modern digital technologies to enhance their functionality and accessibility. These stories aim to provide a supportive environment for students to learn social skills through interactive narratives (Sani-Bozkurt et al., 2017).

Operationally, interactive digital social stories refer to the media used in learning, including social stories, top worksheets, Chromebooks, and other devices.

## 2. Reading Comprehension

Conceptually, reading comprehension is an interactive process where readers use their knowledge and language skills to engage with the text, making predictions and connections to derive meaning (Kasmiri et al., 2023).

Operationally, reading comprehension is a dependent variable that will be measured based on the pre-test and post-test.

## 3. Young Learners

Conceptually, young learners refer to primary school students who are between the ages of five and twelve (Nuralisa & Nirwanto, 2023).

Operationally, young learners are elementary school students learning English as a second or foreign language, focusing specifically on their experiences and challenges in acquiring language skills at this developmental stage.

