CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

The ability to read and analyze information critically became a significant need in the digital age. Cahyani & Sastromiharjo (2025) stated that critical reading skills were essential in navigating the overwhelming flow of information in the digital age. With these skills, individuals were able to filter valuable information from the unreliable, minimizing the spread of misinformation and avoiding the consumption of inaccurate or biased information (Roomy, 2022), Therefore, it was crucial for people to acquire good critical reading skills due to the vast amount of unfiltered information that was easily accessible. Digital elements became an integral part of society. This was evident in the significant increase in digital media consumption. One notable phenomenon that highlighted the generalization of digital aspects was the growing prominence of digital media in everyday life (Lorenz-spreen et al., 2023). One clear example of the generalization of digital aspects was the rise of digital media. This increase caused a significant change in the way people consumed and interacted with information (Priyono & Moin, 2020).

Although critical reading skills were needed in the process of learner development, there were many challenges that had to be faced by students, such as students' lack of understanding of the context of a text and also the lack of student motivation in the learning process, which was influenced by the concept of critical reading that required concentration and focus from readers (Permatasari et al.,

2020). With these challenges, students needed a way of learning that helped them understand the context of a reading and not only the literal meaning. According to research by Nguyen (2020), the main challenges faced by students included understanding the author's arguments, the main ideas of the text, and the text structures. Similarly, Permatasari et al. (2020) identified challenges such as limited time allocation, large classes, teachers' knowledge, and students' reading habits. With these challenges, students needed a way of learning that helped them understand the context of a reading and not only the literal meaning.

Rapid technological advances opened up new opportunities for innovation in education, particularly through the integration of digital tools. Škola et al. (2020) stated that these tools transformed traditional teaching methods, allowing for a more interactive, personalized, and engaging learning experience. The researchers also stated that the integration of digital tools in education facilitated a more interactive learning environment and allowed for personalized student engagement. One innovative approach that capitalized on these technological advancements was digital storytelling. This method combined storytelling with modern multimedia elements such as images, video, audio, and interactive content to create an immersive learning experience that emphasized contextual understanding. Tuveri et al. (2024) stated that digital storytelling provided students with an immersive experience that fostered a deeper understanding of complex concepts. By using digital storytelling, educators enhanced students' understanding of complex contexts, fostered creativity, and encouraged active participation. As noted by Santos et al. (2024) digital storytelling encouraged students to actively engage in learning while enhancing their critical thinking skills and creativity. Similarly, a

study by Navas (2025) found that digital storytelling tools significantly boosted student engagement and creativity in higher education settings. Furthermore, a study by Tisoglu (2022) highlighted that digital storytelling was an effective method for integrating technology into educational settings, promoting creativity and active participation among students. This creative learning strategy not only bridged the gap between technology and narrative, but also empowered students to explore and express ideas in dynamic ways, ultimately encouraging deeper engagement and retention of knowledge (Alshaye, 2021).

Previous studies investigated the impact of digital storytelling on students' critical thinking skills (Derasin, 2024; June & Estanislao, 2023; Radaideh et al., 2020; Alshaye, 2021). For example, Wiwikananda & Susanti (2022) found that digital storytelling improved students' critical thinking skills by enhancing their ability to analyze, evaluate, and interpret information. Similar findings were made by Chen & Chuang (2021), who found that digital storytelling boosted students' enthusiasm for learning and sharpened their critical thinking abilities. Derasin (2024) also found that digital storytelling significantly enhanced reading comprehension among senior high school students. This showed that digital storytelling activities were effective for students to gain understanding in the context of the study.

Prior research demonstrated that digital storytelling enhanced various educational outcomes, including reading comprehension, students' critical thinking skills, and students' critical reading skills (Derasin, 2024; June & Estanislao, 2023; Radaideh et al., 2020; Bakar, 2020; Alshaye, 2021). Research by Derasin (2024) showed that digital storytelling improved the reading comprehension of high school

students in the Philippines. Students found it easier to understand the context of reading through interactive multimedia elements. According to June & Estanislao (2023), the integration of multimedia elements such as images and audio in digital stories allowed students to understand the content of the text better, especially in the context of language learning. Radaideh et al. (2020) also noted that the use of digital storytelling encourages students to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information, thereby improving their critical thinking skills. Despite the positive outcomes of these studies, further study is still needed to determine how digital storytelling impacts critical reading abilities. Additionally, there were limited numbers of studies discussing how students responded to the use of digital storytelling in learning critical reading competency.

Overall, the ability to read and analyze information critically is a very important skill in the digital age. Digital storytelling, as a medium that combines multimedia elements with narrative structure, has been identified as a potential tool for improving critical thinking and reading skills. At SMA Negeri 1 Kuta Utara, initial observations and teacher reports indicate that many 11th-grade students struggle with interpreting, evaluating, and reflecting on reading texts, often relying on superficial understanding without deeper analysis. This issue highlights the need for engaging and effective teaching strategies to strengthen their critical reading competencies. Thus, this study aims to contribute to existing research by exploring the impact of digital storytelling on students' critical reading competence and their responses to its implementation.

1.2   Identification of Research Problem

Several studies have examined the application of digital storytelling in the learning process, demonstrating its various benefits in improving students' language skills and thinking processes. This method provides positive stimulation in the learning environment, enabling students to absorb material more effectively by leveraging technological developments to achieve optimal results. In terms of reading especially critical reading competence, digital storytelling has great potential for application. By combining digital media with traditional storytelling elements (Robin, 2008), this method offers an immersive and dynamic learning environment that stimulates critical engagement with textual and visual material (Hull & Nelson, 2005). This aligns with Alshaye's (2021) findings, which indicate that digital storytelling significantly enhances students' motivation and learning outcomes.

At SMA Negeri 1 Kuta Utara, initial observations and teacher reports identified several key issues: many 11th-grade students struggled to identify main ideas, draw conclusions, and evaluate arguments in texts; they often engaged in superficial reading without in-depth analysis; their motivation for critical reading was low; classroom activities tended to rely on traditional text-based instruction; and the integration of technology in learning was still minimal. These issues contribute to limited development of higher-order thinking skills in reading.

Given these challenges, the use of digital storytelling is expected to help improve students' critical reading competencies and increase their engagement. However, research specifically focused on its impact in this context and student responses is still limited. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how digital

storytelling affects critical reading competency and student responses at SMA Negeri 1 Kuta Utara.

1.3   Limitation of Research

This study focused on the effect of digital storytelling in students' critical reading learning and also examined students' responses to the application of this method in the learning process.

1.4   Research Question

1. Is there a significant effect in students critical reading competence who are taughted with digital storytelling compared to those who are taughted using conventional method?

2. How is the student' response on the implementation of digital storytelling in facilitating the student critical reading competency?

1.5   Research Objective

1. To assess whether there is significant effect on students' critical reading competency who are taughted with digital storytelling compared to those who are taughted using conventional method.

2. To explore students' responses regarding the implementation of digital storytelling in facilitating the student critical reading competency.

1.6 Significance of The Research

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

The expected outcome of this study is to provide insight into the impact of digital storytelling on students' critical reading competence, especially in the context of English language learning. This involves incorporating digital storytelling principles into English language learning and critical reading theories from experts. By integrating digital storytelling techniques and focusing on critical listening competencies, this study aims to meet various learning needs and contribute to the improvement of English language education (Robin, 2008; Hull & Nelson, 2005; Alshaye, 2021).

1.6.2 Practical Significance

1.6.2.1 Teachers

Digital storytelling as a learning method developed in this study will be a useful resource that can be used by teachers in the classroom to meet students' needs, especially in developing critical reading competencies. In addition, insights gained from teachers regarding the opportunities, obstacles, and challenges faced in implementing digital storytelling will be the basis for development, training, and support for other teachers.

1.6.2.2 Students

For students, the results of this study are expected to provide insight into new methods in developing critical reading competencies in English. In addition, the results of this study are expected to increase students' interest in developing

their critical reading competencies by implementing the digital storytelling method in the classroom.

1.6.2.3 Other Researchers

The methodology and results of this study can provide a reference view for other researchers who may want to explore more deeply the influence of digital storytelling to improve students' skills in learning English. These findings will contribute new knowledge about the use of digital storytelling in learning, especially in developing students' critical reading competency.