CHAPTER I

1.1 Background of the Study

Students with disabilities require a unique approach to learning as they are not the same as mainstream students. Gkora and Karabatzaki (2023), indicated that students with disabilities have low levels of perseverance in classroom activities and show a lack of motivation. This situation can have an impact on their learning outcomes, as motivation plays an important role in the learning process and students' academic achievement. Stahoupolou and Siskou (2023) It is argued that students with disabilities strive to achieve good results in learning, but due to experiencing persistent failure during the process, they may lose enthusiasm, end up not completing their homework, and be unable to set goals and achievements in their learning.

VIS has challenges that lead to obstacles in adapting the curriculum (Fanshawe et al., 2023). To motivate and support VIS to continue learning, suitable learning materials must be used (Pratiwi et al., 2019). VIS, therefore, needs special aids and media for the learning process so that blind people can learn without seeing (Permatasari et al., 2022). VIS uses services with the help of technology to facilitate their daily activities and can carry them out independently, which helps to improve their quality of life, Khan and Khusro (2021). Technological support or applications that blind people can access using screen reader programmes, namely VoiceOver for iPhone users and TalkBack for Android users (Jain et al., 2021). Audiobooks are a very helpful medium for VIS (Guha, 2020). The challenge is the limited access to information available at school. VIS has difficulty reading text and accessing visual materials, so VIS has different learning media compared to other students with disabilities. Therefore, media that focuses on listening or hearing can be an alternative to support VIS in the learning process.

High quality learning media play an important role in delivering material effectively, increasing student interest, creating a conducive learning environment, and encouraging motivation to learn. Thus, teachers are required to design more interactive and enjoyable learning activities, one of which is by utilizing audio-based learning media as a means of supporting the learning process (Ratminingsih,

2016). The use of innovative learning media in the form of multimedia-based flipbooks that combine text, images, videos, and audio has the potential to increase student enthusiasm for learning. This media has advantages in terms of ease of access without time and place restrictions and practical presentation of material, thereby encouraging increased interest in learning and student activity in the learning process (Sujana and Susiliastini, 2022).

Despite these limitations, some learning media can be used to teach the material for VIS. The application of audiovisual media contributes to developing students' ability to utilize technology appropriately, responsibly, and efficiently in the learning process (Citra Wibawa et al., 2023). Learning media for VIS, such as audiobooks, aids, interactive games, and Braille. These can make learning easier for VIS. It is important to work with special education teachers when developing learning media for VIS because they know the situations and barriers that occur in the teaching and learning process. One of the learning media for VIS is audiobooks. Research by Fansury et al., (2019) revealed that the use of audiobooks as a learning tool for VIS in English learning provides significant support in their learning process. In addition, because the materials can be accessed more easily and learning becomes more practical, the use of audiobooks also increases students' motivation. VIS can also adjust to auditory learning styles, which makes learning easier for them (Guha, 2020).

Audiobooks are effective for VISs with visual-kinesthetic learning styles as they tend to utilize their smartphones and listening skills during the learning process. Virtual network learning also has a positive impact on VIS learning achievement, so this is an opportunity for teachers and students who want to utilize smartphone technology to support their learning (Allahi et al., 2020). In addition, the current generation of students is more accustomed to using technology in their daily lives, which makes it easier for them to get instruction through digital learning media. This is in line with the characteristics of Generation Z, who were born and grew up in the digital and internet era, including in education. To meet the needs of the current and future digital generation, the transformation from the conventional education system to digitalization is the right step (Kohnová & Papula, 2022).

As auditory and oral learning are essential for English language acquisition for people with special needs, students with visual impairment (VIS) tend to rely on these two methods. (Khadijah et al., 2020). Listening skills are essential for understanding English. Since students are more often taught speaking, reading, and writing, these skills are rarely the focus of the learning process in schools. Even in higher education, there are only specialized courses that discuss listening (Woottipong, 2014). In the early stages of the learning process, especially for young learners who are still at the beginner level in learning a foreign language, listening skills are an aspect that needs to be prioritized. This is due to the fundamental role of listening skills compared to other language skills in the early stages of language acquisition (Ratminingsih, 2017). However, listening is an important part of developing dual language skills. Listening activities allow students to interact with the culture and the middle language they are learning. (Yurko & Styfanyshyn, 2022). Students face many challenges when learning to listen, such as a lack of concentration during long practice sessions, difficulty understanding various accents, and difficulty learning a new foreign language (Buck, 2001).

The results show that the use of mobile learning apps offers an innovative way to learn. It offers flexible and accessible audio materials and interactive components that enhance learning enthusiasm, listening skills, and make learning more engaging. It also helps students become more independent and creates an inclusive learning environment. (Hamid & Chrysty, 2024). Woottipong (Woottipong, 2014) Technology, such as video in learning, can assist teachers in improving students' understanding of the material being taught. Therefore, technology should be used in education to build students who are language proficient and ready to face global competition.

Speaking skills are one of the important aspects in English language learning. This skill is crucial to the communication process as it reflects a person's ability to use the target language to communicate their feelings, ideas, and thoughts, and convey a variety of topics. The ability to communicate well is essential for success in various fields. There is no denying that speaking ability is essential for anyone who wants to communicate effectively in the modern era (Parupalli Srinivas Rao, 2019).

This theory is in line with the statement made by Akhter et al., (Akhter et al., 2020), which emphasizes how important speaking skills are to achieve success in the era of globalization. Good speaking skills are necessary to communicate well. Given that English is a widely spoken international language, learners must master speaking skills to help them succeed in various fields. The learning classroom is a great place to improve communication skills, especially speaking. (Malavika & Muthukrishnan, 2021). Through hands-on activities, students are encouraged to use the target language appropriately according to its purpose and context to improve their speaking skills (Ozverir & Herrington, 2018). Improving students' ability to speak in public can be aided by the use of materials derived from real situations in their environment. (Nariswari, 2020). Examples of hands-on activities include presentations, voiceovers in English, explanations of site plans, and explanations of daily activities (Elisathusilawani, 2023). In this era of developing technology, the process of learning and teaching English as a foreign language, especially speaking skills, has become more effective and easier for both teachers and students. This is due to the ease with which technology can provide and distribute learning materials, reduce student anxiety, and open up wider opportunities for students to practice continuously (Santosa and Utami, 2023).

Teachers have an important role in choosing and using the right media and learning design to increase students' learning motivation (Wanodya, 2023). There are not many learning media available for VIS. The results of pre-observation conducted by researchers at SLB 1 Tabanan showed that the only learning media used was the WhatsApp application with the Talkback feature. Teachers send learning materials such as YouTube videos and quizzes related to activities at school and students' daily lives through the WhatsApp group. This situation affects student learning outcomes, causing low motivation to learn and indicating that learning outcomes have not been maximized (Simamora and Oktaviani, 2020). The pre-observation results show that students have limited learning resources. Therefore, the development of specialized learning media that supports English learning is necessary. To make learning more interesting and effective, materials should be presented correctly and according to students' needs.

The purpose of this research is to create audiobooks as learning media for students at SLB 1 Tabanan who are visually impaired (VIS). Audiobooks were

chosen because they allow VIS to maximize the use of the senses of hearing and speech, which is very important for the learning process, as VIS can use other senses, such as hearing and touch, to get information. The use of interactive multimedia plays a role in increasing students' interest in the learning process (Jampel et al., 2018). (Lintangsari & Emaliana, 2020). Governments and educational institutions should ensure that high-quality, sound sources, such as audiobooks, are available to students. The method of learning through listening to and reading texts can not only improve students' understanding of the reading material but also improve their confidence, communication skills, and social interaction among VIS students (Abodunrin, 2024). Audiobooks also allow students to learn at various places and times, encouraging their passion for learning (Fansury et al., 2019). Therefore, audiobooks are an ideal learning tool to increase the motivation of VIS students in SLB 1 Tabanan to learn English.

1.2 Problem Identification

As previous research has shown (Sohaib et al., 2021; Tahiri, 2023; Zahra et al., 2022), There are several challenges faced by VISs and their teachers in implementing English for VISs. This research shows that inadequate teaching materials, inexperienced teachers, and inadequate facilities are some of the many challenges that VISs and their teachers face in learning English. The use of teaching materials in Braille and access to assistive technology are two examples of different learning approaches for VIS.

The results of the Initial study show that VISs require specialized teaching materials that are not only relevant to their needs but also focus on the English language. Developing appropriate audio materials would be a fundamental step in improving their language skills. The audio approach is crucial in inclusive education as it helps the accessibility of learning resources for children with special needs. Therefore, audiobooks are the most effective alternative to improve the VIS learning process in SLB 1 Tabanan. First, audiobooks provide greater convenience in acquiring teaching materials for learners who prefer learning through listening. They can listen to the text content using listening devices or electronic gadgets that suit their preferences. In addition, audiobooks help students to acquire information with correct pronunciation and emphasis, which supports them in understanding the

nuances of language and context that can be difficult to understand when reading. This increases learning independence and time management flexibility. As a result, audiobooks have become a highly inclusive VIS teaching tool at SLB N 1 Tabanan.

Initial observations showed that students and teachers faced several difficulties when talking about the problems faced by VISs and students at SLB N 1 Tabanan. However, these issues require further research to gain information about similar or bigger problems. There are various challenges faced when teaching students with special needs, especially in supporting VISs during their learning process. To meet their demands, selecting and identifying appropriate teaching materials is crucial. Based on their circumstances, audio-based teaching materials are the most suitable. Some research has found ways to address this issue, such as the development of audiobooks that have been shown to increase comprehension and motivation to learn for VIS (Amalia Utomo and Istiqomah, 2020; Assiddiqhi and Rosa, 2021; Guha, 2020) The advantage of audio-based teaching materials is that the explanation depends only on hearing, so it is easier for the VIS to understand.

Previous research that has focused on creating audiobooks using the ADDIE approach, for example, in the development of audio-based learning media for people with intellectual disabilities, indicates that this can improve students' comprehension and recall of content, and confirms that well-planned learning methods can strengthen comprehension and accessibility for students (Saputra et al., 2022; Sholeha et al., 2024); however, the evaluation was only conducted at a later stage.

While studies indicate that audiobooks can help VIS, the ADDIE model is not as effective as expected in the context of inclusive education, as it requires iterative development, involving modifications and suggestions during the development phase (Dewi et al., 2024). Due to its iterative and rapid instructional development, the Evaluate-Design-Develop cycle in this model supports iterative revisions based on feedback. This study will use the Two-Phase SAM instead of ADDIE (Allen & Cites, 2012). However, the lack of application of SAM in creating learning media for VIS provides a new aspect to this study. Expert judgment is also needed to ensure the suitability of the content (Buitrago et al., 2023; Tomlinson, 2011).

Therefore, the issue found is the lack of organized and verified development of English audio materials and media specifically for VIS in Indonesia.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What challenges do English teachers and Visual Impairment Students at SLB N 1 Tabanan perceive regarding the potential use of audiobooks for learning English before they are introduced?
2. How are the audiobooks that meet the needs of Visual Impairment Students in English language education developed?
3. How is the quality of the audiobooks for Visual Impairment Students?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the challenges perceived by English teachers and VIS at SLB N 1 Tabanan regarding the potential use of audiobooks for learning English before their introduction.
2. To design and develop audiobooks that suit the needs of visually impaired students (VIS) in learning English.
3. To evaluate the quality of audiobooks for VIS to facilitate their learning of English.

1.5 Limitations of The Research

This study focuses on the development of audiobook media for teaching English to VIS students, especially for VIS students in eleventh grade in the second semester of SLB 1 Tabanan. Located at Jl. Pulau Batam No. 40 Tabanan, Dauh Peken, Kecamatan Tabanan, Kabupaten Tabanan.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study has significance as it offers valuable insights for academics and audiences. There are two key elements in this context, namely:

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This study reinforces the concept that audiobooks are one of the tools that VISs can utilize to learn English through listening and improve their enthusiasm for learning.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

This research is essential because it provides valuable insights for researchers and readers. There are two important aspects to this, including:

1.6.2.1 For Students

Audiobooks help visually impaired students learn English because they allow them to listen to the material according to their abilities and needs. With an attractive design and effective delivery, audiobooks can make the material more interesting and easier to understand, which can increase enthusiasm for learning and reduce boredom. Audiobooks allow students to learn English more flexibly outside the classroom and have a lot of variety and interactivity, all of which help students become more active in the learning process.

1.6.2.2 For Teacher

The development of audiobooks gives educators a cutting-edge teaching resource specially designed to meet the needs of blind students. These audiobooks make it simple for students to acquire and comprehend the instructional materials by providing the subject matter in an understandable audio format.

Additionally, audiobooks improve instructional efficiency by saving teachers time and effort by eliminating the need for repeated explanations of the same content. Students can access these resources whenever they want, freeing up teachers to concentrate on deeper, more involved connections.

Additionally, adopting audiobooks enhances the learning experience for students by giving teachers a chance to hone and polish their abilities in utilizing audio technology in the classroom.

1.6.2.3 For Other Researchers

This study offers models and techniques that can be modified or expanded upon in future research of a similar nature, making it an invaluable resource for scholars interested in creating audio-based instructional resources for kids with special needs. Examining the use of audio technology in English language instruction adds to the body of knowledge in the specialized educational literature and opens the door for more research on the usefulness and integration of technology in inclusive education. The results can also help researchers improve current teaching strategies and assess and create educational tools specifically designed for kids with disabilities.