

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In learning a language, it is already known that there are four component skills that the student should master: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. From the four skills mentioned before, reading is the essential skill of learning a foreign language that the student should master (Aka, 2020). The students are expected to collect new information to increase their knowledge by reading (Chen & Abdullah, 2024). Reading also affects students' ability to think critically; as previously mentioned, students can increase their knowledge by reading, and the ability to think critically is owned only by people who read diligently (Din, 2020). That means critical thinking can be done by reading.

Therefore, students are encouraged to organize the information they have gathered, because, as time goes by, media for reading has been influenced by technology, which is characterized by media for reading that can be found on the internet. However, with the rapid development of time, it can also backfire on information that can be manipulated for personal gain. Engaging in reading is expected to help students improve their critical thinking skills to sort out reliable information so that they do not easily fall for hoaxes. Students interested in reading usually have more problem-solving skills than others (Goodrich & Namkung, 2019).

Besides all of the aspects in the previous explanation, including the importance of reading skills, reading has other benefits, especially in mastering English (Habók et al., 2024). If students can read the text in English, they can quickly increase their vocabulary knowledge, which can be used in daily conversations. Then, one of the benefits of reading is learning grammatical features during reading. This can happen because the students who are used to reading, they are indirectly learn and know about grammar; indirectly, they also use reasonable and correct grammar (Zhong & Wakat, 2023). The last benefit is that reading habits can also improve students' focus and concentration during learning; it can happen because students who are taught to read from an early age are able to devote full attention to the book they read so that students can manage focus and concentration during learning (Grøver et al., 2023).

Although skills in reading are the one of basic skills of learning a language, they are essential for students to master, and reading remains the most significant problem Indonesian students face, especially for special needs students. Students who are with special needs frequently faced problem with reading, and there are many different causes of these challenges, such as neurological diseases, motor difficulties, problems with visual perception, and language and communication issues. Teaching and learning challenges for special needs students such as deaf and mute in Indonesian education are a significant problem. Students with deaf and mute may struggle with visual discrimination and form recognition, among other aspects of visual perception (Adnyani et al., 2024). Several strategies are used to help students with special needs overcome their learning challenges. These include

making the classroom safe and comfortable, treating students to help them overcome obstacles and learning challenges, using online learning models, encouraging self-development through writing, storytelling, and discussion, and creating learning programs tailored to provide students' needs and abilities (Depani Putri et al., 2023).

In Indonesia, the use of technology in education, particularly digital reading materials such as e-books, has only recently gained attention, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic (Ratminingsih et al., 2022). Since then, both online and offline reading activities have been supported through the use of electronic and printed books (Anggia & Habók, 2023). Despite these developments, the availability and variety of such materials remain relatively limited, and most of them are still designed to meet the needs of mainstream learners. Access to reading resources tailored for students with special needs, whether in digital or printed form, is still lacking. At the same time, learning foreign languages, particularly English, has become increasingly important due to its role as a global means of communication (Tauchid et al., 2022). Students who are deaf and mute face difficulties while learning a foreign language because of the limited reading media that they have (Wisudariani et al., 2022). Finding the teaching and learning processes by teachers and students themselves simpler with new developments in media production to promote student learning, such as hybrid books with story-based learning for increasing students' ability in reading comprehension (Ratminingsih et al., 2025). The demands and preferences of students for learning

media can also be supported by media, such as hybrid modules that are available online or can be printed.

Mentioned by several studies, which interesting learning media could increase the reading interest of students and improve their reading skills. Blaabæk (2020) explains a study of the importance of reading, which affects students' academic performance at school. Then, in the Muh. Yusuf (2023), there is a study of using engaging media effectiveness to increase the students' reading skills and interest. The last in Fatich (2020) also studied engaging learning media using electronic books that can help increase students' skills in reading. From these three studies, it can be concluded that interesting learning media can increase students' interest in reading and also their skills in reading. These journals also explained the limitations of their research, which were limited to regular classes without students with special needs who required different treatment or inclusive classes.

This study was carried out at SD N 2 Bengkala, recognized as the first inclusive school in Buleleng. The implementation of inclusive education at this school began on July 19, 2007. Although special schools (SLB) for children with special needs are available in the Buleleng area, many deaf and mute students still face difficulties in accessing formal education, mainly due to financial limitations. In response to this situation, the principal of SD N 2 Bengkala initiated an inclusive education program to ensure that all children in Bengkala Village have equal opportunities to receive education (Sariani, 2015).

This study developed a reading media that can be used for sixth-grade students. This reading media is designed as a hybrid module, meaning the module is

available in both digital and printed formats, and allows access to interactive content provided. The selection of a module with a hybrid type as reading media in inclusive class because, in the class, students are mixed, not only regular but also special needs students, including deaf and mute. Therefore, the availability of a hybrid English module is important to meeting every student's needs. As an example, this hybrid module provides various types of content, such as audio, visual, Indonesian translation, and International Sign Language. Students can access these features based on their individual needs, both for regular and deaf-mute students. Then, the hybrid module is available in two formats, digital and printed, so students can choose the type of media they want to be use. In other words, the hybrid module was developed to be able to accommodate students' interests and help facilitate students' reading skills in English lessons. Because in the SD N 2 Bengkala, especially in sixth grade, which has an inclusive class still have limited sources for reading lessons.

Based on the interview with the School Principal, Mr. I Ketut Sulatra, it was revealed that Grade 6 consists of eight students, two of whom are students with special needs (deaf and mute), and six regular students. The inclusive learning process is conducted in one classroom shared by all students, with differentiation occurring primarily in assessment. The school implements the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Freedom Curriculum), although the English reading media is still based from textbooks based on the 2013 Curriculum (K13). At the time of the interview, lesson plans (RPP) and syllabi for English were not yet available, as the district team had not provided the required modules. In terms of media, the learning process relies on

textbook content, which is visualized through a projector. There are no specialized teaching materials or media specifically designed for inclusive students.

The Grade 6 Homeroom Teacher, Ms. Ni Luh Ratniasih, explained that classroom instruction is conducted with two teachers: one class teacher and one inclusion support teacher, who acts as a translator or interpreter during lessons. However, in most cases, students with special needs are taught separately in the inclusion room, as they find it challenging to keep up with the general classroom instruction. Curriculum completion is not the primary goal of teaching students with special needs, but the basic development of literacy and numeracy skills—reading, writing, and arithmetic. The school is well-equipped with digital facilities, including internet access, LCD projectors, speakers, and laptops, all of which are currently functional. The primary teaching media used in class are YouTube videos and textbooks. There are no major technical issues, though the use of diverse media remains limited. Teachers strive to involve students in media selection based on their preferences and learning styles.

The interview with Mr. I Made Wisnugiri, the Sign Language Support Teacher, provided detailed insights into media usage in English instruction for inclusive learners. He emphasized that instructional media should be visual or concrete in form to support comprehension. While the school does possess some visual and tangible teaching aids, the collection is not yet complete. Students are more attracted to media with strong visual elements, and common resources include YouTube videos and audio as learning media. The special needs students' assessment is carried out by the homeroom teacher and follows the same structure

as for other students. However, these students have a shorter attention span, usually only 10–15 minutes. When they lose interest, teachers must improvise—such as moving the learning process outside and using real-life objects like flowers, fruits, or stones as part of the lesson.

Regarding sign language use, Mr. Wisnugiri explained that students in lower grades (1–3) use *kata kolok* (a local sign language), while those in upper grades (4–6) use a combination of *kata kolok*, *SIBI* (Indonesian Sign System), *BISINDO* (Indonesian Sign Language), and international sign language. In English instruction, the same combination of sign languages is used to interpret written texts. Ideally, teaching media for English should include images, English vocabulary, Indonesian translations, and sign language spelling—preferably covering all four sign systems if possible.

These interviews collectively demonstrate that the inclusive learning system at SD N 2 Bengkala still faces limitations, particularly in the availability of inclusive-friendly teaching media and adaptive lesson planning. However, the dedication of the teaching staff to continuously adapt and respond to students' needs reflects a strong commitment to providing equitable and effective inclusive education. Then in this school, the students with special needs in the lower classes (first to third class) are taught separately and in another classroom, and the higher classes (fourth to sixth class) are taught in their class (mixed). They are taught by two teachers, one for regular students and the other for deaf and mute students (Detik.com, 2023). The issue is the school only has one teacher who can teach special needs students, so students with special needs cannot study every day. This

research expected that the media-developed approach could help students with deaf and mute to learn together in class with regular students without hesitation.

## 1.2 Problem Identification

Identifying the challenges related to the learning activities conducted in inclusive classrooms, particularly the reading activities that are difficult to implement for a variety of reasons. First, low reading levels are made worse by the dearth of resources in many inclusion schools, particularly those in rural regions. Adequate books, libraries, and educational resources are required for students. The fact that some schools still implement antiquated teaching strategies and need trained instructors, yet are unable to accommodate the diversity of learning requirements of their students, particularly the need for specialists to support teaching and learning activities in inclusive classrooms, raises concerns about the quality of education as well. Then schools are unable to deliver the best and most sufficient education since they are unable to determine the needs of every student with deaf and mute.

Second, students' diminished motivation is influenced by numerous factors, including the relevance of the content, examination pressure, and limited extracurricular activities (Alani & Hawas, 2021). The current curriculum might need to be more engaging and relevant to student's lives, leading to disinterest and reduced learning motivation. The emphasis on standardized testing creates a stressful learning environment, where students focus more on passing exams than understanding and enjoying the subjects. Additionally, the lack of diverse

extracurricular activities deprives students of opportunities to explore their interests and passions outside of academics.

Adding to these challenges is a specific issue of students with special needs especially with deaf and mute face. They require tailored approaches and resources to improve their reading interest and literacy levels. The mainstream educational media and methods often do not cater to their unique learning requirements, making it essential to develop appropriate media and tools to support their learning. Special needs students who are deaf and mute might benefit from multimedia resources, interactive learning platforms, and assistive technologies that can make reading and literacy more accessible and engaging for them.

Addressing these interconnected challenges requires a collaborative effort involving educators, policymakers, parents, and communities. It is crucial to invest in improving educational resources, updating teaching methods, and revising the curriculum to make it more inclusive and engaging for all students, including special needs especially deaf and mute students in SD N 2 Bengkala. Developing appropriate media and tools such as hybrid English module tailored to the needs of special needs students with deaf and mute can facilitate students' reading skills and hopefully can significantly enhance their reading interests and literacy levels, also ensuring that they receive the support and opportunities they need to succeed academically and personally.

### 1.3 Limitations of the Study

This research is focused on developing a hybrid English module for deaf and mute also regular students in inclusive classes at SD N 2 Bengkulu, specifically targeting 6th-grade students. This study is development research conducted using the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) approach to reach the practical evaluation stage.

The ADDIE approach provides a systematic framework for instructional design, starting with the Analysis phase to identify the needs and characteristics of the target learners, followed by the Design phase, where the media is conceptualized. The media is created and produced in the Development phase according to specification designs. The Implementation phase involves the deployment of the media in the inclusive class at SD N 2 Bengkulu, where it is used to support and enhance the learning experiences, especially in reading activity of the 6th-grade students. Finally, the Evaluation phase assesses the effectiveness of the media in achieving its intended learning outcomes, gathering feedback from both teachers and students to make necessary improvements.

This development research aims to address the specific learning needs of students in inclusive classrooms by creating media that can cater to diverse learning styles and abilities. By employing the ADDIE approach, the study ensures a structured and iterative process that allows for continuous refinement and improvement of the media, ultimately enhancing its relevance and effectiveness in supporting literacy development and increasing reading skills among 6th-grade students at SD N 2 Bengkulu.

#### **1.4 Research Problems**

For research focusing on the development of reading media for inclusive classes, here are some research questions tailored to this topic:

1. What kind of English-ready media are needed by inclusive students to facilitate their reading skills?
2. How is the design of the Hybrid English Module to facilitate the reading skills of inclusive class students?
3. How is the content validity of the Hybrid English Module to facilitate the reading skills of sixth-grade students in an inclusive class?
4. How is the practicality of the Hybrid English Module to facilitate the reading skills of inclusive class sixth-grade students?

#### **1.5 Purpose of the Study**

The purposes of this research on the development of reading media for inclusive classes at SD N 2 Bengkala are:

1. To identify the kinds of English-ready media that are needed by inclusive students to facilitate their reading skills.
2. To identify the design of the Hybrid English Module to facilitate the reading skills of sixth-grade students in an inclusive class.
3. To identify the content validity of the Hybrid English Module to facilitate the reading skills of sixth-grade students in an inclusive class.

4. To identify the practicality of the Hybrid English Module to facilitate the reading skills of inclusive class sixth-grade students.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Based on the study's findings, the researcher anticipates the following theoretical and practical benefits:

### **1. Theoretical Significance**

This study's findings are expected to inform the development of reading media that promote inclusive reading. As a result, the teaching and learning techniques must be adjusted and personalized. It is challenging to educate students with special needs in regular courses; they must have adequate pedagogical skills, an understanding of these students, and the capacity to create specialized reading media.

### **2. Practical Significance**

#### **1. For the Institution**

This research can benefit educational institutions by ensuring that instructional resources are accessible and attractive to everyone, providing a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. Furthermore, developing a hybrid English module aligns with the institution's aim to employ technology to improve

education and foster technical literacy, which is increasingly important today. Developing a hybrid English module helps the school's objective of producing well-rounded individuals. This media increases children's excitement for reading and promotes cooperation, critical thinking, and creativity.

## 2. For the Teachers

Developing a hybrid module as a reading facility for English learning in inclusive classrooms offers important practical benefits for educators. This resource can support the availability of accessible and engaging reading materials, helping to create a more effective learning experience. Providing such a medium also reflects the teacher's role in facilitating inclusive education by ensuring that learning resources can be accessed by students with different needs. Through the use of a hybrid module, teachers can offer a reading environment where students feel supported and are able to engage with the material in ways that suit their abilities.

## 3. For the Students

Students benefit significantly from creating a hybrid module for English lessons to boost their skills in reading in inclusive classes. This program is meant to make the English learning experience more pleasurable, accessible, and adapted to individual requirements by offering students numerous valuable activities. Able to access some content provided to meet every student's needs during reading the hybrid English module, it also provides interactive quizzes to checking students' understanding after reading the module.

#### 4. For the Researcher

Researchers found significant practical benefits in studying and developing hybrid module for English lessons to facilitate students' skills in reading in inclusive classes. This investigation has numerous essential implications for future academic research while enhancing instructional methods and our understanding of effective pedagogical techniques. The practical ramifications of this research include the development of an evidence-based teaching technique. Researchers can offer insight into the ideal modalities and techniques by investigating how multimodal reading media influence students. Educators may use this knowledge when motivating students to read in an inclusive curriculum, and educators can utilize this knowledge to guide their decisions.

