

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the study by explaining the research background and the main issues related to the reading comprehension in English learning. It also presents the research limitations, research questions, research objectives, and research significance.

1.1 Research Background

Reading comprehension is one of the important skills that students must have and develop for their success in an academic context. Reading comprehension allows students to understand, process, analyze and apply written information which is beneficial not only in language learning, but also useful in understanding other learning such as science, mathematics and social sciences (Sahibzada et al., 2020). This allows them not to experience difficulties in accessing knowledge other than language, does not cause low or declining academic achievement and not limit their opportunities in the future. In the current global context, reading comprehension is a measure of the quality of education and students' readiness to face future challenges. A country with high literacy quality will reflect the quality of its human resources and will show the country's significant progress in various fields (Bakar, 2019).

Currently in Indonesia, reading comprehension is still an urgent problem that needs to be addressed. The quality of Indonesian reading comprehension reflects a quality that is below the world average standard literacy quality as stated

in the latest results quality as from the program for international students' assessment (PISA). According to the result of the program for international students' assessment (PISA) 2022, Indonesian students have reading literacy skills below the global average with problems identifying main ideas, making conclusions and critically evaluating written information (Mustafa, 2023; Wiranatha & Santosa, 2024).

Moreover, it is also supported by the result from the Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM) in 2022 that show there is still a need to be improve literacy skills for most of young learners in Bali. It can be seen from the data of the literacy competency average of elementary school students in most of the school in Bali that was around 56.3%. In addition, the data also showed that Buleleng Regency elementary schools has an average AKM score that is still below the provincial average with a score of 52.93% (Pemerintah Provinsi Bali, 2022). It is indicating that there are still many elementary school students in Buleleng whose literacy skills are not optimal enough and still struggling to reach the set standards. These findings are similar with research carried out by Radaideh et al. (2020) which highlights the memorization method in traditional teaching which often fails to engage students effectively, resulting in low students' comprehension skills. The same thing was also conveyed in research conducted by Hamdy (2017) which emphasized the need for interactive teaching in order to overcome problems with reading comprehension in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Additionally, research conducted by Santoso et al. (2023) emphasizes the importance of innovative approaches such as storytelling to increase student involvement and understanding in reading in class.

Empirical evidence from several studies discusses the essence of students' comprehension skills. Storytelling is a teaching strategy that has long been used to communicate ideas, share values and build connections with students when teaching in the classroom (Elkhimry, 2022). The use of storytelling in the classroom can simplify abstract or complex story ideas into a simple narrative, that make students easier to remember and understand. This process also supported by the Schema Theory (Anderson et al., 1977), which explains that the better story understanding of the students happened when they can relate with a new information from the story to their previous knowledge and experiences, so their comprehension and memory become stronger. Unlike traditional learning, learning using storytelling involves two important aspects of learning, namely cognitive and emotional (Hussein & Barzani, 2020). Research conducted by Yulianawati et al. (2022) show the effectiveness of storytelling in fostering students' motivation and active involvement in reading activities. Same with research that conducted by Santoso et al. (2023) shows that the use of storytelling very significantly increases students' understanding at elementary school level of reading material presented in interesting and relevant content and ways. A flexible storytelling can also give teachers the possibility to adapt students' different learning styles and abilities so that they can ensure that the class has implemented an inclusive approach for its diverse students (Lap et al., 2022).

However, along with the advancement of technology and media, storytelling has also developed into digital storytelling, a method that combines narrative content with digital tools such as images, audio, video music and animation (Hamdy, 2017). The digital storytelling goes beyond the oral narrative by offering

multimedia learning experiences that can stimulate multiple senses and foster creativity of the student (Moradi & Chen, 2019). By using stories that include contexts that are familiar to students, it can help to improve students understanding of the material and build students' confidence in reading. Ratminingsih et al. (2020) confirmed that inserting or incorporating local cultural context into storytelling can increase student involvement and understanding of the story being taught. Research by Nassim (2018) found that digital storytelling significantly improves students' reading and creative skills. The combination between technology and narrative story can enhance the motivation and comprehension of the students (Wu & Chen, 2020). It can also fit with the learning styles of today's students, who are more familiar with digital multimedia content and interactive platforms.

In addition, digital storytelling is also related to reading comprehension because does not only involve listening to the stories, but also engages students in reading activities through multimodal texts. In many digital storytelling activities, students often see written text such as subtitles, short sentences or story scripts on the screen which help them practice to read and understand the text while following the story (Hamdy, 2017). The combination of pictures, audio and video can also support students to understand the meaning of a text that they read, making them easier to identify main ideas, understand vocabulary and follow the sequence of the story. Through this process, students can connect what they see, hear and read to comprehend their reading skills (Bakar, 2019; Radaideh et al., 2020). So, even though it is a digital storytelling, but the activities still involve reading in meaningful context that can helps students to improve their reading comprehension in engaging and interesting way.

Furthermore, the research conducted by Hamdy (2017) showed that using digital storytelling can improve both reading and listening comprehension, making it a strong alternative to conventional instruction in the EFL classroom. In addition, Anggeraini and Afifah (2017) also emphasized that digital storytelling not only enhances reading comprehension skills but also supports students in developing technological literacy and becoming more enthusiastic students, especially in reading lessons. Even though digital storytelling uses technology, it still keeps the true meaning of storytelling. It means that the student can still enjoy the story, feel the emotions and understand the moral value of the story just like listening to a regular story (Choo et al., 2020). Moreover, research conducted by Santoso et al. (2023) found that the lesson with digital storytelling can make students feel more encouraged to participate actively and were able to express their ideas to creating a positive classroom environment. In addition, Jager et al. (2017) stated that digital storytelling also supports the essential of 21st century learning skills such as collaboration, critical thinking and digital literacy. It because digital storytelling can combine the different learning styles, so it can provide students with multiple learning styles and intelligences.

Apart from several benefits that have been stated by previous research, there is still a gap in some of the previous literature. Most previous research discussions only focused on using digital storytelling to improve reading comprehension in general without exploring students' perceptions of storytelling as a teaching strategy to improve reading comprehension. By understanding students' perceptions of this approach, it is possible to provide a valuable insight into its effectiveness and potential wider application. Research conducted by Vu et al. (2021) found that

students active participation and enjoyment in the storytelling activities was a key factor for success in improving students' reading comprehension, but it would also be better to deepen students' perspectives on this.

This research aims to fill the gap in previous research by investigating the effectiveness of storytelling in improving fifth-grade student' reading comprehension and also exploring their perception of this teaching strategy. By focusing on specific age groups and grades, it is hoped that this research can target important stages in student development where basic literacy skills must be strengthened. Understanding how digital storytelling impacts students' ability to process and analyze a story can provide deeper insight into its role in education. It is hoped that the findings in this research will provide practical strategies for educators to integrate digital storytelling into learning so that they can improve students' reading comprehension for the better.

1.2 Problem Identification

Reading Comprehension is an essential skill that must be mastered to achieve student academic success. However, currently Indonesia is experiencing big challenges in improving reading comprehension. The latest PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) results in 2022 show that students in Indonesia have literacy achievements that are still far below the global average with the main problem is that many students have difficulty identifying main ideas and making conclusions. Traditional teaching strategies fail to actively engage students, leaving them unmotivated and unable to improve their understanding because traditional teaching strategies only emphasize memorization. Several previous studies have shown that the digital storytelling strategy can increase active student participation

and student understanding by providing them with interesting and meaningful learning experiences. However, there is still limited research that discusses the effectiveness of digital storytelling on reading comprehension and how students perceive this teaching strategy. Based on this gap, further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of using digital storytelling and students' perceptions of it as a teaching strategy.

1.3 Research Limitation

This research focuses on determining the impact of using digital storytelling on fifth-grade students' reading comprehension and their perceptions of digital storytelling as a teaching strategy at SD Negeri 3 Banjar Jawa. This study covers a lot of digital storytelling because it will focus a lot on the use of digital storytelling in the classroom. Apart from that, this research is also limited to certain class groups to be able to focus the analysis on their developmental stages and learning needs.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the research background and problem identification, the following research question are proposed :

1. Does the use of digital storytelling significantly affect fifth-grade students' reading comprehension skills at SD Negeri 3 Banjar Jawa?
2. How do fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 3 Banjar Jawa perceive digital storytelling as a teaching strategy in affecting their reading comprehension?

1.5 Research Objective

Based on the research questions above, the research objectives are formulated as follows :

1. To determine whether digital storytelling has a significant impact on the reading comprehension skills of fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 3 Banjar Jawa.
2. To explore fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 3 Banjar Jawa perceptions of digital storytelling as a teaching strategy.

1.6 Research Significance

The research significance can be viewed from both theoretical and practical perspective as follows :

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This research contributes theoretically to the field of English language teaching by giving a clearer understanding of how digital storytelling as an innovative teaching strategy can affect students reading comprehension and shape their learning experiences. The research is based on the understanding that digital storytelling integrates with technology, story and visual to support comprehension in a more engaging and meaningful way (Hamdy, 2017; Sahibzada et al., 2020; Santoso et al., 2023). It also helps to connect language with real-life situations, so students can understand better (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Yulianawati et al., 2022). Furthermore, this research considers the importance of students perceptions, as these influence their motivation, classroom engagement and overall response to learning strategies (Dharmayanti et al., 2024; Rahmania & Mandasari, 2021). By combining this theoretical perspective, this research offers valuable contributions to the application of digital storytelling in reading lesson and how students perceive this new teaching strategy.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

In the practical terms, this study is expected to be beneficial for teachers, students and future researchers.

1.6.2.1 For Teachers

The findings from this research will be able to provide teachers with a strategy for teaching and improving students' reading comprehension that is packaged in a practical and interesting way, making the learning activities more interactive and enjoyable for students.

1.6.2.2 For Students

Teaching strategy using digital storytelling can help to develop and improve their reading comprehension to a deeper level and foster a positive and motivated attitude in learning.

1.6.2.3 For Future Researchers

This research offers a basis for exploring further the benefits of digital storytelling to improve students' reading comprehension and their perceptions in different educational contexts.