

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

The mastery of English has become one of the main skills that must be possessed in the 21st century, especially in facing the rapid development of technology and globalization. Good English language skills enable individuals to access global information, participate in international discussions, and compete in the global job market. At the elementary school level in Indonesia, English language learning aims to introduce and develop language skills from an early age. The main goal is to build basic skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, by adjusting vocabulary and learning contexts to the developmental stage of the students (Sumardi et al., 2020). However, English education in the 21st century is not limited to language proficiency but must also be integrated with the development of 21st-century competencies known as the 4Cs (Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, and Collaboration). These competencies equip students not only to use the language effectively but also to apply it meaningfully in problem-solving, innovation, and collaboration (Stanikzai, 2023).

In the context of elementary school students, 21st-century learning demands more active, enjoyable, and everyday life-relevant learning methods where the integration of technology becomes an important aspect in supporting and achieving high-quality and engaging learning. According to Haleem et al., (2022) technology is capable of opening broader learning access, especially for students with low academic backgrounds. The use of digital tools such as smartphones, tablets, and

computers not only increases students' interest but also supports their critical thinking skills and emotional engagement in the learning process (Jannah et al., 2020; Zarifsanaiey et al., 2022).

To address the demands of 21st-century learning, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbudristek) launched the Merdeka Curriculum in 2019, which emphasizes the importance of freedom in learning and encourages a more contextual, and student-centered approach (Rahmadayani, 2022). The main features of the Merdeka Curriculum include the simplification of materials and curriculum flexibility, which allows schools to tailor learning to the needs of students and the specific conditions of their school environment. Through a more streamlined, it allows teachers the freedom to focus on developing students' competencies and character without being burdened by administrative matters.

The Merdeka Curriculum also emphasizes character education through the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile, namely: being devout and pious to God Almighty and having noble character, being independent, collaboration, embracing global diversity, critical thinking, and being creative (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

As a step toward fostering active learners, teachers also need to become active facilitators of learning. According to Kemendikdasmen, (2025) Pancasila Student Profile is developed as a graduate profile that consists of eight dimensions (faith and devotion to God Almighty, citizenship, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, independence, health, and communication). One dimension that is important to note due to its relevance to 21st-century skills is collaboration. The dimension of collaboration is crucial in facing the challenges of the 21st century because it can foster positive social attitudes, cultivate empathy, build harmonious

relationships, and train responsibility in joint decision-making (Sulistiyowati et al., 2023). Therefore, the insertion of collaboration value into learning media becomes essential to create learning experiences that not only focus on academic achievement, but also emphasize the development of character with the ability to collaborate and contribute actively, using collaborative problem solving and creating a harmonious atmosphere to achieve common goals.

The graduate profile dimensions are the comprehensive competencies that every student must possess after completing the learning and education process. This is to fulfill the objectives of national education and the demands of 21st-century skills. The graduate profile is the result of Deep Learning framework adopted by the Merdeka curriculum. Deep learning is applied to realize a graduate profile that is faithful and devoted to God Almighty, has noble character, and possesses social and learning skills as a citizen (Kemendikdasmen, 2025). Quoted from Kemendikdasmen (2025) Deep learning is an approach that emphasizes the creation of a learning environment and a learning process that is conscious, meaningful, and enjoyable through holistic and integrated thinking, heart, feeling, and physical exercise. According to Cholifatunisa et al. (2025), the Merdeka Curriculum aligns with the concept of Deep Learning which consists of three principles namely; mindful learning, joyful learning, and meaningful learning. These three elements emphasize an inclusive approach that can improve the quality of education in Indonesia (Putri et al., 2024).

Through deep learning, students are not only encouraged to memorize, but also to analyze, evaluate, and create new ideas or solutions. Activities such as group discussions, collaborative projects, contextual problem solving, and open idea

presentations are concrete examples of deep learning in developing students' critical thinking, effective communication, collaboration, and creativity skills. Deep learning in Indonesia emerges as an enhancement of previous approaches such as Active Student Learning (CBSA), Active Innovative Creative Effective and Enjoyable Learning (PAIKEM), Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), but more systematically addressing the challenges of modern education (Kemendikdasmen, 2025).

The Merdeka Curriculum requires teachers to adapt to new policies that emphasize flexible learning processes and creativity in selecting appropriate and contextual teaching materials. This is intended to ensure that learning aligns with 21st-century demands, including the implementation of graduate profiles and deep learning principles. In this context, teaching materials are expected not only to meet curriculum requirements but also to integrate 21st-century skills (4Cs), incorporate graduate profile values, and reflect the principles of deep learning. At the same time, these materials need to consider the characteristics of young learners, who have different needs and learning styles compared to other age groups. Therefore, understanding learners' characteristics becomes essential to ensure that the learning process is meaningful, relevant, and aligned with their developmental needs.

However, teaching English to children still presents its challenges. Because young learners have characteristics that need to be considered. According to Suyanto (2014) young learners are very imaginative, young learners love to learn through games, stories, and songs. However, children also have short-term spans, they need learning media that is interesting and able to engage them to learn. Children also love stories as much as they love games, because through stories they

can use their imagination while developing their language skills (Ratminingsih et al., (2022). In this era, children as digital natives are very familiar with the use of electronic devices, meaning they grow up in an environment deeply integrated with technology. They can more easily understand the material, improve their memory, and develop critical thinking skills with the help of technology in this digital era (Granito & Chernobilsky, 2012; Kamaridinovna, 2024).

Therefore, to address the needs of young learners, who are characterized by their preference for narrative elements integrated with digital technology, digital storytelling represents one of the most appropriate instructional media. Integrating storytelling with digital technology, such as animated videos, can make them more engaging and create more vibrant, engaging, and learning experiences. According to Harjono and Wiryotinoyo, (2021) Digital Storytelling (DST) is a combination of narrative, visuals, audio, and other digital elements in an engaging and interactive form. This method allows children to learn through engaging and imaginative stories, while simultaneously developing integrated listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Huda et al., 2022; Nair & Yunus, 2021). The use of technology in English language learning not only increases student motivation but also provides access to a variety of rich and diverse learning resources. This is in line with the perspective of Bumela (2020), who states that 21st-century learning demands multisensory engagement, whether through visual, audio, or direct interaction, both inside and outside the classroom.

In addition, the children in the classroom have different characters. The most prominent thing that can be seen is that there are two types of learners in the classroom, namely slow and fast achievers. According to Singh (2024) in every

classroom, students are different. Some learn quickly (fast achievers), while others need more time and help (slow achievers). Teachers must understand these differences and create a learning environment that supports all students, without separating them. According to Pellicer and Ana (2023) the implementation of two languages or bilingual in learning media has proven to be effective in helping students who are classified as slow learners to understand the material more easily.

Although English-only or monolingual instruction is often recommended to increase language exposure, it may not always be effective for young learners who are still developing their English proficiency. In classrooms where students have diverse learning abilities, including fast and slow achievers, English-only materials may create comprehension difficulties that hinder meaningful learning (Suyanto, 2014; Singh, 2024). Cummins (2007) argues that learners' first language can serve as a cognitive resource that supports second language learning. Therefore, bilingual support can function as a scaffold that helps students understand content, connect prior knowledge with new vocabulary, and participate more actively in learning activities. Rather than reducing English exposure, bilingual media facilitates more accessible and meaningful learning for all students (Pellicer & Ana, 2023; Umar et al., 2023).

One common form of bilingual implementation is the use of subtitles or translated text in videos or reading materials. The presence of subtitles in two languages, for example English and students' mother tongue, allows learners to grasp the meaning and structure of sentences more clearly, as they can see the direct connection between the two languages. This is particularly beneficial for students who struggle to understand material presented in a single language, as the subtitles

provide both visual and contextual support simultaneously.

This finding is supported by Umar et al. (2023), who stated that simultaneously presented bilingual storytelling can enhance students' comprehension and help them recognize the connection between the two languages more effectively. Therefore, the use of bilingual learning media not only strengthens foreign language comprehension but also provides more equitable access to learning for all students in the classroom, including those who require more time to process information. Ideally, English learning media are able to create learning conditions that are more engaging and involve students in learning. To accommodate English learning that is relevant to the needs of the 21st century, implement the Graduate Profile value of collaboration, and in accordance with the character of young learners, bilingual storytelling with digital media integration is the ideal English learning media to meet these needs.

Therefore, the results of preliminary informal interviews with a teacher at SD Negeri 1 Baktiseraga show that English learning at SD Negeri 1 Baktiseraga uses English books as the main learning resource. English teachers there teach more using books as learning media. Furthermore, based on the teacher's informal feedback, some students still experience difficulties in understanding English instructions and vocabulary when materials are delivered solely in English. This indicates the need for learning support that can bridge students' first language and the target language, allowing them to understand the content while gradually developing their English proficiency.

The assignments given are mostly sourced from the English Book. Thus, the teaching method tends to use the lecture method. Methods such as the lecturing

method reduce student participation and enthusiasm because only the teacher is the center of the classroom, making the classroom atmosphere less interactive and interesting. Research indicates that one-way teaching approaches often make students feel less interested and struggle to maintain focus during lessons (Xie, 2021; Brownhill, 2024). Moreover, conventional and monotonous teaching methods have been found to increase students' boredom and reduce their motivation to learn (Duapadang et al., 2024). These limitations hinder the optimal development of students' English language skills. Fun and meaningful learning is essential for students to understand foreign languages more easily.

Based on the explanation, this research not only aligns with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum but also addresses the demands of 21st-century learning, which emphasizes the integration of technology, language skill development, and the insertion of the Graduate Profile value of collaboration for students. Specifically, this research focuses on the development of learning media in the form of a bilingual digital storytelling clip that incorporates the values of collaboration. This is important considering the limited availability of interactive digital learning media that combine bilingual elements with the value of the graduate profile in English language learning at the elementary school level. Therefore, this research is expected to fill that gap through the development of a bilingual digital storytelling clip that not only improves students' English proficiency but also inserts the collaboration value as rooted in the Graduate Profile.

1.2 Problem Identification

English learning at the elementary school level has not been optimally integrated with 21st-century competencies, particularly the 4Cs, especially

collaboration as one of the key dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile and the graduate profile in the Merdeka Curriculum. In classroom practice, the application of deep learning principles and the integration of character and graduate profile values into English learning media remain limited. This condition is reflected in English instruction at SD Negeri 1 Baktiseraga, where learning still predominantly relies on textbooks and lecture-based methods. Such teacher-centered practices reduce student participation, limit interaction, and make the learning process less engaging and meaningful for young learners. Furthermore, the existing learning approach has not fully accommodated the characteristics of young learners, who are imaginative, enjoy stories and games, have short attention spans, and are highly familiar with digital technology. Differences in students' learning abilities, particularly between slow and fast achievers, are also not sufficiently addressed, resulting in unequal learning opportunities and difficulties for some students in understanding English material.

In addition, the availability of interactive English learning media that integrate digital technology, bilingual support, storytelling, and collaboration values is still very limited at the elementary school level. These conditions indicate a clear gap between curriculum demands and classroom practice. This research aims to fill that gap by developing a bilingual digital storytelling clip that not only improves students' English proficiency but also instills Graduate Profile values, particularly the value of collaboration. Ultimately, this learning media is expected to support the implementation of deep learning, an inclusive and engaging English learning experience for elementary school students.

1.3 Limitation of the Research

This research has limitations that need to be considered. The main focus of this research is on the development of bilingual story digital clips as a learning medium and their implementation in English language learning in elementary schools, especially for grade 4 students. The developed digital clips are designed to integrate the Graduate Profile value of collaboration into English learning media. This research was conducted only in certain elementary schools. The research was conducted in SD Negeri 1 Baktiseraga, so the results obtained cannot be widely generalized. Additionally, this research is not focused on the comprehensive development of a bilingual digital story curriculum, does not assess the effectiveness of this media in other subjects, and does not examine the long-term impact of its use beyond the research period. The primary target of the developed media is elementary school students, so the design of the digital clips is tailored to their level of understanding and learning needs in English.

1.4 Research Questions

From those explanations, the research questions can be concluded as follows:

- 1 How to design a storytelling clip that insert the value of collaboration for teaching English in fourth grade elementary school?
- 2 What are the relevant tasks that need to be developed to teach English and the value of collaboration for young learners through a bilingual storytelling clip?
- 3 What is the quality of the developed bilingual storytelling clip for teaching English to 4th-grade elementary school students with the insertion of the Graduate Profile value of collaboration?

1.5 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

1. To design a bilingual storytelling clip that inserts the value of collaboration for teaching English.
2. To develop relevant tasks needed to teach English and the character of collaboration through bilingual storytelling clips that insert collaboration value.
3. To evaluate the quality of the bilingual storytelling clip developed for teaching English to 4th-grade primary school students, with the insertion of the Graduate Profile value of collaboration.

1.6 Significance of the Research

This research has significance that can be divided into two, namely theoretical and practical.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This research contributes to the development of English language learning theory through a bilingual approach or media-based digital storytelling that integrates the character values of Pancasila. The results of this research can serve as a reference for other researchers in the field of technology-based learning, digital literacy, and character education.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

a) For Teachers:

This research is expected to serve as a source and medium for English

language learning in the form of digital storytelling clips for elementary school teachers. This media can help teachers increase student engagement and motivation, as well as support the development of students' digital literacy.

b) For Students:

The development of this bilingual digital story clip is expected to become an innovative learning resource for elementary school students in English language learning. Through this interactive media, students not only develop receptive skills but also have the opportunity to use the language more naturally in the context of storytelling. In addition, this media is designed to insert the values of the Graduate Profile, enabling students to develop not only in linguistic aspects but also in character building. Through various activities provided, students are expected to learn more effectively and actively engage in the learning process.

c) For Other Research:

The findings from this research can provide insights into the effectiveness of using digital media to enhance language skills naturally through a storytelling approach, while also inserting Graduate Profile value. Therefore, the results of this study can serve as a reference for future research focusing on the development of digital learning media, bilingual approaches, and the application of character values in education. Additionally, the results of this research can serve as a basis for developing similar methods or media in other educational contexts.