

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

In the midst of globalization and rapid technological developments, English language proficiency has become increasingly important to master (Haryadi & Haminuddin, 2023). It is because good English language skills not only open up wider access to global information and knowledge but also increase academic and professional opportunities at the international level (Indrayani et al., 2025; Lawalata, 2024). As a response to this growing need, the importance of introducing English from an early age has become a major focus in the field of education. One of the ideal stages to begin English language learning is during primary school (Artini, 2017; Syarifah & Nurhidayat, 2024). The primary school age is considered the most effective period for English language learning because children are in a developmental phase known as the golden period or critical period. During this period, children's cognitive abilities are still very flexible and not yet greatly influenced by external factors, which makes it easier for them to absorb a new language (Artini & Padmadewi, 2019; Ratminingsih et al., 2021 & Pamungkas, 2021). Therefore, learning English from primary school can serve as a strong foundation to prepare them for future challenges.

However, teaching English to children as young learners is not an easy task because teachers must take on multiple responsibilities where they not only determine the right learning strategies but also have to design appropriate learning materials that support the learning objectives and students' developmental needs (Rohimajaya et al., 2021). Learning materials serve as an important guide in the

teaching and learning process, helping teachers organize instruction while assisting students in understanding the content more effectively. For this reason, learning materials become one of the key factors contributing to the success of English language learning (Utami & Widiastuti, 2025). Learning materials in primary school, in general, and English learning in particular, should not only deliver language content but also create meaningful and engaging learning experiences. Therefore, such materials must be carefully designed in accordance with the needs, interests, and characteristics of young learners.

According to Oktavia et al. (2022), young learners have unique characteristics and moods that are still easily changeable, in which they learn according to their own preferences. Additionally, they have a short attention span, making them easily bored and lose focus (Juhana, 2014). On the other hand, they have a high curiosity and enjoy learning new things, especially if the learning is accompanied by interesting illustrations and, even more so, if the learning is related to direct experience (Cameron, 2001; Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2001; Shin, 2006). Furthermore, they find it easier to understand concrete things, things that can be seen, touched, heard, or smelled (Kawuryan, 2011). Even more interestingly, they enjoy learning through singing, playing, and storytelling (Ratminingsih et al., 2021). Therefore, learning materials designed based on these characteristics will make the English learning process more enjoyable, meaningful, and effective for young learners.

Talking about learning material itself, it can be defined as anything intentionally used to improve students' language knowledge, language skills, and learning experience (Cakir, 2015; Meganathan, 2009; Nikoopour & Farsani, 2011;

Tomlinson, 2012). Learning materials may take many forms, one of which is story-based material. Story is considered one of the most effective forms of learning material for children because it naturally attracts their attention and motivation, and has been proven to support the English language learning process (Bansa & Wenny, 2021). Essentially, young learners are very enthusiastic about listening to or even reading a story. It can serve as a strong motivation for them to learn and understand the language used in the story (Wright, 2004). Additionally, a story is not only to teach language but also to convey moral messages or character values that are important for their development (Al Harrasi, 2012). Last but not least, story-based materials are beneficial for developing reading and writing skills, but also greatly assist in developing other skills such as listening, speaking, grammar, and vocabulary (Ellis & Brewster, 1991; Mart, 2012; Sani & Rahmat, 2023). Therefore, the story-based learning materials are highly effective and necessary for young learners because they can accommodate students' needs, learning abilities, and learning styles, while also developing their four language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

More than just language learning, English materials should also contribute to character education. In the Indonesian educational context, students are expected not only to master academic competencies but also to develop moral values and positive attitudes needed in real social life (Jayanti & Wulandari, 2024). This means that learning materials should not merely focus on vocabulary, grammar, or language skills, but also provide opportunities for students to learn the values needed through the learning content. By integrating character values into English materials, language learning can become more meaningful and

relevant to students' daily lives (Fiprinita et al., 2020). Therefore, English materials should function as a media for both language development and character building.

The urgency of integrating character education is increasingly evident in today's modern era, where moral degradation among young people has become a serious concern (Artini & Padmadewi, 2019; Utami, 2012). Introducing character education needs to be introduced from an early age because it has great potential to be empowered, not only by gaining the knowledge of the language itself, but also by instilling character values during the learning process. It has been proven to contribute positively to students' development, academic success, and self-esteem (Indrayani et al., 2017). In other words, it plays a role in preparing students not only academically, but also morally (Kamaruddin, 2012). Thus, English learning should be designed to achieve a balance between language competence and character formation, in line with the goals of national education.

In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, the internalization of character education can be achieved through the values outlined in the Graduate Profile. It is designed to be a guide in shaping graduates who are not only academically competent but also possess a strong national identity and character, ready to face the challenges of the 21st century (Savitri, 2025). According to Kemendikdismen (2025), the Graduate Profile consists of eight main dimensions, such as faith and belief in God Almighty; citizenship; critical thinking; creativity; collaboration; independence; health; and communication. Among the eight dimensions, independence is one of the most essential values to be developed from an early age, including within the context of English language learning (Diharja et al.,

2023). This value helps students not only to manage their own learning processes but also to cultivate responsibility, discipline, perseverance, and courage in making decisions (Kemendikdismen, 2025). By fostering independence, students are encouraged to face challenges with confidence rather than relying entirely on others (Latifah et al., 2019). Such a value strongly aligns with the national education goals, which emphasize not only academic achievement but also the formation of resilient and character-driven individuals who can adapt to the demands of changing times. Therefore, independence emerges as a key value that empowers students to succeed academically, grow morally, and contribute meaningfully as resilient citizens of Indonesia.

In addition to integrating character values, the use of a bilingual approach is also considered important in primary English learning. This is because children at this level have very diverse learning abilities and different rates of understanding. There are students who are classified as fast achievers, meaning they are able to absorb material quickly and demonstrate high learning responses. On the other hand, there are also slow achievers who need more time and additional support to understand and master the material provided (Nurfadhillah et al., 2021). Considering this diversity, the bilingual approach becomes very relevant and strategic. By presenting material, especially in the form of a story in two languages, namely English and Indonesian, all students have a more equitable opportunity to understand the content of the material in a deep and meaningful way (Nareswari et al., 2023; Tirtayani et al., 2017). This approach allows all students to avoid problems or difficulties they faced during the learn English. Not only that, but students also acquire both languages naturally without social or

personal barriers, making the language learning process more effective (Padmadewi & Artini, 2017). Therefore, the use of the bilingual approach not only supports students' academic success but also maintains their engagement and fosters their confidence in the English learning process.

Along with the importance of inserting the character value and the use of a bilingual approach, today's technological advancements also provide great opportunities to present story-based materials in more engaging, attractive, and interactive forms, such as digital storytelling. It is very relevant because young learners are digital natives, which means they are already familiar with technology-related matters, which can support learning to be more effective. (Sadiku, 2017). Digital storytelling itself is the presentation of a story through a combination of text, sound, images, animation, and music designed digitally with a short duration (Jenkins & Lonsdale, 2007; Lambert & Hessler, 2018; Robin, 2006). This media provides significant benefits in English learning (Amaliah et al., 2022). It can help students improve their vocabulary mastery (Akdogan, 2023; Bin Jwair, 2023; Hamdani et al., 2022; Maya et al., 2023). Additionally, through its engaging presentation, this media can enhance students' motivation, engagement, and attention span in learning (Kurniawan, 2024). Equally important, this media can enhance students' four language skills, including speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills (Fakhrudin et al., 2023; Karupayah et al., 2024; Ningsih, 2023; Rahmawati et al., 2023; Ramelepe & Westhuizen, 2024; Tham & Thuy, 2023). Furthermore, it has also been proven to enhance students' behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement, making students more active, enthusiastic, and motivated during the learning process (Purnawan et al., 2026).

One popular form of digital storytelling is the storytelling clip, which is a short video that presents a complete story in a concise and engaging way (Fitria, 2023). Unlike ordinary clips that only show fragments of events, a storytelling clip has a clear narrative flow supported by multimedia elements such as text, images, sound, and background music (Yang et al., 2024). With an ideal duration of about three to five minutes, this format can deliver messages clearly and effectively while keeping students focused (Davey & Benjaminsen, 2021). Its short and practical nature also makes it easier to use in classroom settings (Muslem et al., 2017). It helps students acquire new vocabulary more easily because words are reinforced with relevant visuals (Khadawardi, 2022). In addition, it also improves their listening skills through exposure to natural pronunciation and intonation (Hadiyansah & Dardiri, 2023). Furthermore, it encourages speaking skills by allowing students to imitate dialogues or retell the story in their own words (Afifah & Lestari, 2019). Beyond language development, the engaging audiovisual presentation boosts motivation and makes learning more enjoyable and relatable for children. Therefore, a digital storytelling clip can be seen as a concise yet complete form of digital storytelling, in which its combination of brevity, engaging visuals, and meaningful narratives not only enriches students' learning experiences but also supports the development of four language skills, digital literacy, and 21st-century skills.

On the other hand, the innovative media-based learning materials align with the deep learning approach that is currently the concern and focus of the Indonesian government in the transformation of education. According to Langer et al. (1989, cited in Feriyanto & Anjariyah, 2024), this approach focuses on three

key dimensions, including mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning. In terms of mindful learning, this media allows students to be fully aware of engaging with the material so that students can understand not only the form of language but also the meaning and context of its use as a whole (Polman et al., 2021). Meanwhile, from the aspect of meaningful learning, the media presents material that is relevant to students' daily lives and is associated with character values such as independence sourced from Graduate Profile, so that the students not only learn language as a technical skill, but also as an integral part of the shaping of students' character and identity (Geng et al., 2011 in Feriyanto & Anjariyah, 2024). In terms of joyful learning, this media creates a fun and motivating learning atmosphere through attractive visual displays, so that it encourages the students' interest, active participation, and enthusiasm during the learning process (Arif et al., 2025; Bhakti et al., 2019). Thus, the use of media-based material in learning means indirectly applying a deep learning approach, which is very important to create more enjoyable, meaningful, and mindful learning to contribute to improving the quality of English learning, especially at the primary school level.

Therefore, while the use of this innovative media-based material reflects the principles of a deep learning approach, the current situation in schools shows that such practices have not been fully realized. Based on the results of a preliminary informal interview with the English teacher of grade four at SD Negeri 1 Bakti Seraga, it was revealed that the current practice of English teaching has not yet fully met the expectations of ideal language learning for young learners. The teacher admitted that the learning process is still heavily dependent on textbooks as the main source of both materials and activities. Although

textbooks provide sufficient basic content, their classroom use remains limited and tends to reinforce conventional teaching practices. As a result, the learning process becomes less contextual and engaging, since it mostly revolves around textbook-driven explanations and exercises rather than creative and meaningful language use. In addition to this textbook dependency, the teacher also explained that alternative learning materials presented through media, particularly contextual materials such as stories packaged in the form of a digital storytelling clip, have never been applied in the classroom. On the other hand, the teacher highlighted the need for such story-based materials to engage students and support their understanding. However, this need has not yet been fulfilled due to several constraints, including time limitations, lack of training, and insufficient resources to develop creative materials.

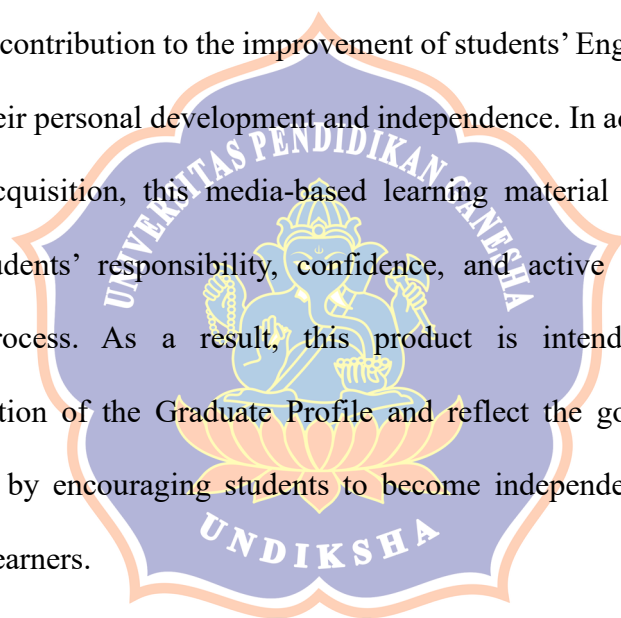
Moreover, the interview revealed that character education has actually been introduced in the classroom, but it is mostly delivered implicitly through teacher reminders, advice, and daily classroom habits rather than through structured learning materials. As a result, students receive character messages indirectly, while materials that explicitly teach character values as part of the learning content are still unavailable. In particular, the Graduate Profile values, especially independence, have not yet been systematically integrated into English learning materials, even though the teacher recognized their importance. At the same time, the absence of a bilingual approach in the materials has created learning gaps, as students with different abilities and learning speeds are not equally supported. In conclusion, the findings indicate that English learning at SD Negeri 1 Bakti Seraga has been conducted in line with the curriculum and existing

classroom practices. Nevertheless, there are still opportunities to further enhance the learning process through the development of more innovative and contextual learning materials presented through media. In addition, the explicit integration of character values, particularly independence from the Graduate Profile, as well as the inclusion of a bilingual approach, may better accommodate students' diverse abilities and learning needs. Therefore, the development of inclusive and engaging media-based learning materials is considered a relevant and promising effort to support more meaningful, effective, and student-centered English learning for young learners.

Ideally, English learning in primary schools should go beyond textbooks and provide students with engaging, contextual, and inclusive learning experiences (Hasyim et al., 2025). Such learning is not only to present language in an enjoyable and meaningful way but also to accommodate students' diverse abilities and learning styles (Goyibova et al., 2025). More importantly, English learning should also include character education as mandated by the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly the Graduate Profile values such as independence, so that language learning also contributes to students' personal growth (Diharja et al., 2023; Latifah et al., 2019). However, in reality, these expectations have not been fully realized, leaving a gap between curriculum goals and classroom practice. To address this gap, one promising solution is the development of story-based learning materials presented through digital media, particularly in the form of a digital storytelling clip. This type of material can combine important elements such as bilingual support and the integration of Graduate Profile values, especially independence, into the learning content. As a result, students are expected not only

to learn English more naturally and meaningfully but also to develop positive character values during the learning process.

In response to this need, the present research aimed to develop an innovative bilingual digital storytelling clip as a media-based learning material that integrates the Graduate Profile value of independence as part of the narrative design to support English language learning for fourth-grade students in primary school. By combining visual storytelling, character education, and language instruction into one integrated product, this material is expected to make a meaningful contribution to the improvement of students' English skills while also fostering their personal development and independence. In addition to supporting language acquisition, this media-based learning material is also expected to develop students' responsibility, confidence, and active participation in the learning process. As a result, this product is intended to support the implementation of the Graduate Profile and reflect the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum by encouraging students to become independent, responsible, and motivated learners.



1.2 Problem Identification

Based on informal interviews conducted with the fourth-grade English teacher at SD Negeri 1 Bakti Seraga, several issues related to English language learning in primary school were identified. First, the learning materials and activities were still heavily reliant on textbooks provided by the school, without any further enrichment or development, such as the use of stories or contextual content. This issue stemmed from the limited time and resources available to the teacher, as well as their lack of training or support in developing creative and

engaging instructional media. Second, the use of digital storytelling clip-based learning materials, which may provide attractive and meaningful learning experiences for students in the digital era, has not yet been implemented in the classroom. This condition was likely related to the limited availability of suitable teaching materials in digital form, as well as the need for greater familiarity and guidance in selecting or integrating such materials effectively into classroom instruction. Third, character education, particularly values related to the Graduate Profile, such as independence, had not been explicitly integrated into English language learning materials. Although character values had been introduced implicitly through daily teaching practices and classroom interactions, English learning materials that explicitly inserted such values were still limited. One reason was that English instruction was often focused more on vocabulary and grammar, rather than on inserting moral or national values within the content. The teacher usually found it challenging to align language learning objectives with character-building goals due to a lack of example models or teaching resources.

In addition, although the students' English levels vary widely, the bilingual approach had not been optimally applied. This was partly because the teacher lacked appropriate bilingual teaching materials that could support students with different levels of understanding, and partly because there was limited awareness of how bilingual strategies could be effectively used in English language instruction. Therefore, based on the identified problems, this research aimed to develop English learning materials presented in the form of a bilingual digital storytelling clip. The developed materials were expected to address the need for more varied and meaningful learning resources by combining language instruction

with engaging digital storytelling content. In addition, these materials were designed to support students with different levels of English proficiency through the use of a bilingual approach, while also explicitly integrating the Graduate Profile value of independence into the learning content. Ultimately, the materials were intended to provide a more engaging, inclusive, and values-oriented learning experience for fourth-grade primary school students.

1.3 Research Limitations

This research had several limitations that need to be considered in interpreting the findings. First, the research only focused on fourth-grade English teachers at SD Negeri 1 Bakti Seraga as the main subjects. Therefore, the results of this research could not be generalized to all primary school teachers, considering that each teacher had different experiences, teaching styles, and classroom conditions. Second, the research location was limited to only one school, so the results may not necessarily represent other school contexts that may have different facilities, student characteristics, or curriculum implementation. Third, this research emphasized the development of English learning materials presented in the form of a bilingual digital storytelling clip. The materials were specifically designed to support English language learning while integrating the Graduate Profile value of independence. However, this research did not examine the long-term effectiveness of the developed materials in regular classroom implementation, nor did it investigate their possible use in other subject areas. Therefore, further studies are still needed to evaluate the sustained impact and broader applicability of the materials.

Additionally, the scope of the developed product was limited to one unit of material, namely Unit 11, which was about transportation. This limitation was due to time and resource constraints during the research process. As a result, the developed materials were intended as an initial product and still require further expansion and refinement to become a more comprehensive learning resource covering a wider range of topics. Moreover, this research was limited only to the stages of product development and expert evaluation. The research did not proceed to the implementation stage in actual classroom learning activities. As a result, the effectiveness of the bilingual digital storytelling clip in improving students' English skills, engagement, and character development during real classroom practice has not yet been fully investigated. Therefore, future research is recommended to continue the study by implementing the developed product in classroom settings. Finally, because the research was conducted for fourth-grade primary school students, the design of the bilingual digital storytelling clip was adjusted to their language ability level, cognitive development, and learning needs. Consequently, if the materials are to be used for other grade levels, further modifications may be necessary to ensure their suitability for different student characteristics and learning needs.

1.4 Research Questions

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

- 1.4.1 How is a bilingual digital storytelling clip that inserts graduate profile values of independence designed for teaching English to 4th grade?

1.4.2 What are the relevant tasks developed through a bilingual storytelling clip that inserts graduate profile values of independence for teaching English to 4th grade?

1.4.3 How is the quality of the developed bilingual digital storytelling clip that inserts graduate profile values of independence for teaching English to 4th grade?

1.5 Research Objectives

Based on the research questions, the objectives of this research are:

1.5.1 To describe how to design a bilingual digital storytelling clip that inserts graduate profile values of independence for teaching English to 4th grade.

1.5.2 To develop the relevant tasks through a bilingual digital storytelling clip that inserts the graduate profile value of independence for teaching English to 4th grade.

1.5.3 To evaluate the quality of the developed bilingual digital storytelling clip that inserts graduate profile values of independence for teaching English to 4th grade.

1.6 Research Significances

This research provided benefits in two main aspects, namely theoretical and practical. The detailed explanations of significances are presented as follows.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This research played a role in enriching theoretical insights related to English language learning, especially through the use of a bilingual digital storytelling clip-based material that integrated the value of independence based on

graduate profile values. The results of this research could serve as a reference for future studies that aim to explore the application of technology in English language learning, the improvement of students' digital literacy, and the strengthening of character education in the context of language learning. Thus, this research not only contributed to the development of innovative learning materials but also expanded the theoretical understanding of the integration between language acquisition, technology use, and holistic student character building in education.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

The practical significance of this research was directed toward educators, students, and future researchers. The detailed explanations of practical significances are presented as follows.

a. For Educators

The results of this research are expected to provide an alternative set of learning materials presented through a digital storytelling clip for primary school teacher in teaching English. These materials can help the teacher create a more interesting and interactive learning environment, making it easier to increase students' involvement and participation in the learning process. Additionally, the use of digitally presented materials may also help students develop essential digital skills that are crucial in technology-based learning. Moreover, this research serves as a practical guide for educators in designing innovative and engaging learning materials, especially through storytelling-based approaches delivered through digital media. Through this research, teacher is expected to gain ideas and a better understanding of how to create

meaningful learning experiences that suit their students' needs. Therefore, the teacher can be more confident and creative in developing similar materials that support more effective and enjoyable English language teaching.

b. For Students

The results of this research are expected to provide students with more innovative and engaging learning materials in understanding English. Through digital storytelling content, students can develop their language skills more naturally within meaningful and contextualized situations, which may also increase their motivation and participation in the learning process. In addition, the materials developed in this research integrate the value of independence as part of the Graduate Profile value, contributing not only to students' linguistic development but also to their character building in line with national education goals. Furthermore, these materials promote autonomous learning by allowing students to explore and understand the content at their own pace, thereby supporting a more effective and meaningful learning experience. Moreover, the bilingual approach used in the developed digital storytelling clip is also expected to support students with different learning abilities, particularly slow learners, in understanding English materials more effectively. By combining English and Indonesian, students are able to connect new English vocabulary and expressions with meanings they already understand in their first language. This approach helps reduce students' anxiety and confusion during the learning process, especially for those who still have limited English ability.

c. For Further Research

The results of this research are expected to become a useful reference for future researchers who are interested in exploring the use of digital media to present language learning materials. This research gives information about the potential of bilingual digital storytelling-based materials as effective learning resources. Furthermore, future researchers are also encouraged to develop and improve similar materials by adding different language skills, character values, or technological features. Therefore, this research not only contributes to existing knowledge but also supports continuous innovation in the development of digital learning materials in education. In addition, this research provides opportunities for future researchers to continue this research through the implementation of the developed product in real classroom settings. Since this research was limited to the stages of product development and expert evaluation, future studies are encouraged to investigate the effectiveness and impact of the bilingual digital storytelling clip on students' English learning outcomes, learning motivation, classroom participation, and character development. Through implementation-based research, future researchers may obtain deeper insights into how digital storytelling clip can contribute not only to language learning but also to character education in primary school contexts.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To provide a clear understanding and avoid ambiguity, the key terms used in this research were defined in this section. The definitions were presented in two forms, namely concept definitions, which explain the theoretical meaning of each term,

and operational definitions, which describe how the terms are interpreted and applied within the context of this research.

1.7.1 Concept Definition

The following conceptual definitions explain the theoretical meanings of the key terms used in this research.

a. Digital Storytelling Clip

Digital storytelling clip is the integration of various multimedia elements, such as images, audio, animation, video, and text, in a digital format to convey information, experiences, or messages to the audience. Digital storytelling generally combines traditional storytelling with technology to create meaningful and engaging learning experiences. It is usually presented in a short format ranging from two to ten minutes (Robin, 2006; Lambert & Hessler, 2018).

b. Graduate Profile of Independence

The Graduate Profile consists of eight dimensions that serve as references for developing students' competencies and character. One of these dimensions is independence. Independence refers to learners' ability to manage their learning process, take responsibility for their actions, demonstrate initiative, and make decisions appropriately (Kemendikdasmen, 2025). In the educational context, independence is reflected through responsible behavior, self-directed learning, and active participation in completing tasks and solving problems.

c. Bilingualism

Bilingualism refers to the ability to use two languages for communication, both orally and in written form (Hoerudin, 2024). In educational settings, bilingual learning involves the use of two languages to support students' understanding of learning content. According to Putri et al. (2023), exposure to two languages helps learners understand the structure and meaning of a new language more naturally and effectively. Therefore, bilingualism can facilitate English language learning while maintaining students' understanding through their first language.

1.7.2 Operational Definition

The following operational definitions explain how the key terms are defined and applied in this research.

a. Digital storytelling clip

In this research, a digital storytelling clip refers to the educational product developed by the researcher for fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 1 Bakti Seraga. The product was presented in the form of a digital story that integrated narration, illustrations, animation, audio, subtitles, and video elements. The visual content was created using Dreamina AI to support the visualization of characters, settings, and events in the story. The clip was developed based on Unit 11: Transportation and incorporated the target learning materials, including transportation-related vocabulary and language expressions. Furthermore, the product was designed based on students' needs, curriculum requirements, and English learning objectives to provide a meaningful, engaging, and enjoyable learning experience.

b. Graduate profile value of independence

In this research, the Graduate Profile Value of Independence referred specifically to the dimensions of responsibility and initiative integrated into the bilingual digital storytelling clip. These values were inserted through the actions and behaviors demonstrated by the main character throughout the story. Responsibility was reflected through the character's habit of maintaining the cleanliness of the house and completing daily responsibilities independently. Meanwhile, initiative was reflected through the character's willingness to prepare food and drinks for friends without being asked.

c. Bilingualism

In this research, bilingualism referred to the use of both English and Indonesian in the developed digital storytelling clip. English was presented through the narration and dialogues, while Indonesian was provided simultaneously through subtitles appearing on the screen. The bilingual presentation is intended to facilitate students' comprehension of the story while supporting their English language development.

