

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Shared reading is a teaching strategy in which teachers and students read texts together, with teachers providing guidance and playing an active role, while students engage in discussing the text or book being read. In addition, this strategy emphasizes the visual aspects of printed texts, such as seeing words, and students' active participation in repeating, predicting, and interacting with texts that they can see (Gonzalez et al., 2024). Through shared reading strategies, children's engagement in reading can be increased, as they appear enthusiastic, listen attentively, and sometimes respond to stories with spontaneous expressions or questions (Nurhillal et al., 2025). In line with Vygotsky (1980), who emphasized that students should learn through interaction with those around them such as adults or peers with greater knowledge as this supports the formation of new ideas and enriches students' intellectual development. Through this interactive approach, students are encouraged to actively participate in the shared reading process.

In the context of shared reading, students' active involvement is closely related to behavioral engagement in reading. According to Guthrie & Wigfield (2000), this engagement occurs when children show interest in the story, focus on reading activities, respond to the text, and participate in interactions related to reading activities. As stated by Rina et al. (2025), meaningful and interesting reading experiences encourage children to be more involved during reading activities, not only cognitively but also behaviorally. Furthermore, Melati (2025)

explains that the appropriate approach to early reading activities for children is very important, because children are at a stage of development that needs interactive and engaging learning experiences. For this reason, it is very important to encourage behavioral engagement during shared reading activities to support children's active participation and maintain their engagement in classroom reading activities

Since behavioral engagement in reading activities is significantly influenced by the media designed and delivered, the selection of appropriate reading media is an important factor in encouraging active student participation. However, there are problems that arise in the implementation of reading activities, especially in early childhood education, where reading media that are not in line with students' developmental characteristics can hinder their attention, focus, and engagement during reading sessions. This finding is supported by several researchers, such as Fuadi (2020), who argue that choosing reading materials that are uninteresting and unsuitable for students' needs can result in low student participation during reading activities. Similar findings are presented by Cahyana et al. (2023), mention that low student participation is very closely related to limited reading interest, which is usually affected by the attractiveness and relevance of the media used. Kurnia et al. (2024) and Hasibuan et al. (2024) further state that the lack of interesting reading materials suitable for students' developmental levels causes students' unwillingness to participate in reading activities, especially at the early age.

Considering the current problems regarding the availability of reading media and its potential influence on students' behavioral engagement, it is

necessary to examine other alternatives that are more suitable for early childhood education. One aspect that can be optimized is the selection of reading media, as media can provide concrete visual and textual stimuli that support children's interest and engagement in reading activities. According to Şenol (2021), the availability of print and visual materials in the classroom has a positive influence on children's interest and early reading skills. In addition, reading media can help children recognize letters and words, which can provide a foundation for their future reading development. The visual aspect of reading materials is also important because illustrations can communicate meanings and social messages beyond the written text. Artini et al. (2024) found that illustrations in EFL textbooks represented social roles and activities, indicating that visual elements in language learning materials can contribute to the representation of social meanings. This is relevant to Darmawan (2025), who reported that children's reading interest can be influenced by the availability of interesting books with attractive illustrations and stories, as well as by the way teachers read and interact with children.

Although previous studies emphasize the importance of choosing reading media that is interesting and appropriate for the child's developmental stage in order to support reading engagement at an early age, the implementation of reading activities and the use of media in the classroom environment does not always proceed in the same way. Based on observations made by the researcher at Telkom Kindergarten on Gajah Mada Street, Singajara, Bali, particularly in class B2, English reading activities have been implemented in this school. Reading activities are conducted once a week with shared reading, where teachers play an

active role in reading stories to students, while also encouraging active participation from all students, such as asking short questions to check their understanding and giving students time to respond to the story being read, either verbally or through simple expressions. However, based on direct observation in the classroom, it was found that there was a lack of appropriate media for early childhood reading activities. The storybooks used are mostly text based with minimal visual displays in the form of colors and images that are appropriate for early childhood characteristics. The books measure A4, This makes it hard for students seated in the back rows to clearly see the text and illustrations when students read in groups. The font size also causes the text layout to be relatively dense for kindergarten students. The illustrations are characterized by limited color contrast, small image placement, and minimal expressive details, which reduce their effectiveness in attracting students' visual focus. This was also confirmed by the results of interviews conducted by the researcher with Teacher B2, who stated that student participation during reading activities was not optimal. The teacher also stated that this situation is related to the reading media used, which are not yet fully aligned with the students' characteristics. Furthermore, the content of these storybooks does not include values relevant to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), such as themes of justice, teamwork, empathy, compliance with rules, and peaceful conflict resolution, as the instillation of values in early childhood reading media is very important to support not only reading development but also the foundation of future responsible citizens with social awareness. Consequently, reading activities are limited to language exposure without introducing social values relevant to children's daily

interactions. These findings indicate a mismatch between the characteristics of reading content, students' developmental needs, and the desired goals of promoting active participation and values based learning during early childhood.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that although teachers in class B2 at Telkom Singaraja Kindergarten have implemented shared reading activities, the unsuitability of reading media to student characteristics is a factor that hinders the optimization of reading engagement among all students, and the storybooks used have not integrated SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). The dominant use of text based reading media with minimal visual displays and illustrations has resulted in suboptimal participation among students during reading activities. Therefore, more interesting, diverse, and appropriate reading media are needed to support shared reading activities. According to Fahmiyah et al. (2025), reading media in the form of picture books with clear text and the use of illustrations and colors that are relevant to children are considered more effective in supporting children's engagement during reading activities. In line with this, Veronica et al. (2021) stated that picture media that is appropriate for the characteristics of early childhood can support the process of meaning formation and maintain children's focus, as it allows them to point to pictures, guess the content of the story, or answer simple questions.

The Big Book is one of the relevant media for reading activities in childhood. The characteristics of Big Books are their large physical size, enlarged letters, and bold illustrations so that they are clearly visible to all students during group reading sessions (Colville-Hall & O'Connor, 2006). The layout usually contains limited text on each page with simple sentence structures so that the

visuals take a central role in supporting meaning formation. The content is generally organized around specific and familiar themes, such as animals, plants, or daily activities, so that it is easy for children to understand (Nurani & Mahendra, 2019; Rofiah et al., 2023). In addition, Mahayanti & Suantari (2012) explains that the stories in Big Books are simple and engaging, with clear and easy to follow storylines, accompanied by illustrations that directly reinforce the narrative content. Therefore, the large size of the book allows all students to see the text and illustrations clearly, helping to maintain their attention throughout the activity. The dominance of colorful illustrations and the use of repetitive sentences give children the opportunity to predict the content of the story, imitate certain expressions, and participate verbally and nonverbally. The simple text structure and limited number of words on each page also make it easier for children to follow the story without feeling overwhelmed. Therefore, the visual and textual features of the Big Book directly support behavioral engagement indicators such as focus, active response, and participation during shared reading.

In addition, the development of the Big Book in this study is integrated with the values of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (United Nations, 2020). SDG 16 consists of several targets addressing peaceful societies, justice, strong institutions, and inclusive governance, including Targets 16.1 Violence reduction, 16.2 Protection of children, 16.3 Rule of law & justice, 16.4 Illicit flows & organized crime, 16.5 Corruption & bribery, 16.6 Effective institutions, 16.7 Inclusive decision-making, 16.8 Global governance participation, 16.9 Legal identity, 16.10 Access to information & fundamental freedoms, 16.a Institutional capacity 16.b Non-

discriminatory laws & policies. These targets broadly emphasize peace, justice, accountability, transparency, participation, and the rule of law. These values need to be instilled at an early age because children begin to form attitudes, behaviors, and social understandings that will influence their future lives (Chapman & O’Gorman, 2022; Mérida-Serrano et al., 2020; Shore, 2021). Therefore, by introducing SDG 16-related values from an early age through picture books, children are expected to develop positive social attitudes that support the creation of a safe, inclusive, and harmonious learning environment. The development of a Big Book that integrates SDG 16 as a shared reading media not only supports student engagement in reading but also contributes to introducing relevant character and social values from an early age. Therefore, this makes the developed Big Book a contextual solution to the literacy learning issues identified in Class B2 at Telkom Singaraja Kindergarten.

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on observations conducted at Telkom Kindergarten on Gajah Mada Street, Singaraja, Bali, particularly in class B2, it was found that English reading activities had been implemented. However, several problems were found, including:

- 1) First, the use of media for reading activities is dominated by text with minimal visuals and color, resulting in suboptimal student participation in reading activities. This shows that the media used in the classroom is still not in line with the characteristics of the students.
- 2) Second, the findings also show that the storybooks used during reading activities do not integrate the values of Sustainable Development Goals

(SDG) 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), but these values are taught outside the classroom, such as the need to respect and appreciate others, although not specifically SDG 16. Introducing the values of justice and peace, as well as a simple understanding of the importance of strong institutions, is very relevant to instil from an early age. Although these concepts need to be adapted to the child's stage of development, their integration into the learning process will help build a foundation of understanding about the importance of not discriminating, living in harmony, and understanding behavior that does not harm others.

Therefore, it can be concluded that based on the results of observations, the use of media for reading activities is still dominated by texts that influence students' engagement during reading activities. Reading activities in terms of material have not integrated SDG values, particularly SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. These challenges will form the basis for the development of Big Book based on SDG 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions and the selection of innovative, interesting, and relevant strategies in accordance with students' needs.

1.3 Limitations of the Research

Based on the background and preliminary observations conducted at Telkom Kindergarten Singaraja, this study has the following limitations:

- 1) This study focused on the development of an SDG 16 integrated Big Book as a shared reading media for kindergarten students. The scope of the study was limited to the design and development of instructional

media intended to support English shared reading activities in early childhood education.

- 2) The concept of behavioral reading engagement in this study is limited to two indicators adapted from characteristic of behavioral engagement by Skinner et al. (2009), namely attention and active participation. Attention refers to students' observable focus on the shared reading activity, such as paying attention to the teacher, the story, and the illustrations. Active participation refers to students' observable involvement during shared reading, including answering questions, repeating vocabulary, pointing to illustrations, and participating in discussions. Other dimensions of behavioral engagement, such as effort and persistence and compliance with classroom rules, are beyond the scope of this study.
- 3) The integration of SDG 16 in this study is limited to selected, age-appropriate values primarily related to Target 16.3 on justice and the rule of law and Target 16.6 on effective, accountable, and transparent institutions. These values are represented through simple situations in the Big Book, such as resolving conflicts peacefully, making fair decisions, listening to both sides, considering evidence, and following rules. The study does not cover all targets and official indicators of SDG 16.
- 4) This study is limited to the evaluation stage of expert validation and limited try out. Expert validation focuses on assess the quality of the developed Big Book in terms of its media and content, while the limited try out focuses on obtaining the teacher opinions regarding the practicality, usability, and feasibility of the developed Big Book, as well

as observing students' behavioral reading engagement during it limited try out. Therefore, this study does not include large scale field testing or experimental research to examine the effectiveness of the developed Big Book in improving students' behavioral reading engagement or other learning outcomes.

1.4 Research Question

1. What are the needs of teachers and students regarding Big Book Integrate with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) to support behavioral reading engagement in shared reading activities?
2. How is the process of developing the SDG 16 integrated Big Book for shared reading activities at TK Telkom Kindergarten?
3. What is the quality of the Big Book integrated with SDG 16 based on expert and user validation result?

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To identify the needs of teachers and students for reading media that can Support reading engagement and integrate the values of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) in the context of early childhood education.
2. To describe the process of developing an SDG 16 based Big Book as a shared reading media for English language learning at Telkom Kindergarten.
3. To determine the quality of the developed Big Book, which is integrated with SDG 16 values, based on expert and user validation results.

1.6 Research Significances

1.6.1 Theoretical Significances

This study is expected to contribute to the field of English language teaching for young learners, particularly in the development of instructional media for shared reading activities. The findings are expected to enrich the existing literature on the development of SDG 16 integrated Big Book by providing a product that incorporates the values of peace, justice, and strong institutions into shared reading activities for kindergarten students. Furthermore, this study is expected to provide a reference for integrating the principles of shared reading and behavioral reading engagement into the design of reading media for early childhood education.

1.6.2 Practical Significances

1. For the teacher

The findings of this study are expected to provide teachers with a reference for developing and implementing Big Book as shared reading media in kindergarten classrooms. The developed Big Book may also serve as an alternative instructional media for introducing SDG 16 values through meaningful reading activities while supporting interactive teacher and students' engagement during shared reading.

2. For the students

The developed Big Book is expected to provide students with meaningful shared reading experiences through age appropriate

stories, attractive illustrations, and interactive reading activities. In addition, the integration of SDG 16 values is expected to introduce young learners to the concepts of peace, justice, and respect for rules through situations that are relevant to their daily lives.

3. Other researchers

The findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for future researchers who are interested in developing instructional media for shared reading activities, integrating Sustainable Development Goals into early childhood education, or conducting further studies related to behavioral reading engagement in English language learning.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

The following key terms are defined to clarify the main concepts used in this study and to avoid misunderstanding in interpreting the scope of the research. These definitions are divided into conceptual and operational definitions so that the theoretical meaning of each term and its specific use in this study can be clearly understood.

1.7.1 Conceptual Definition

a) Big Book

According to Colville-Hall & O'Connor (2006) and Big Book is a large format storybook designed to support shared reading activities through enlarged illustrations, large print, simple vocabulary, and predictable language patterns that are appropriate

for young learners. Its size and visual features make it easier for children to follow the story, observe the pictures, and participate during reading activities.

b) SDG 16

According to United Nations (2020) SDG 16 is one of the Sustainable Development Goals that focuses on peace, justice, and strong institutions. In the context of education, SDG 16 can be introduced through story content that reflects positive values such as honesty, responsibility, fairness, and respect for rules. These values help young learners understand simple social behaviours that support peaceful interaction in daily life.

c) Shared Reading

According to Sénéchal & Cornell (1993) Shared reading is an instructional reading approach in which teachers and students read a story together using the same book. During the activity, the teacher models fluent reading while encouraging children to observe illustrations, predict story events, answer questions, and participate actively throughout the reading process. Shared reading promotes interaction between the teacher, students, and the reading material to support children's literacy development.

d) Behavioral Reading Engagement

Behavioral reading engagement refers to students' observable behaviors that indicate their involvement in reading and learning activities. According to Skinner et al. (2009), behavioral

engagement is reflected in students' constructive and active participation in classroom learning through observable behaviors, including attention, effort and persistence, active participation, and compliance with classroom rules. These behaviors demonstrate the extent to which students are involved in the learning process and participate in instructional activities. In this study, the conceptual discussion of behavioral reading engagement is limited to two indicators, namely attention and active participation, because these indicators are considered the most relevant to shared reading activities in early childhood education.

1.7.2 Operational Definition

a) Big Book

In this study, a Big Book refers to a reading media developed for kindergarten students in a large book format to support shared reading activities. The Big Book is designed with large illustrations, simple language, and interactive features so that children can easily follow the story and remain engaged during reading activities.

b) SDG 16

In this study, SDG 16 refers to selected, age-appropriate values primarily related to Target 16.3 on the rule of law and equal access to justice and Target 16.6 on effective, accountable, and transparent institutions. These values are represented through peace, justice,

honesty, responsibility, and following rules, which are presented in simple and familiar contexts appropriate for young learners. The integration of these values is intended to introduce SDG 16-related social values during shared reading activities.

c) Shared Reading

In this study, shared reading refers to a collaborative reading activity conducted between the teacher and students using the developed Big Book. The activity is implemented through three stages: before reading, during reading, and after reading. Throughout these stages, the teacher supports children's participation by reading the story aloud, asking guiding questions, encouraging predictions, and discussing the story together with the students.

d) Behavioral Reading Engagement

Behavioral reading engagement is operationalized in this study through the observation of students' observable behaviors during the limited try out of the SDG 16 integrated Big Book in shared reading activities. Based on Skinner et al. (2009), the operational definition is limited to two indicators, namely attention and active participation. Attention refers to students' observable focus during shared reading, such as paying attention to the teacher, the story, and the illustrations. Active participation refers to students' observable involvement during the reading activity, including answering the teacher's questions, repeating vocabulary, pointing

to illustrations, making simple predictions, and participating in discussions. These behaviors are observed using a behavioral reading engagement observation checklist to describe students' responses during the implementation of the developed Big Book. The observation is conducted descriptively and is not intended to measure the effectiveness of the Big Book in improving students' behavioral reading engagement.

