

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Under the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, English learning is directed toward developing students' ability to understand texts as meaningful and contextual communication. Reading is considered a vital language skill since it allows students to gain knowledge, enhance critical thinking, and expand their understanding. In the eighth grade at junior high school, students are introduced to recount texts, which require them to identify the sequence of past events, understand detailed information, recognize the generic structure, and interpret vocabulary in context. Therefore, Learners are anticipated to not only interpret written language but also to grasp the overall significance of the text proficiently.

However, based on observations conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Tanjungpinang during the Pengenalan Lingkungan Persekolahan (PLP) program, many eighth-grade students experienced difficulties in reading recount texts. Most students encountered problems in identifying the main idea, understanding detailed information, making inferences, and interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary. These difficulties often prevented them from comprehending the overall meaning of the text. Consequently, students' reading performance did not meet the expected learning outcomes, indicating that more effective instructional strategies were needed to improve their reading skills.

An important factor affecting students' reading skills is the instructional strategy employed by the teacher during the learning process. Effective

instructional strategies should not only employ appropriate teaching techniques but also integrate digital learning media to support students' engagement and facilitate reading comprehension. However, although the teacher had implemented various instructional approaches, such as group discussions, question answer sessions, and text based tasks, the integration of digital media and interactive technology into reading instruction remained limited. Consequently, students' engagement in reading activities was not optimal, which affected their ability to comprehend recount texts effectively. This finding was consistent with the study conducted by (Rafid et al., 2025), which revealed that difficulties in utilizing digital media hinder the improvement of students' reading interest.

Given the limited integration of digital media in reading instruction, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) was regarded as an effective approach to improving students' reading skills. ICT enables teachers to develop more interactive and interactive educational settings by utilizing various digital resources that support students' comprehension. One instructional strategy that has attracted considerable attention is digital storytelling, which combines narration, written text, images, audio, animation, and video into a meaningful learning experience. Through these multimodal features, digital storytelling provides contextual support that helps students understand the content of a text more easily while increasing their motivation and participation during reading activities.

The capability of digital storytelling to enhance reading skills can also be explained through the multimedia learning principles, which indicated that students achieved better learning outcomes when information was conveyed through verbal

and visual channels simultaneously. Rather than relying solely on printed text, digital storytelling allows students to process information through multiple modes simultaneously, making abstract ideas easier to understand and unfamiliar vocabulary easier to remember. In addition, the authentic contexts presented in digital stories encourage students to connect new information with their prior knowledge, thereby facilitating reading comprehension. As a result, digital storytelling is considered an appropriate instructional strategy for improving students' ability to identify main ideas, understand detailed information, make inferences, recognize the generic structure of recount texts, and interpret vocabulary in context.

Several previous studies demonstrated the effectiveness of digital storytelling in English language learning. (Hidayati & Ira Maisarah, 2024) for example, reported that digital storytelling increased students' engagement and improved their understanding of learning materials. Nevertheless, most previous studies have primarily focused on productive language skills, particularly speaking and writing, while relatively few have examined its effect on receptive language skills, especially reading comprehension and vocabulary mastery. Furthermore, studies investigating the effectiveness of digital storytelling in teaching recount texts at the junior high school level remain limited, particularly in the Indonesian context. Therefore, further research is needed to provide empirical evidence regarding the effect of digital storytelling on students' reading skills in recount texts.

Based on these considerations, this study was conducted to investigate the effect of digital storytelling on junior high school students' reading skills in recount

texts at SMP Negeri 2 Tanjungpinang. Specifically, the study aimed to determine whether the use of digital storytelling significantly improves eighth-grade students' reading skills, particularly in reading comprehension and vocabulary mastery. It is expected that the findings of this study will contribute both theoretically and practically by enriching the existing literature on technology-integrated English language teaching and by providing English teachers with an innovative, interactive, and student-centered instructional strategy for improving students' reading skills.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the problems identified in this research will be:

1. Students still experienced difficulties in understanding recount texts, especially in reading comprehension and vocabulary in context.
2. Students' interest in reading during English learning was relatively low, which affected their overall reading skills.
3. The lack of variety in learning media and teaching strategies caused students to lose interest quickly during reading activities.
4. Research on the effect of digital storytelling on junior high school students' reading skills, especially in recount texts, was still limited and required further investigation.

1.3 Limitation of the Research

This study was limited to investigating the effect of digital storytelling in English learning, focusing on students' reading skills. The type of text examined

in this research was restricted to recount texts in accordance with the basic competencies applicable at the junior high school level. The research subjects were eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Tanjungpinang during the academic year in which the research was conducted. Therefore, this study did not cover other language skills such as listening, speaking, and writing, nor did it examine text types other than recount texts.

1.4 Research Question

The research question of this study was: “Is there any significant effect of digital storytelling on junior high school students’ reading skills in recount texts?”

1.5 Research Objective

The objective of this study was to determine the effect of digital storytelling on students' reading skills, particularly their reading comprehension of recount texts. This included students' ability to identify main ideas, understand detailed information, make inferences, and interpret vocabulary in context.

1.6 Significances of the Research

This study was expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits, as detailed below:

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This study was expected to contribute to the development of the literature on the use of digital storytelling to improve junior high school students' reading skills, particularly in recount texts.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

1. For English Teachers: This research served as a reference for developing more engaging and effective reading instruction methods.
2. For Students: It was expected to help students enrich their vocabulary, improve their comprehension of recount texts, and increase their learning motivation.
3. For Future Researchers: It was expected to provide references for implementing technology based learning in accordance with the curriculum.

1.7 Definition of the Key Terms

1. Digital Storytelling in Recount text

Digital storytelling in the context of recount texts refers to the use of digital media to retell past experiences or events in chronological order by integrating text, images, audio, and video into a coherent and engaging narrative.

2. Reading

Reading is a complex cognitive process involving the ability to decode written symbols and construct meaning from texts. It requires the integration of various components, including vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension, and reading strategies.

3. Recount Text

A recount text is a type of text that presents a sequence of past events into three main parts: orientation, events, and re-orientation.