CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the research background, the problem statement, the research objectives, the hypothesis, the significance of the study, the scope and limitations, and definitions of key terms.

A. Background of the Research

Reading is one of the main skills in education that affects many aspects of learning, especially in understanding academic texts, expanding vocabulary, and improving critical thinking skills.[1] Among the 4 main skills in learning English, speaking, listening, and writing, reading is very important because it is the foundation for understanding vocabulary and grammar.[2] Reading is not only understanding the words in a text, but also interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating the information contained in it. In learning English as a foreign language (EFL), reading skills are also an important step in mastering other skills, such as writing and speaking.[3] Reading is not only needed in academic life, but also in everyday life. Reading is a tool to develop insight, creativity, and

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[1] A. S. Mamun, *"The Effect of Using Digital Comic Book on Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement in Narrative Text,"* dalam *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Literasi dan Pedagogi (SRADA)*, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Pancasakti Tegal, 2023, hlm. 168–178.

[2] J. Rana, P. L. Gutierrez, dan J. C. Oldroyd, *"Quantitative Methods,"* dalam *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance*, 2021, hlm. 1–6.

[3] A. D. Saputri, S. Sunardi, dan A. A. Musadad, *"Digital Comics as A Media in EFL Reading Classrooms,"* *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2021, hlm. 1097–1102.

critical thinking skills that are very much needed in the 21st century.[4]

However, many students in Indonesia still face challenges in improving their reading skills. Low interest in reading is one of the main obstacles. Based on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) report, Indonesia is often ranked lower in reading literacy compared to other countries.[5] Traditional media such as textbooks tend to be considered boring by students so they are less motivated to learn.[6] Students often find it difficult to understand the main idea, answer critical questions, or interpret the texts they read. Therefore, innovative solutions are needed to improve their reading skills. In the digital era, technology has brought opportunities to overcome this problem. For example, the use of technology allows students to access reading materials anytime and anywhere.[7]

The development of digital technology has had a significant impact on various aspects of life, including education. In Indonesia, the use of digital technology in education has begun to be widely applied to improve the quality of learning. As part of generation Z who grew up in

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[4] A. A. Wirdiyana, C. Sunaengsih, dan A. A. Syahid, *"Utilization of Digital Books in Increasing Students' Reading Interest," Pedagogia: Journal of Education*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2024, hlm. 134–144.

[5] A. Surya, J. I. S. Poerwanti, dan M. I. Sriyanto, *"The Effectiveness of the Use of Digital-Based Educational Comic Media in Improving Reading Interest in Elementary School Students,"* dalam *Proceeding of the 3rd International Conference on Learning Innovation and Quality Education (ICLIQE 2019)*, Atlantis Press, Februari 2020, hlm. 411–415.

[6] M. Mutiaramses dan Y. Fitria, *"Development of Problem Based Learning (PBL) Oriented Digital Comics to Improve Students' Science Literacy," Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan IPA*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2022, hlm. 699–704.

[7] A. A. Wirdiyana, C. Sunaengsih, dan A. A. Syahid, *"Utilization of Digital Books in Increasing Students' Reading Interest," Pedagogia: Journal of Education*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2024, hlm. 134–144

the era of globalization and technological advancement, around 63.82 million young Indonesians have a high interest in technology-based media.[8] Information and communication technology (ICT) is one of the main innovations that influences the teaching and learning process. The use of technology-based learning media such as e-books, learning applications, interactive videos, and digital comics is an attractive alternative that helps students understand the material more easily and enjoyably.[9]

Digital-based learning technology also provides a lot of support for teachers in delivering material that is difficult to understand using conventional methods. [10] Explained that teachers can now utilize various technological media, including audio-visual, interactive applications, and digital comics to create a more engaging classroom experience. This media allows students to focus more and understand the learning material better, especially in challenging subjects such as English. This is in line with the objectives of the School Literacy Movement (GLS) in Indonesia, which aims to improve students' literacy skills through innovative approaches that are relevant to the

[8] L. Anggraeni, C. Darmawan, dan S. W. Tanshzil, *"The Use of Comic-Based Technology: Media Cultivation of Values in the Nation Defense,"* dalam *Proceeding of the 2nd Annual Civic Education Conference (ACEC 2019)*, Maret 2020, Atlantis Press, hlm. 428–431.

[9] Z. A. Arief, E. Mujahidin, dan R. H. Hartono, *"The Effect of Digital Comic Media on East Asian Students' English Language Learning Outcomes,"* *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2022, hlm. 117–124.

[10] A. S. Fatimah, S. Santiana, dan Y. Saputra, *"Digital Comic: An Innovation of Using Toondoo as Media Technology for Teaching English Short Story,"* *English Review: Journal of English Education*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2019, hlm. 101–108.

needs of the times.[11]

One of the digital technology innovations that can be used as an effective reading learning medium is digital comics.[12] Comics are media that combine image and text elements to convey information in an interesting and easy-to- understand way. In education, comics are used to help students understand abstract concepts, increase creativity, and motivate them to learn.[13] The popularity of comics among the younger generation, both in print and digital form, makes this media an effective tool to attract students' attention.[14] According to Bose and Singh, comics can be defined as a series of interconnected images to tell a story, either with words or without words at all. In various countries, including Indonesia, the younger generation shows great interest in comics because of their interesting storylines and entertaining visuals. In science education, comics have proven effective in overcoming the challenges of conveying abstract concepts that are difficult to understand.[15]

Along with the development of technology, comics are now available in a more interactive and dynamic digital format. Digital

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[11] Surya, Poerwanti, dan Sriyanto, *"The Effectiveness of the Use...,"* hlm. 414.

[12] J. Kirchoff, *"Using Digital Comics to Develop Digital Literacy: Fostering Functionally, Critically, and Rhetorically Literate Students," Texas Journal of Literacy Education*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2017, hlm. 117–129.

[13] I. Damopolii, T. Lumembang, dan G. O. İlhan, *"Digital Comics in Online Learning During COVID-19: Its Effect on Student Cognitive Learning Outcomes," International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies*, vol. 15, no. 19, 2021, hlm. 33.

[14] J. Maity, *"Comics in Digital Forms: An Overview and Growth of Digital Comics in the Present Era," Contemporary Literary Review India*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2022, hlm. 86–98.

[15] S. Bose dan P. Singh, *"The Potential of Digital Comics in the Classroom,"* dalam *AIP Conference Proceedings*, vol. 2782, no. 1, AIP Publishing, 2023.

comics, are comics developed using digital technology so that they can be accessed via electronic devices such as smartphones, tablets, or computers. Digital comics have various formats that can be adjusted to the needs of readers and learning objectives. According to Kirchoff,[16] digital comics can be divided into three main types. The first type is remediated comics, which are digital comics that duplicate the traditional format of printed comics, still using elements such as panels and text, but published on a digital platform. The second type is ergodic-hypercomics, which allow readers to interact with the story, such as choosing a particular storyline or point of view. This type provides a more active and personal learning experience. Third, multimedia comics, which integrate additional elements such as animation, music, and sound effects to create a more immersive reading experience.[17]

Many studies have discussed the effectiveness of digital comics in improving students' reading and learning abilities (Fitri et al.[18]; Fitria

[16] J. Kirchoff, *"Using Digital Comics to Develop Digital Literacy: Fostering Functionally, Critically, and Rhetorically Literate Students," Texas Journal of Literacy Education*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2017, hlm. 117–129.

[17] J. Maity, *"Comics in Digital Forms: An Overview and Growth of Digital Comics in the Present Era," Contemporary Literary Review India*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2022, hlm. 86–98.

[18] Y. Fitria, A. Malik, S. H. Halili, dan R. Amelia, *"Digital Comic Teaching Materials: Its Role to Enhance Student's Literacy on Organism Characteristic Topic," Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, vol. 19, no. 10, 2023, artikel em2333.

et al.[19]; Mamun[20]; Taka[21]). The advantage of digital comics as a learning medium lies in its ability to attract students' attention through high visualization and interactivity.[22] Research by Bose and Singh[23] shows that comics, including their digital versions, are a very effective medium for conveying information in an interesting way. Comics help students understand complex concepts through simple visualizations, and their use as an educational tool has been a global trend since the mid-20th century. In addition, digital comics allow for more flexible learning, because students can access them anytime and anywhere using digital devices.[24] Damopolii et al[25]., in their research also stated that the use of digital comics in science learning can help explain abstract concepts that are difficult for students to understand if they only use conventional methods. The visual and narrative elements in comics make the material easier to remember, while the interactive features help students to be more actively involved in the learning process. In

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[19] M. Fitri, P. A. Hasibuan, N. Nurzena, dan M. Murny, *"The Use of Digital Comics on Students' Reading Comprehension of Narrative Texts," Innovative: Journal of Social Science Research*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2023, hlm. 263–270.

[20] A. S. Mamun, *"The Effect of Using Digital Comic Book on Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement in Narrative Text,"* dalam *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Literasi dan Pedagogi (SRADA)*, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Pancasakti Tegal, 2023, hlm. 168–178.

[21] S. D. Taka, *"The Efficacy of Using Digital Comics in Reading Class to Senior High School Students," IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2022, hlm. 882–892.

[22] N. Istiq'faroh dan A. Mustadi, *"Improving Elementary School Students' Creativity and Writing Skills through Digital Comics," Ilkogretim Online*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2020.

[23] S. Bose dan P. Singh, *"The Potential of Digital Comics in the Classroom,"* dalam *AIP Conference Proceedings*, vol. 2782, no. 1, AIP Publishing, 2023.

[24] J. Aggleton, *"Defining Digital Comics: A British Library Perspective," Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, 2019, hlm. 395–405.

[25] Damopolii et al., *Digital Comics in Online Learning*, hlm. 33.

addition, digital comics provide a new way to connect text with interesting visual elements, thereby strengthening students' understanding of the subject matter.

In reading English, digital comics provide an innovative solution to increase students' interest and understanding. Research by Fitria et al.[26] shows that digital comics can improve student literacy by combining text and images to help students understand abstract concepts and enrich their vocabulary. Meanwhile, Taka [27] also explains that digital comics provide a fun learning atmosphere, so that students are more motivated to read. Digital comics also have an important role in building students' scientific literacy skills so that they can be adapted to various subjects.[28]

One type of digital comic that is increasingly popular is Webtoon, which is a digital comic that is released online and optimized for electronic devices such as computers and mobile phones.[29] Webtoon provides a more interactive reading experience through a combination of interesting stories and colorful visuals. This platform has various genres that can meet students' interests, such as drama, comedy, or educational stories. In addition, Webtoon also allows for more flexible

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[26] Fitri et al., *The Use of Digital Comics*, hlm. 263.

[27] Taka, *The Efficacy of Using Digital Comics*, hlm. 882.

[28] M. Mutiaramses dan Y. Fitria, *"Development of Problem Based Learning (PBL) Oriented Digital Comics to Improve Students' Science Literacy," Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan IPA*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2022, hlm. 699–704.

[29] W. I. Erya dan R. Pustika, *"Students' Perception Towards The Use Of Webtoon To Improve Reading Comprehension Skill," Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2021, hlm. 51–56.

learning, because it can be accessed anytime and anywhere using a device connected to the internet .[30] Previous studies have shown that the use of Webtoon can improve students' reading skills. Sabiq[31] found that Webtoon can help students understand English texts more easily through a combination of interesting images and text. Another study by Ma'ruf & Fakhurriana[32] emphasized that Webtoon provides a fun learning atmosphere, so that students feel more motivated to learn.

This study aims to test the effectiveness of using digital comics in improving students' English reading skills. Based on this explanation, the researcher conducted this research experimentally entitled "The Effectiveness of Using Digital Comics toward Reading Skill on Seventh Grade Students at SMP Negeri 1 Sumbergempol".

B. Statement of Research Problem

Based on the background explained above, the formulation of the problem is as follows: "Is there any significant difference in students' scores before and after being taught using digital comics toward the English reading skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1

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[30] S. Ali dan E. Emirati, *"Webtoon Application and Students' Reading Activity," Ethical Lingua: Journal of Language Teaching and Literature*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2021, hlm. 518–525.

[31] A. H. A. Sabiq, *"Students' Perception of Webtoon as a Self-Directed Learning Medium for Reading Skill," Pubmedia Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2024.

[32] M. H. M. Ma'ruf dan R. Fakhurriana, *"The Students' Perception Towards the Use Of Webtoon to Improve Reading Comprehension Skill," IJET (Indonesian Journal of English Teaching)*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2024, hlm. 233–241.

Sumbergempol?"

C. Objectives of the Research

Based on the research problem above, the objective of this study is: To determine the effectiveness of using digital comics toward the English reading skills of grade VII students at SMP Negeri 1 Sumbergempol.

D. Research Hypothesis

In experimental research there are two types of hypotheses, Ha (Alternative Hypothesis) and H0 (Null Hypothesis). Based on the background and objectives of the study, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

a. **H0:** The use of digital comics does not have a significant effect on improving the English reading skills of grade VII students at SMP Negeri 1 Sumbergempol.

b. **Ha:** The use of digital comics can significantly improve the English reading skills of grade VII students at SMP Negeri 1 Sumbergempol.

E. Significance of the Research

This research is expected to provide benefits for English

teaching and learning, all readers and researchers themselves both in theory and practice. The benefits expected from this research are as follows:

    a. Theoretical Benefits

This research is expected to enrich the study and insight into the use of digital teaching media, especially digital comics in improving the quality of students' reading skills. In addition, it is expected that the results of this study can be a recommendation in the selection of English learning media at the junior high school / MTs level.

    b. Practical Benefits

        i. For Teachers

The results of this study are expected to increase the insight of teachers in schools regarding the importance of selecting student teaching media, especially digital comics. As well as helping teachers to create more interactive teaching media.

      ii. For Students

Through this research, it is hoped that it can increase students' interest in reading, additional knowledge and new learning experiences that are different from usual by using digital comic media.

iii.   For Next Researchers

It can add experience and knowledge related to making fun English language teaching media and it is hoped that this research can be a reference for further research with a larger scope.

F. Scope and Limitations of the Research

The scope of this study focuses on the English reading skills. The limitations of this study is specific focus on digital comics as a learning medium at SMP Negeri 01 Sumbergempol, specifically with grade VII students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other schools or contexts.

G. Definition of the Key Terms

To avoid misunderstandings and errors in the meaning of the terms contained in this study, the researcher explains the description of these terms, including the following:

a. Digital Comics

Digital comics are comics in digital format, which can be accessed via electronic devices such as computers, tablets, or smartphones (Fitri et al., 2023). Unlike traditional printed comics, digital comics allow readers to interact with the content

in a more enjoyable way. This comic combines text and images, so it can make it easier for readers to understand the material being taught. In English learning, digital comics can be used to introduce new vocabulary, clarify the context of sentences, and increase students' interest in reading in a more enjoyable way.

b. Reading Skills

Reading skills are the ability to understand and process information contained in written texts. In the process, it goes through aspects, such as recognizing and pronouncing words correctly, understanding the meaning of sentences as a whole, and concluding information or messages contained in the text (Wirdiyana et al., 2024). Reading skills also include the ability to analyze the contents of the text and draw conclusions based on the information available. In this study, the reading skills referred to are students' ability to read English texts well, which includes understanding the meaning of words, sentence structure, and the ability to conclude the message conveyed in the text.