

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **A. The Background of the Study**

Digital learning refers to a learning process that utilizes digital technologies, such as online platforms and applications, to enhance access, interaction, and personalized instruction (Zou et al., 2025). Research on the digital learning ecosystem investigates learning as the result of interactions between biological elements, including teachers and students, and abiotic elements, such as ICT infrastructure, which function to transform data into meaningful knowledge (Nguyen & Tuamsuk, 2022). This approach is further supported by the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which emphasizes the use of visual and auditory channels to reduce students' cognitive load and improve learning effectiveness (Mayer, 2021, as cited in (Zou et al., 2025)). These perspectives indicate that learning in the digital era requires instructional designs that integrate technology meaningfully to support effective learning processes.

In line with the development of digital learning, digital natives particularly Generation Z, represent a group that has grown up with technology from an early age, enabling them to skillfully use digital devices and social media for learning and social interaction (Prensky, 2023, as cited in Seland & Hyggen, 2021). Studies on digital media influence mention that this generation relies heavily on online content as a primary source of information, shaping patterns of multitasking and rapid adaptation to information and communication technologies (Chang & Chang, 2023). In addition, theory of punctuated equilibrium explains that their identities

change quickly because they have instant access to information, and this strongly influences their digital lifestyle (Spaticchia, 2024). Therefore, learning approaches in schools are expected to align with the characteristics and digital experiences of today's students.

Within the context of English language learning, writing is a complex cognitive activity in English language learning that involves idea planning, text organization, appropriate vocabulary selection, and continuous revision to improve writing quality (Leotta & Ahmad, 2025). Studies conducted in the EFL context examine the development of writing skills through several stages, namely pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing, indicating that writing is a recursive process requiring critical and creative thinking (Alghasab M, 2025). In addition, research explains that learning motivation plays an important role in writing development, as intrinsic motivation encourages students to actively explore ideas and continuously revise their writing (Anggraeni et al., 2025). These findings suggest that students need strong motivation and relevant learning contexts in order to develop their writing skills optimally.

One type of text learned at the junior high school level is recount text. Agustin (2020) states that recount text is a type of text that tells readers about events or activities experienced by someone in the past. The purpose of recount text is to inform and retell the writer's experiences to the readers. However, various studies have found that students have difficulty in writing recount texts because they find it difficult to generate and organize ideas as well as a lack of proper vocabulary and grammatical functions. Therefore, this causes them to lack enthusiasm in writing

recount text (Simanjanorang, 2021). This then affects their writing, which tends to be incoherent and monotonous.

To overcome these difficulties, the use of learning modules can be an effective solution. Learning Modules are a form of self-teaching materials that are systematically designed to achieve certain learning goals. According to Arista et al. (2022) the module it is defined as printed and non-print teaching materials that contain materials, methods, limitations, and ways of evaluating that are arranged in such a way that they can be learned independently by students. A modul is a printed learning material designed to help students achieve course competencies. It supports independent learning and encourages students to be more active than when using regular textbooks or handouts (Kustandi & Darmawan, 2020).

Based on the results of the observations, it was found that the learning modules currently used still rely heavily on printed textbooks and conventional learning activities. The teaching modules used by teachers can be seen in Picture 1.1 below

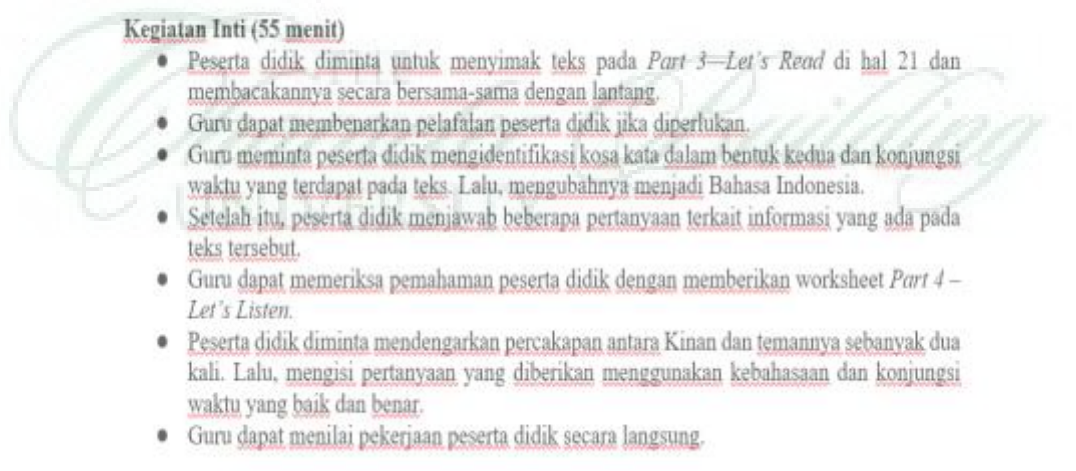


Figure 1. 1 Teachers' Module

The learning activities tend to focus on answering questions “*Peserta didik diminta menyimak kembali gambar yang diberikan oleh guru sambil menjawab pertanyaan pada Part 1 – Let’s Start di hal 15.*” “*Setelah itu, peserta didik diminta untuk mengidentifikasi informasi yang terkait pada teks sambil menjawab pertanyaan yang diberikan.*”, copying information “*Peserta didik diminta untuk mendengarkan audio sambil menyimak pertanyaan yang diberikan dan menuliskan informasi yang didapat secara tertulis.*” “*Peserta didik diminta menyimak informasi apa yang disampaikan dengan menuliskannya dikertas.*”, and reading texts “*Peserta didik diminta membaca teks pada Part 4 – Let’s Read tentang ‘Celebrating Independence Day’ dengan lantang secara bersama-sama.*” “*Peserta didik diminta untuk menyimak teks pada Part 3—Let’s Read di hal 21 dan membacakannya secara bersama-sama dengan lantang.*” These show makes the module less engaging for students. Therefore, the material in the teacher teaching module has not accommodated the characteristics of the current digital generation.

However, to reinforce this observation, an interview was also conducted with an English teacher of the eighth grade (YH) at SMP N 35 Medan. The following are the results of the interview between the reacher (R) and the teacher (YH):

R: “What module do you use to teach recount text?”

YH: I use Curriculum Merdeka module. Usually, It’s just from the textbook, or I give them examples from the internet. We discuss the structure, and then they are told to write. Well, they are not very enthusiastic. The module is lacks connection to their world, so they get bored quickly.

The interview revealed that the teacher mainly uses the *Kurikulum Merdeka* module and textbooks, occasionally supplemented with examples from the internet. However, students' responses to these learning activities were reported to be less enthusiastic, as the module lack connection to students' real-life experiences and interest.

Based on the results of the interview, it can be concluded that the module use by the teachers still relying solely on textbooks and conventional approaches, which do not fully meet students' needs and characteristics. This condition indicates a gap between students' digital-oriented learning preferences and the available learning media. Therefore, it is necessary to develop learning modules that are more contextual, interactive, and relevant to students' digital experiences.

One instructional approach that aligns with students' digital characteristics is Game-Based Learning (GBL). Jihan & Maharsi (2024) state that Game-based learning (GBL) is a type of learning that involves combining educational content and learning materials with digital games. These tasks let students do basic actions or get really creative with problem-solving. Jääskä et al. (2022) study investigate that GBL effectively increased student motivation in teaching projects. Other research conducted by Andika, Agustini, Sudatha (2025) shows that the use of Game-Based Learning (GBL) has a significant positive impact on student motivation and learning achievement in various fields. Thus, the use of GBL has been proven to be an effective learning innovation to improve student learning outcomes and interest.

One of the digital platforms that is popular among teenagers is Roblox, which is an online game that allows users to create and play their own virtual experiences. Roblox games are one of the alternatives that can be brought into the learning process. Roblox is an online social networking-based multiplayer gaming platform with tens of millions of active users worldwide, particularly among children and early adolescents (Morreale & Rosa, 2024). These users, referred to as players, have the ability to design their own games and immersive experiences while also generating income through in-game monetization features (Umair & Syas, 2022). Collectively, players spend billions of hours on the platform each month, with studies indicating that children under the age of 13- many of them are elementary school students spend an average of more than 50 hours per month playing, this shows that the platform is still popular. (Dezuanni et al., 2025)

Based on the findings of the interview conducted at SMP Negeri 35 Medan, it was found that the teaching of recount text still relies on conventional learning materials, and there is a need for more interactive and technology-integrated learning media to support students' writing development. Therefore, this study intends to develop a Roblox-based learning module for Grade VIII students in writing recount text. The development of this module is expected to connect students' digital experiences with the academic objectives of English language learning, in line with the principles of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, which emphasizes contextual, enjoyable, and student-centered learning.

## **B. The Problem of the Study**

Based on the research background, the research problem is: How is a Roblox-based learning module developed for Grade VIII students in writing recount texts at SMP N 35 Medan?

## **C. The Objective of the Study**

The objective of this research is to develop a valid and feasibility learning module that uses Roblox to help eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 35 Medan write personal recount texts.

## **D. The Scope of the Study**

This research focuses on the development of roblox based learning modules to support the teaching process of writing Personal Recount text. The subjects of this study are English teachers and 29 students at SMP N 35 Medan. Meanwhile, the object of the research is the process of developing and validating roblox-based learning modules designed to increase student participation and involvement in recount text writing activities.

## **E. The Significances of the Study**

The results of this study are expected to make a meaningful contribution both theoretically and practically to the field of English language teaching, especially in the context of the development of Roblox-based digital learning media.

### **1. Theoretical Significances**

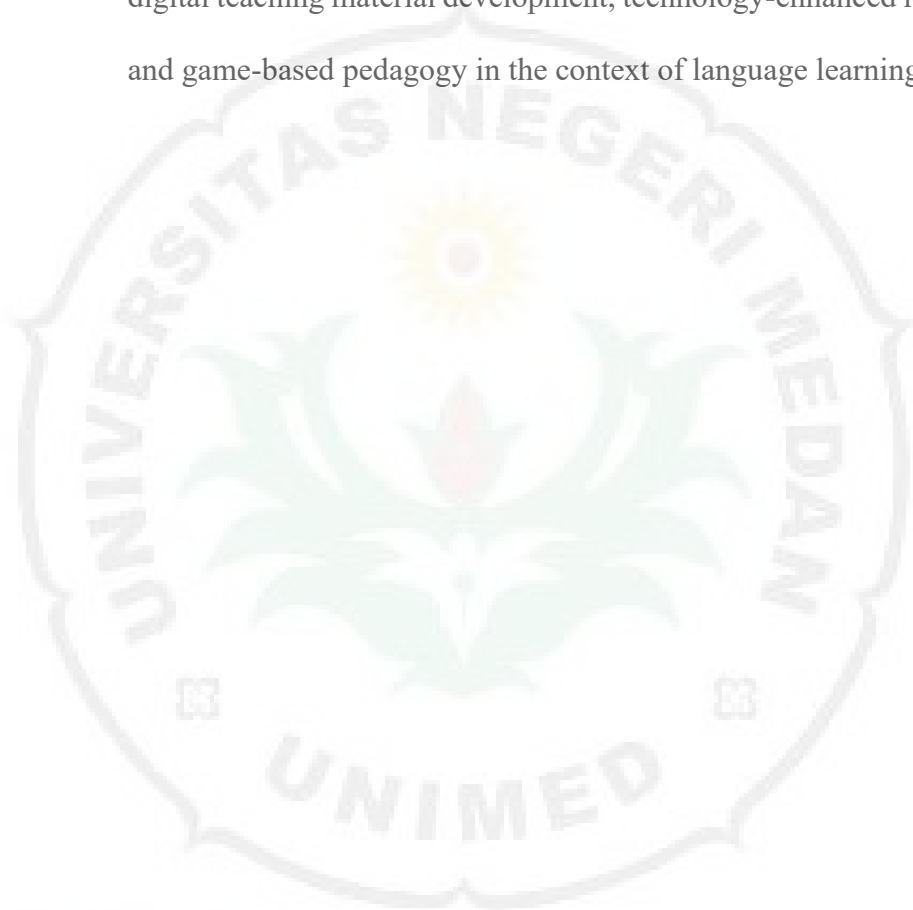
Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich insights and literature on the development of interactive learning modules that utilize game-based

learning platforms, such as Roblox, in the English teaching process. The findings of this study can expand understanding of how the integration of technology and game elements (gamification) can increase learning effectiveness, especially in writing skills and recount text learning activities.

## **2. Practical Significances**

- a) For English teachers, this research is expected to be a source of inspiration as well as a guide in developing and using innovative learning media in the classroom. The resulting Roblox-based module can help teachers deliver recount text material in a more engaging, contextual, and appropriate way to the characteristics of today's digital generation. In addition, this module can also be a new variation in learning strategies that not only focuses on language theory, but also encourages active engagement (student engagement) and collaboration between students.
- b) For students, this research provides benefits in helping them understand text recount material more fun and easily. Through interaction in the Roblox virtual environment, students can learn to write recount texts in an immersive, creative, and experiential way. Thus, they not only memorize the structure of the text, but also practice expressing their ideas and experiences more naturally. The use of this module is expected to increase students' motivation, confidence, and interest in learning English.

- c) Future Researchers, the results of this study can also be an additional reference for future researchers who are interested in the field of digital teaching material development, technology-enhanced learning, and game-based pedagogy in the context of language learning.



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