

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill in learning English as a foreign language because it enables learners to understand information, interpret meaning, and build knowledge through written texts (Brown, 2001). The development of reading ability allows students to access academic content and supports their overall language proficiency as they interact with various types of texts in the learning process.

Educational practices are expected to facilitate meaningful learning experiences that actively involve students in constructing understanding rather than receiving information passively (Mayer, 2021). Instructional materials, therefore, play a significant role in guiding students to interact with texts, process information, and develop comprehension strategies (Harmer, 2007). Learning materials that are engaging and interactive are associated with deeper understanding because students participate cognitively during learning activities (Mayer, 2021).

In the context of Indonesian education, the current curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning in which learners are required to actively understand and interpret texts as part of achieving learning outcomes. Students at the junior high school level are expected to comprehend texts by identifying main ideas, specific information, and contextual meaning, including descriptive texts used in

English instruction (Permendikbudristek, 2022). These expectations indicate that learning resources should support active engagement with texts and promote meaningful reading practices.

However, studies have reported that reading instruction often remains dominated by conventional materials that emphasize answering questions rather than guiding comprehension processes, which can reduce students' motivation and engagement in reading activities (Fitriani et al., 2023; Rahmawati, 2024). The continued reliance on printed worksheets has been associated with limited interaction, making it difficult for students to actively construct meaning from texts.

To obtain initial information regarding the teaching of descriptive texts, a plerimary interview was conducted with an English teacher at SMP N 14 Medan. The interview revealed that students frequently encountered difficulties in understanding descriptive texts, particularly in vocabulary mastery and identifying the main ideas of the text. The teacher explained that students often asked for the meaning of unfamiliar words while reading and requirea additional guidance to determine the main idea of a passage. Furthermore, reading activities were generally conducted using printed worksheets and textbook-based exercises, which mainly focused on answering comprehension questions after reading the text. According to the teacher, students sometimes showed limited participation and enthusiasm when completing these activities.

These plerimany findings indicate that the current learning practices have not fully reflected the expectations of students-centered learning. While

students are expected to actively construct meaning from texts through engaging learning experiences, many still struggle with fundamental reading skills and rely heavily on teacher assistance. This condition demonstrates a gap between the expected learning process and the actual classroom reality.

A possible way to address this issue is through the integration of technology-based instructional materials. Technology has been widely recognized as a means of creating more engaging learning environments by combining visual, textual, and interactive elements that can support students' comprehension and participation during learning activities (Mayer, 2021).

According to Resnick et al. (2023), digital learning platforms allow instructional materials to be delivered in dynamic formats that can increase motivation, participation, and understanding. Scratch is one example of a digital platform that enables educators to design interactive learning activities through animations, feedback, and problem-based tasks integrated into instructional content (Resnick et al., 2023). According to Lubis et al. (2023), the use of Scratch in education has been shown to enhance student engagement and participation because learners interact directly with the material rather than passively completing exercises.

Nevertheless, previous studies have primarily focused on general applications of Scratch or on other language skills, and limited attention has been given to developing Scratch-based worksheets specifically designed to support reading comprehension of descriptive texts at the junior high school level. This

indicates the need for instructional material development that integrates reading pedagogy with interactive digital media.

Based on the theoretical expectations that learning materials should promote active engagement and the classroom reality showing the continued use of conventional worksheets, there is a gap between what should occur in reading instruction and what actually occurs in practice. Addressing this gap requires the development of learning materials that align with curriculum goals and students' learning characteristics in the digital era.

Therefore, this study proposes the development of a Scratch-based interactive worksheet designed to support students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts. The novelty of this research lies in transforming traditional printed worksheets into interactive digital learning materials that combine reading activities with guided interaction and immediate feedback.

This development is considered urgent because without innovation in instructional materials, reading instruction may remain passive and less effective in helping students achieve the expected competencies. Developing an interactive worksheet is expected to provide a practical solution to enhance students' engagement and comprehension while supporting the implementation of student-centered learning.

Based on these considerations, this study focuses on developing a Scratch-based interactive worksheet for teaching reading comprehension of descriptive texts at the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 14 Medan.

1.2 Problem of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the problem of this research is formulated as “How is the Scratch-based interactive worksheet developed in teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text for eighth-grade students of SMP N 14 Medan?”

1.3 The Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to develop a Scratch-based interactive worksheet for teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text to the eighth-grade students of SMP N 14 Medan.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study will be only focused on developing Scratch as students' worksheet in reading descriptive text for eight grade students in the first semester at SMP N 14 Medan. The use of Scartch is offered as the solution on overcome the problem. This recommended media will be limited only for reading descriptive text. The researcher also limits the research on its participants and also its purposes. This media is developed based on the needs analysis for the learners which will motivate them to study.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to give both theoretical and practical contributions.

- 1) Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute knowledge and references to English language teaching, particularly in the development of

Scratch-based interactive worksheets for teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text.

2) Practically, this findings are useful for:

- a) For Teachers : This study is expected to provide English teachers with an alternative interactive learning medium that can support reading instruction and create a more engaging learning atmosphere in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum.
- b) For Students : This study is expected to help students improve their motivation and understanding in reading comprehension of descriptive text through interactive and game-based learning activities.
- c) For Future Researchers : This study is expected to serve as a reference for future researchers who are interested in developing interactive learning media or Scratch-based instructional materials in English language teaching.