

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explain the introduction of this research. The components in this chapter include background of the study, research question, purpose of the study, hypothesis, significance of the study, scope and limitations, definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of The Study

In learning English, there are several skills that students must learn, one of which is reading skills. The learning process of other skills is influenced by reading skills. Additionally, as required by the national curriculum, students must be able to achieve reading competencies (Nurhana, 2014). Reading skills are an important skill for students to learn. Reading skills help us to know and understand more about various of information. Students who practice reading frequently not only improve their comprehension, analysis, and evaluation of the content they have read, but also develop a more critical skill in their cognitive processes. The students' ability to interact with the advancement of knowledge in the global world is another reason why reading literacy is crucial. Reading is one of the ways that most people utilize to obtain information and broaden their knowledge. It's not just a means for writers and readers to exchange ideas (Hidayati et al., 2020).

In the 21st century, the education system has gone through many changes. Currently, the education curriculum system in Indonesia emphasizes students to have critical thinking skills. The goal is to develop

student's creativity, innovation, and critical thinking skills. Critical thinking is the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information logically and objectively in order to make decisions or solve problems. Critical thinking is one of the important things for a person to analyze and decide on a decision. In addition, critical thinking is also important when we communicate with each other. Critical thinking skills are very important in Indonesian education. Activities that aim to teach language require the use of critical thinking skills. Students are always exposed to different types of information from what they read and see, which demands analysis and critical thinking skills. Nowadays, critical thinking abilities are crucial for developing other thinking abilities, such as the ability to solve problems and make decisions. There are so many things in daily life that are deserving of criticism (Saputri & Dewi, 2022). In professional and educational environments, the development of critical thinking is widely acknowledged as an important skill for learning in the 21st century (Heard et al., 2020).

In the process of learning, including the study of the English language, critical thinking has a crucial role for students. Language is the most important way of communication for humans to connect with each other. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language. English can also be used to express our thoughts and ideas to others. As English is the most widely used language in the world, its role in today's global society is crucial and cannot be ignored. One of the most common languages spoken worldwide is English. English, as an international language and *Lingua Franca*, definitely has a crucial role in many aspects of modern work life (Rao,

2019). As we all know, critical thinking is required in the learning process for reading activities. Students need to be able to analyze the texts they have read critically. Critical thinking is needed to analyze the problems, content, and conclusions from the text that has been read.

Nowadays, technology is an invention that has greatly improved modern human life. Technology has advantages in many areas of human existence, including the field of education. The era of globalization and technological advancement has caused everyone to have a deep attachment to all aspects of human life and context (Warsihna et al., 2019). Effective and efficient online learning can be achieved by utilizing technology in the development of educational materials like multimedia and other digital platforms (Heliawati et al., 2022). These technical innovations come in a variety of forms, such as smartphones, internet, websites, mobile apps, and others. We can communicate remotely, locate information sources quickly, and take advantage of a number of other advantages thanks to technology. Based on pre-research, which has been conducted by researchers, there are still teachers who prefer to teach using traditional methods. This is due to the limitation of students in using smartphones at the junior high school level. In the current era, teachers are required to be more creative in using digital platforms that can be utilized in the learning process. Nowadays, a lot of teachers use digital media in the classroom and are exposed to a variety of platforms. This is a result of how common it is to switch from traditional learning methods to technology-based learning methods (Mandasari & Aminatun, 2020).

One of the web-based learning tools that is frequently utilized in the teaching and learning process is Wordwall. Wordwall is an innovative, interactive online learning platform. It has many features that can be used by teachers to make learning materials more interesting for students. An application called Wordwall can be used to make interactive educational materials. Wordwall is an online tool that may be used to create educational materials including tests, matching, pairing, anagrams, word searches, random words, and categorization, among other things (Fitria, 2023). Among the interactive learning media applications available on the website is Wordwall, which offers entertaining game-based quiz features that attract students' interest and make learning more enjoyable (Marensi et al., 2023). Nowadays, the wordwall platform is widely used by teachers as an interactive evaluation tool, which helps students feel less worried and more excited about the questions. In addition to being easy to use for evaluating student achievement, Wordwall may help students understand online content (Fitria, 2023). An online tool called Wordwall is used to make interactive games based on quizzes. Teachers who want to use other methods for creating and evaluating an online learning assessment can use this web application, which has a wordwall of several game models that we can develop. Assignments for students to complete can be wordwall exercises (Saputri & Dewi, 2022).

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that in learning a foreign language there are several skills and components that are related and must be learned by students. The development of students' way of

thinking is also one of the things that really needs to be considered. Students need to apply critical thinking to improve their reading skills. To analyze, understand, and evaluate the content of the text they have read, students involve their cognitive activities. Thus, students can think rationally to solve a problem. In addition, technological advances have brought many changes in various fields, one of which is the field of education. Digital learning platforms are an example of modern innovation in technology in the education field. This platform can be in the form of applications or websites such as Kahoot!, Quizziz, Wordwall and many others. The Wordwall application itself is a website-based digital platform that has many interactive features that can be utilized by teachers to help them in the learning process. Wordwall application supports the critical thinking process by offering interactive and customizable features that challenge students to engage deeply with content. Activities such as quizzes, matching games, and puzzles can be designed to require analysis, evaluation, and logical reasoning, encouraging students to think beyond simple memorization. Interactive decision-making activities, such as "True or False" or "Find the Match," promote critical evaluation by requiring students to make quick, reasoned choices. Additionally, Wordwall enables teachers to present scenarios or case-based challenges, prompting students to reflect on information, predict outcomes, and justify their reasoning. These features make Wordwall an effective tool for cultivating critical thinking skills in an interactive and engaging environment. Nowadays, teachers are encouraged to be teachers who can utilize the application of

technology in the learning process. The use of learning media plays a crucial role in the education and teaching process. In order to successfully convey information and help students in understanding lessons, teachers frequently use a variety of media. Recognizing the importance of learning media is essential for enhancing the teaching and learning experience. Interactive learning media, in particular, makes the process more effective, efficient, and engaging. It serves as a bridge for communication, ensuring the smooth and interactive exchange of information between teachers and students (Arni et al., 2024). The text used in this material is narrative text. Although narrative text is entertaining, its real value lies in its ability to develop critical thinking skills. By engaging with characters, exploring complex themes, and reflecting on moral messages, readers learn to think deeply, analyze situations, and make informed decisions. Teachers and students should engage narrative texts not only as stories to enjoy, but also as tools to sharpen the mind and build intellectual capacity. It is useful to consider teaching reading skills in EFL classes by choosing narrative text themes that students are already familiar with and by providing critical reading comprehension (Azmi & Achadiyah, 2023).

Previous research about the effect of using wordwall media in learning has been conducted. Rosyidah, et al. (2022) conducted a study that focused on knowing the effectiveness and perceptions of using wordwall as technology-based learning for junior high school students in learning grammar. The findings of this research on the use of wordwall as technology-based learning for junior high school students in learning

grammar showed that the wordwall online game significantly affected the quality of students' grammar. Hidayaty, et al. (2022) used quantitative methods in their research to determine the effect of word wall media on student interest and learning outcomes. the results of the study showed that wordwall media affected student interest and learning outcomes. Research conducted by Muzaini et al. (2023) focused on the effect of blended learning with word wall application on critical thinking and student learning outcomes. The result of the study is the application of blended learning with wordwall application can improve student learning outcomes by increasing learning enjoyment which in turn can improve critical thinking skills. Alpatikah (2022) conducted a study that focused on investigating the effectiveness of wordwall.net as an online website platform on students' vocabulary. The study's finding showed that wordwall media has an effect on students' vocabulary, and researchers also mentioned that the interactive features of wordwall media can increase students' motivation. Rachmanita (2021) conducted a study using quantitative methods to determine the effect of using wordwall on students' writing ability on description text. The findings of this study showed that the use of wordwall media was effective on students' writing ability on descriptive text.

The researcher concluded that wordwall is a web-based interactive media that can be used by teachers to help the learning process become more active and fun. Wordwall is one of the web-based digital media that helps teachers to create interactive learning media. The use of interactive multimedia improves learning outcomes, motivation, and critical thinking

skills (Hamdani et al., 2022). Wordwall has many interesting features that can make students interested in being more active and fun. Wordwall has also been widely used by teachers as a platform for making interactive assessment media so that students are not nervous during the evaluation. In addition, in today's era which is very easy to use technology, it is hoped that teachers can further utilize technology to facilitate learning and teaching activities, one of which is using this Wordwall media as a learning media to hone skills in English. The use of digital media in education, especially how it can improve reading skills, has been the subject of several studies. However, research that specifically examines the effect of web-based digital media such as Wordwall on the development of students' critical thinking skills is still limited, especially at the junior high school level. Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled *“The Effect of Web-Based Wordwall Digital Media on Critical Thinking in Reading Skills for Junior High School Students at MTsN 2 Kediri”*.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the research background above, this research formulates research problems. Therefore, this research is interested in focusing on: Is there a significant effect on the critical thinking in reading skills of VIII grade students by using the wordwall website at MTsN 2 Kediri (Kanigoro)?

1.3 Purpose of The Study

Based on the research problem above, the researcher concludes that the objectives of this study are: To investigate whether there is a significant effect in learning English by using the wordwall website on critical thinking in reading skills of VIII grade students at MTsN 2 Kediri (Kanigoro).

1.4 Hypothesis

Based on the research problem, the hypothesis that can be stated are:

1. Null Hypothesis (H₀): there is no significant difference in the effect between teaching using Wordwall website and small group discussion on critical thinking in reading skills of class VIII students.
2. Alternative Hypothesis (H_a): there is a significant difference in the effect between teaching using Wordwall website and small group discussion on critical thinking in reading skills of grade VIII students.

1.5 Significance of The Study

1. For students

This research is expected to provide awareness to students that learning English is fun and can learn from any source, including learning to think critically through website-based digital media, one of which uses wordwall.

2. For teachers

This research aims to educate teachers about technology-based media that can be used for learning tools to create a more pleasant atmosphere such as this website-based wordwall media.

3. For researchers

This research is intended to provide and deepen the researcher's understanding of wordwall which has many advantages in learning English, one of which is utilizing various wordwall features to improve students' critical thinking.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on the effect of wordwall website in improving critical thinking skills in students' reading skills. The subjects of this study were students of class VIII MTsN 2 Kediri (Kanigoro). The things that will be researched in this study are students' critical thinking in reading skills. The use of web-based media in this study was limited by the researcher. Wordwall media is the only interactive media that researchers used for this study. The application of wordwall is aimed at junior high school students where students at that level are required to be able to think critically and creatively. Therefore, learning English by using this wordwall website expected that students can understand the material well through this website-based media. This wordwall media also has various features that can be used by teachers and students to learn English.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. Reading Skills

Reading skill is one of the essential skills in English. The ability to comprehend, analyze, and evaluate texts in various ways is referred to as reading skill. For students to learn new material and acquire new

knowledge, reading comprehension is essential. Reading is a comprehension process that helps you understand a text (Tanjung, 2018). The cognitive ability that an individual can employ to interact with written text is known as a reading skills (Bojovic, 2010).

2. Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is one of the important abilities for humans. critical thinking is the ability to analyze and evaluate a fact by thinking clearly and rationally. Critical thinking is the art of evaluating and analyzing a thought and trying to find ways to improve it rationally (Paul & Elder, 2007). The term "critical thinking" has a broad definition that includes both social interaction and cognitive activities (Tahira & Haider, 2019).

3. Wordwall

Wordwall is a website-based interactive digital media that provides many features to support learning to be more fun. A web-based interactive tool called Wordwall can be used to construct many kinds of online quiz forms (Anisah, 2022). A web-based tool for making teaching tools is called Wordwall. There are many instructive and interactive quiz-based games on this web application (Rosydiyah et al., 2022).