

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The introduction discusses the research background, the research problem, the research purpose, the primary definition of the research, the scope and limitations, and the research's relevance.

A. Background of the Study

Reading is one of the most important skills to master for understanding information. Especially in education, reading is a skill educators focus on to impart knowledge to learners. In line with McKoon & Ratcliff (1992; Block, 2013), reading comprehension plays a crucial role in enabling learners to extract, interpret, and construct meaning from text, forming the foundation for academic success and lifelong learning. It bridges decoding words with deeper understanding, critical thinking, and knowledge application across subjects. Reading comprehension is essential because it transforms passive word recognition into active engagement with ideas, allowing individuals to analyze, infer, and synthesize information effectively.

However, in stark contrast to the importance of reading comprehension, a phenomenon has emerged alongside the rise of the digital age that is affecting reading interest. Sari et al. (2024) said the era of digital disruption is defined by easy access to information via numerous visual channels, such as social media, short films, and audio content. While this phenomenon has significantly altered how individuals absorb knowledge, it also poses new obstacles to the enthusiasm for and practice of in-depth reading. In response to this, it is necessary to conduct this study to find a solution for improving students' reading comprehension, particularly for EFL students who need to make a

greater effort to understand English texts. Reading comprehension is vital for EFL students as it builds vocabulary, grammar awareness, and cultural insights in a non-native language, directly boosting overall proficiency (Grabe, 2009; Anderson, 1991). Teaching strategies like pre-reading activation, shared inquiry, and monitoring enhance EFL learners' ability to handle complex texts, improving exam performance and writing skills (Urquhart & Weir, 1998). In EFL classrooms, explicit comprehension instruction fosters independence, reducing anxiety and enabling real-world communication. This issue, together with the obvious benefits of children reading print books, necessitates a study of the advantages and limitations of children's digital books (Kucirkova, 2019). In response to these educational requirements, the Indonesian government developed the Kurikulum Merdeka, which includes English language teaching from Grades 1 to 12. This curriculum emphasizes a comprehensive approach to language skills, motivating students to connect with texts in ways that improve understanding and reflection, helping them to effectively address real-world challenges (Adidomo, 2021). One common challenge students face in reading comprehension is diminished motivation, primarily due to unappealing and non-interactive reading materials that render activities monotonous and disengaging (Wigfield et al., 2016). Instructional practices relying on static texts without efforts to ignite interest further erode intrinsic motivation, as students perceive little relevance to their values or goals, leading to reduced engagement and persistence in processing texts. Empirical evidence confirms this issue persists across grade levels, with students describing school-assigned materials as boring and irrelevant, exacerbating avoidance and limiting comprehension gains (Brandt & Isaacson, 1998). Interventions introducing dynamic, choice-based resources have proven effective in restoring

motivation and boosting efficacy, underscoring the shift needed from traditional non-interactive formats (Wigfield et al., 2016).

Especially, high school students commonly encounter significant challenges in reading comprehension due to low motivation stemming from unappealing, non-interactive traditional materials that fail to engage their interests or foster persistence, resulting in diminished understanding, vocabulary gaps, and avoidance of reading tasks (Wigfield et al., 2016; Brandt & Isaacson, 1998). Research into interactive e-books and apps further justifies investigation, as they address these motivational deficits by providing dynamic, student-centered experiences that boost literacy outcomes, yet gaps remain in context-specific implementations for high school settings, necessitating targeted studies to optimize adoption and efficacy (Chuang, 2023). Given the significance of reading comprehension for students, there is a need for more tools to increase students' enthusiasm for reading.

The "Let's Read" application was selected for this study due to its superiority in providing reading content categorized by difficulty levels, complete with audio narration, engaging illustrations, and interactive multimedia elements that make the reading process more enjoyable and effective in improving student comprehension and interest, particularly in the Indonesian educational context with limited book access (Pratiwi, 2024).

The researcher decided to implement this application in high school students because, based on a preliminary study, the researcher found that although the students were at the high school level, their reading comprehension was still very low and needed to be improved. The researcher believes that this application is still suitable to use at the high school level because the Let's Read application offers reading levels that can be adjusted to the reading abilities of the students participating in this study. The

researcher can also adjust the reading levels as the students' reading comprehension develops during the study.

Compared to other reading applications like Epic!, Duolingo Stories, or Readwise, "Let's Read" stands out with its more diverse content across various genres and languages, easy access without additional file downloads, and adaptive features allowing students to select materials based on their interests and ability levels, making it superior for developing literacy skills such as reading comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking (Samsiyah et al., 2022).

In today's digital age, interactive platforms offer innovative ways to engage learners and enhance their reading abilities. One such platform is 'Let's Read', which provides a dynamic and immersive learning experience. The implementation of 'Let's Read' aims to address the critical need for effective literacy development in educational settings. Reading is a fundamental skill that underpins academic success and lifelong learning, yet many students struggle with it due to factors such as lack of engagement and insufficient practice. The proposed platform aims to create an engaging, interactive learning environment that motivates students to improve their reading skills. By incorporating multimedia elements, gamification, and personalized feedback, 'Let's Read' aims to foster a love for reading while simultaneously enhancing comprehension and fluency.

This study explores the potential of the 'Let's Read' platform in improving students' reading comprehension, vocabulary, and overall reading fluency. By leveraging interactive features, such as audio narration, visual aids, and personalized quizzes, this platform can cater to diverse learning styles and motivate students to become lifelong readers. This study also aims to investigate high school students' perceptions of how the interactive 'Let's Read' platform influences their reading

motivation. Specifically, it seeks to capture students' views regarding the platform's interactive features, such as multimedia elements and adaptive content, in fostering greater interest and persistence in reading activities.

B. Research Question

The research questions for this study are:

1. How was the implementation of the interactive platform ‘Let’s Read’ during the teaching and learning process in Senior High School?
2. Is Let’s Read effective for students' reading comprehension in Senior High School?

This problem formulation aims to explore not only the platform's impact on reading skills but also the elements that may support or hinder its successful implementation in an educational context.

C. Research Objective

The objectives of this study included the following:

1. To describe the implementation of the interactive reading platform “Let’s Read” during the teaching and learning process at Senior High School .
2. To investigate the effectiveness of Let’s Read for students’ reading comprehension scores.

D. Research Hypothesis

1. H_0 There is no difference in students' reading comprehension between those who were taught using the platform of 'Let's Read' and those who were not taught using the platform.
2. H_1 There is a significant difference in students' reading comprehension between those who were taught using the 'Let's Read' platform and those who were not taught using the platform.

E. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical significance as follows:

1. Theoretical Significance

It is predicted that the findings of this study will add to the existing body of data on the use of interactive digital reading platforms in teaching reading. This study's empirical results on the effectiveness of the 'Let's Read' platform in increasing students' reading interest and engagement may support and expand theoretical perspectives on technology-assisted language learning and literacy development.

2. Practical Significance

a. For English Teachers

This study provides practical insights into how the 'Let's Read' interactive reading platform can be implemented effectively in classroom instruction. The findings can serve as a reference for teachers in utilizing digital reading platforms as more varied teaching materials to enhance students' reading interest and engagement. Through the use of 'Let's Read', teachers are expected to have practical guidance in

creating interactive and enjoyable reading activities that support students' reading development in the classroom.

b. For Students

This study is expected to provide benefits for students by creating a more engaging and interactive reading experience through the use of the 'Let's Read' platform. By accessing various digital reading materials with attractive visuals and interactive features, students can improve their reading interest, comprehension, and motivation to read. The implementation of 'Let's Read' may also help students develop positive reading habits and enhance their overall reading skills in a more enjoyable learning environment.

3. For Future Researchers

This study can be used as a resource for future academics interested in researching the usage of digital reading platforms in language learning. The findings may provide insights into the effective implementation of the 'Let's Read' interactive reading platform in classroom settings and can be used as a basis for further studies focusing on reading motivation, reading comprehension, or the integration of educational technology in literacy instruction. Future researchers may also expand this study by applying the platform in different educational contexts or research designs.

F. Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study focuses on the implementation of the 'Let's Read' interactive reading platform in reading instruction for tenth-grade students at SMAN 1

Purwoasri, specifically in English classes. The study focuses on students' reading comprehension and their ability to analyze texts, develop critical thinking skills, and enhance reading motivation. In addition, this study investigates students' impressions of the utilization of the 'Let's Read' application in the learning process. The preliminary observation results are utilized as the first references rather than the study's primary data.

The limitations of this study are limited to one school. Therefore, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other schools with different characteristics and learning environments. External factors such as parental support, students' individual motivation outside the classroom, and technological facilities are not examined in this study. Furthermore, this study focuses only on reading activities using the 'Let's Read' platform and does not investigate other digital reading applications or language skills. This study also focuses on the narrative text as the genre of the text that is used to test the students. The effectiveness of the platform is measured based on students' reading comprehension, analytical ability, critical thinking, motivation, and perceptions without extending the investigation to long-term learning outcomes.

G. Definition of Key Terms

1. Implementation

Implementation refers to the process of applying or carrying out the tool in an educational setting. In this study, implementation refers to the systematic use of 'Let's Read', an interactive platform for teaching reading comprehension.

2. Reading Interactive Platform

A reading interactive platform in this study refers to a digital learning tool, named 'Let's Read', that provides reading materials combined with

interactive features such as illustrations, levels, audio support, and comprehension activities to engage students actively in reading.

3. Let's Read

'Let's Read' is a digital reading platform that offers a wide range of graded reading texts with visual and interactive elements designed to support students' reading skills and comprehension. In this study, 'Let's Read' stands as an object of research, which will be implemented to determine the platform's impact on student reading comprehension.

4. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the potential of 10th-grade students at SMAN 1 Purwoasri to understand, interpret, and extract meaning from written materials, such as identifying major ideas, supporting facts, vocabulary meaning, and reaching conclusions.

Students refer to EFL 10th-grade students enrolled at SMAN 1 Purwoasri who participate in the reading learning process using the 'Let's Read' platform.