

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of research background, research questions, research objectives, research scope, research significance, research hypotheses, and key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Reading is one of the most crucial parts of learning a language. Reading skills were an important aspect in a person's literacy development. Among the basic skills that include literacy include writing, reading, listening and speaking, these four skills were the main skills that must be learned to master a language (Laila et al., 2021) The ability to understand and analyze text allows a person to access information more effectively. The reading process involves not only recognizing words, but also understanding the context and meaning behind sentences. With good reading skills, a person can explore a variety of topics, from science to fiction, and increase their understanding of the world.

Developing reading skills requires consistent practice and dedication. Reading regularly allows a person to expand their vocabulary, improve their understanding of sentence structure, and sharpening their analytical skills. In addition, reading can also be a means to deepen a person's interest and knowledge in various subjects, enriching their intellectual life.

It is not only important to read, but also to read with understanding. Effective reading skills involve the ability to relate the information read to existing knowledge, infer, make inferences, and question. This ability helps a person to not only absorb information, but also to process it critically, forming the basis for strong critical and analytical thinking. Thus, good reading skills were not just about recognizing words, but also about understanding and applying the ideas contained in the text.

The ability to read English allows a person to access information in a language that is widely spoken in the modern world. In this context, reading skills include not only the recognition of English words, but also an understanding of sentence structure, grammar, and related cultural contexts. Through reading in English, a person can expand their vocabulary, increase their understanding of the use of words in context, and deepen their understanding of the culture associated with the language. By having good English reading skills, a person can expand their opportunities in studies, careers, and cross-cultural interactions.

The problems that students often face when practicing reading in English is inability to understand the deep meaning in the text. Students may have difficulty conveying messages effectively. In addition, an inability to thoroughly analyze the meaning of a text can limit students' ability to explore deeper ideas and understand the broader context. This can hinder their ability to perceive information correctly and respond appropriately in real-life situations.

The role of educators is needed to make students interested in learning and mastering reading skills. If teachers can understand and meet students' needs during the learning process, it will certainly be very easy to provide appropriate teaching according to students' development. By understanding students, teachers were also able to determine appropriate approaches, techniques, methods and models so that they were interested in the material being taught. During the learning process, one thing that cannot be ignored is the existence and use of media. In psychology, the media used in the teaching and learning process greatly determines the success of delivering material to students (Alzahrani et. al, 2024). Teachers have the responsibility to select and integrate relevant and interesting media into learning. One effective medium is the use of digital technology, such as learning applications or online platforms that provide access to various reading materials in English. Through this media, students can access reading material tailored to their ability level, as well as various tools such as online dictionaries and audio features to improve their understanding.

Keeping up with the times, many media that were now used by educators were integrated with technology. This aims to adapt to today's students who mostly focus on things related to technology. The expectations placed on future educators were extremely high. Educators were required to master technology which continues to develop rapidly so that their educational results were not left behind compared to generations in more developed countries (Mamlok, 2021) Smartphones, one of the gadgets designed to fit in your hand, were very effective when combined with an internet network to access new knowledge, both in the

world of education and the general public. Electronic media used to improve educational levels is also called e-learning based learning.

The research that was carried out in this scientific work is closely related to education and technology. In order to transfer knowledge successfully, teachers not only use smartphone electronic media in the learning process, but students were also required to be able to operate this media so that learning can run effectively. One of the media that is currently being developed is the *Awabe Learn Languages* application. The use of the online application *Awabe Learn Languages* aims to measure whether this application is effective when used as a medium to improve students' reading skills at SMAN 1 Banda Aceh. This application is an application used to learn various languages in the world. One of them is English, an international language that is often used to interact with many tribes who have different languages.

Awabe is an application center that consists of various derivative applications that focus on teaching foreign languages. In this study, researcher focused their research on one of the application derivatives, namely Awabe English Reading. Users were given the convenience of choosing reading-based learning topics that must be studied. Users can learn the correct pronunciation and can also use the dictionary feature to find out the meaning of each word or sentence that is read with voice over in the form.

In observations carried out from October 2023 to December 2023, researcher conducted an interview with one of the English teachers at SMAN 1

Banda Aceh. In interviews conducted by researcher, the teacher explained several problems related to the reading ability of class X students during the teaching and learning process of descriptive text material. Class Even though students were taught reading material, their ability to recognize English vocabulary and phrases correctly is still limited. This can hinder their understanding of the texts they read, because unclear vocabulary and pronunciation can make it difficult for them to grasp the meaning conveyed. The students also have difficulties to analysis and quantify the part and meaning of the text they read. It is probably because students not really understand every part of text. Teachers should ensure that students can recognize words correctly, classify different parts of the text, and express their opinions on the content, as these skills were essential for effective reading comprehension.

In the initial observation process, researcher found that students had difficulty identifying the meaning of the text as a whole. They tend to focus on understanding individual vocabulary without being able to understand the context and main message to be conveyed in the text. This can be caused by students' lack of ability to relate information spread across various parts of the text, as well as limited background knowledge that supports understanding the text. Apart from that, it was also found that students were unable to summarize the text into language that was simpler and easier to understand. Even though students can read and understand texts, they often have difficulty conveying the essence or main idea of the text using their own sentences. This can be caused by students' limited mastery of English vocabulary and structures.

Still during the observation period, the researcher carried out direct observations in grade X classes at the target high school, including classes X1, X2 X3, X4 X5, X6, X7 and X8. Researcher found that all classes proved to have the same problems in English reading skills. Both of them have the ability to listen to English spoken by the teacher, but were not able to fully understand the content of the text given. Most students admit that there is a lot of vocabulary that they rwerely even have heard before, so students have difficulty understanding it. Meanwhile, the English language that students must master is not only limited to frequently encountered sentences, there is a lot of vocabulary that must be learned along with correct pronunciation.

This is what triggered researcher to look for solutions to reading skill problems by using electronic media that is packaged attractively and equipped with voice over native speakers so that students get used to the correct pronunciation according to English spoken by native speakers. The applications used by researcher to conduct research can be used anytime and anywhere as long as the gadget used is connected to the internet network.

When deciding to conduct research at the SMAN 1 Banda Aceh school, the researcher observed several advantages and disadvantages of the school so that it met the criteria desired by the researcher. Some of the advantages of SMAN 1 Banda Aceh include, 1) every student is allowed to use a smartphone so they can access the internet easily, 2) the students who were be researched were very open and can accept technological developments well, this fact can be seen based on the

students' activeness in using several applications learning supports such as YouTube, Kahoot, Quizizz, even GPT chat, 3) the students who were be researched also have a high enthusiasm for learning and a competitive spirit which of course can be the biggest reason for researcher to conduct research at SMAN 1 Banda Aceh. Meanwhile, apart from advantages, researcher also found disadvantages at SMAN 1 Banda Aceh which might become obstacles in conducting research. These shortcomings include 1) There is no internet network or wifi which the school provides free of charge to all students, so students have to access the internet using personal data. Apart from these shortcomings, researcher did not find any other deficiencies at SMAN 1 Banda Aceh that could become obstacles in the research process.

In this research, researcher took three preview studies related to the research title. In this research, researcher took three previous studies related to the research title. The first research was conducted by (Litta et al., 2023) with the title "Digital Flipbook Maker Technology as a Learning Media to Improve English Reading Skills." This research aimed to investigate the effectiveness of digital flipbook maker technology as a learning medium to improve English reading skills and to determine students' interest in using this technology for reading activities. The study involved 30 tenth-grade students from SMA Frater Makassar in the 2023/2024 academic year, using a Research and Development (R&D) method with random sampling. Data were collected through English reading tests and questionnaires.

The findings showed a significant improvement in students' reading skills, with the average post-test score (82.17) being higher than the pre-test score (54.83). Additionally, the average student interest score was 88.17, categorized as "strongly interested." This indicates that digital flipbook maker technology is effective in enhancing reading comprehension and increasing student engagement. However, there is a gap between this research and the current study titled "The Effectiveness of Using Awabe Learn Languages to Improve Reading Skills." While Litta et al.'s (2023) research focused on digital flipbook maker technology, the current study explores the Awabe Learn Languages application, which offers features such as interactive reading skills. This gap highlights the need to examine how mobile language learning applications can provide more personalized and flexible learning environments compared to traditional digital tools like flipbooks.

The second research was conducted by (Klimova & Zamborova, 2020) with the title "Use of Mobile Applications in Developing Reading Comprehension in Second Language Acquisition —A Review Study". This research aimed to explore the effect of emerging technologies, specifically mobile applications, on second language reading comprehension. The study involved a review of articles published between 1 January 2018 and 30 September 2020 in two databases, Web of Science and Scopus. The findings showed a significant improvement in reading comprehension after the treatment with mobile applications. Additionally, a positive attitude and enhanced learner motivation when using mobile apps were found in several studies. This indicates that mobile applications can be an effective tool for developing reading skills in a second language.

However, there is a gap between this research and the current study titled "The Effectiveness of Using Awabe Learn Languages to Improve Reading Skills." While Klimova and Zamborova (2020) examined the general impact of mobile applications on reading comprehension, the current study specifically explores the Awabe Learn Languages application, which offers features tailored to improving reading skills. This gap highlights the need to examine how mobile language learning applications, like Awabe Learn Languages, can provide more personalized and flexible learning environments compared to traditional digital tools like digital flipbooks.

The third research was conducted by (Bunga Dewi Sonya, 2022) under the title The Effectiveness of Using Google Classroom to Develop Reading Comprehension at Tenth Grade of SMA Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung. This study aimed to examine whether Google Classroom could effectively enhance students' reading comprehension skills. The researcher used a quasi-experimental method with two classes: one as the experimental group and the other as the control group. The main instrument used was a multiple-choice reading test consisting of 40 items. The results of the study showed that the use of Google Classroom had a statistically significant effect on students' reading comprehension.

The t-value obtained was 3.97, which exceeded the critical values at both the 0.05 (1.67) and 0.01 (2.39) significance levels, indicating that H_a (the alternative hypothesis) was accepted. This proves that Google Classroom is an effective medium for teaching reading and can significantly improve students'

reading comprehension, especially at the tenth-grade level of SMA Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung in the 2022 academic year. However, Google Classroom is a teacher-managed learning management system that relies on scheduled activities and teacher instruction. In contrast, Awabe Learn Languages is a mobile-based, self-access application that enables independent reviews.

All of previous studies reviewed show a consistent trend regarding the positive impact of technology-based media in improving students' reading comprehension. The study by Litta et al. (2023) demonstrated that digital flipbook maker technology significantly improved students' reading scores and engagement. Similarly, Klimova and Zamborova (2020) concluded that various mobile applications positively influenced second language learners' reading comprehension and motivation, based on a review of several articles. Meanwhile, the research conducted at SMA Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung in 2021/2022 confirmed that Google Classroom a web-based platform was effective in enhancing students' reading comprehension through structured, teacher-directed materials and assessments. These studies provide strong support for the integration of digital tools in reading instruction across different levels and learning environments. However, despite these encouraging findings, none of the reviewed studies investigated the use of Awabe Learn Languages, a mobile application specifically designed for language learning with ready-made reading materials.

While previous research focused on either teacher-curated platforms (such as Google Classroom) or general mobile learning tools (like flipbooks or broad app reviews), Awabe offers a distinct approach by enabling students to independently

access structured reading tasks anytime and anywhere. This presents a clear research gap: the need to explore the effectiveness of mobile-based applications that promote learner autonomy and personalized pacing in developing reading skills. Therefore, the current research, titled "The Effectiveness of Using Awabe Learn Languages to Improve Reading Skills", aims to provide a more focused and practical contribution to the field of language education by examining how mobile learning through Awabe supports reading development in a senior high school context.

Based on the background of this problem, researcher were interested in studying whether the *Awabe Learn Languages* application is effective in solving problems with students' English reading skills. This research is entitled "The effectiveness of using Awabe Learn Languages to improve reading skills at SMAN 1 Banda Aceh grade X".

1.2 Research question

1. Does the *Awabe Learn Languages* application is effective in improving students' English reading skills at SMAN 1 Banda Aceh?
2. How effective is the *Awabe Learn Languages* application in helping students understand vocabulary and identify main ideas in English reading texts at SMAN 1 Banda Aceh?

1.3 Objective of the Study

1. To find out of the effectiveness of using *Awabe Learn Languages* to Improving Reading Skills at SMAN 1 Banda Aceh.
2. To determine the effectiveness of the *Awabe Learn Languages* application in helping students understand vocabulary and identify main ideas in English reading texts at SMAN 1 Banda Aceh.

1.4 Scope of Study

Researcher limited this research to class X students of SMAN 1 Banda Aceh. The research only focuses on Reading Skills from articles entitled “Vietnam Country”, "Pho Vietnam", and "What Exactly is Sushi?" All articles were in the *Awabe Learn Languages* application.

1.5 The Importance of Research

1. For Students

In this study, students were found that reading English using media that suits their needs is very influential in improving reading skills that have been considered difficult. At the end of the lesson, students were understood that learning English is difficult and the ease is according to the medium used.

2. For Teachers

The findings of this research can be taken into consideration in choosing learning support media for teachers so that the teaching and learning process can run more effectively and efficiently.

3. For school

From the results of this research, the school was understood that education does not only stop at manual learning with textbooks, but the existence of gadgets is very influential in increasing students' abilities to achieve more precise learning targets.

1.6 Research Hypothesis

H₀: The Awabe Learn Languages application does not improve students' English reading skills

H₁: The Awabe Learn Language application improves students' English reading skills

1.7 Key Terms

1.7.1 Awabe Learn Languages

This application is an application created to be a place to learn foreign languages or second languages, especially English. *Awabe Learn Languages* itself is the center of many other derivative applications that focus on learning various

languages and the skills that must be mastered in these languages. "Our app helps you learn a second language just like you learned your first, with intuitive and immersive methods that were as fun to use as they were effective." One derivative of this application is the Awabe reading skill which was be the focus of research used by researcher.

1.7.2 Reading Skill

Reading skills were an ability possessed by humans that functions to receive information from a text, sentence or paragraph. Humans have abilities that were obtained by practicing the ability to remember letters in a language, this skill is the ability to read the sentences around them. Reading can be interpreted as a stage of training vision and sensitivity to brain performance (Harmer, 1991:190).