

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter discusses the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significances, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

A. Research Background

Reading is an essential skill for acquiring new knowledge in academic learning, particularly at the secondary school level where students are expected to engage with a variety of texts across subject. According to Haerazi & Irawan (2020), reading is often a promising skill for students to acquire because reading is considered one of the language skills that students must master. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), reading comprehension plays a crucial role because it enables learners to understand written texts and construct meaning from the information they read. As stated by Grabe & Stoller (2020), reading comprehension involves the ability to process textual information from the text. Without adequate reading comprehension skills, students may face difficulties in understanding learning materials and participating actively in classroom activities.

Despite its importance, many EFL students experience significant difficulties in reading comprehension. According to Kendeou et al. (2014), reading comprehension is a cognitive process involving inference making, executive function, and attention allocation. Therefore, students' ability to understand a text is not only determined by mechanical reading skills but also by their capacity to integrate cognitive process. In line with this view, Samiei & Ebadi (2021) state that many EFL learners struggle to apply inferential reading skills such as find the main idea, specific information, drawing conclusions and predicting meanings while reading texts. In the context of junior high school students, these difficulties are often reflected in their limited ability to identify main ideas, understand longer texts, and maintain attention during reading activities. Students may also experience challenges in locating information efficiently, particularly when the text is presented in dense and less engaging formats. This finding is consistent with Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016), who report that EFL learners often struggle to

distinguish main ideas from supporting details and to process complex texts effectively.

In the context of the present study, particular attention was given to seventh-grade students at SMPN 6 Kota Sukabumi. As students in the first year of junior high school, they were experiencing a transition from elementary school to a new level of English learning. This transition may require students to adjust to differences in learning materials, classroom activities, and the demands of learning English at the junior high school level. Some students may also have limited familiarity with English, which can make it challenging for them to engage with reading materials, particularly when they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, important information, or texts that require them to construct meaning independently.

Given these challenges, it is important to using instructional media that can support students in supporting their reading comprehension skills more effectively. According to Grabe & Stoller (2020), reading comprehension requires not only the ability to decode written information but also the ability to organize and visualize ideas, particularly in identifying main ideas and supporting details. In this context, using visual-based digital media have the potential to support students' comprehension by presenting information in a more structured and meaningful way.

According to De Vega & Rahayu (2023), the integration of technology such as digital media in English language learning positively contributes to improved language learning outcomes. This view is supported by Mayer (2019), in multimedia learning theory, which explains that learning becomes more effective when information is presented through a combination of words and visuals, as it helps learners process and understand information more effectively.

One form of digital media that has been increasingly used in educational contexts is digital posters. According to Hadi et al. (2021), digital posters are visual-based learning media that combine text and image elements to convey information in an interesting way and help students understand learning materials more easily. Similarly, Sugianto & Wati (2024) state that digital posters function as visual learning media that integrate textual and visual information to present messages

attractively, which can increase students' interest in learning during the instructional process. By integrating textual and visual elements, this media allows students to understand the materials in a more concrete and engaging way,

In the context of reading activities, using visual learning media such as digital posters can support students in processing textual information more effectively. According to Eng et al. (2020), visual elements in reading materials influence readers' attention, and well-designed illustrations help direct attention to relevant information, thereby improving reading comprehension. Furthermore, the visual organization information in digital posters support students in identifying main ideas and locate specific details within a text.

Several previous studies have highlighted the potential of using digital media, including digital posters in supporting English language learning. However, the existing body of research predominantly emphasizes the effectiveness of digital media in improving learning outcomes rather than examining how students experience the learning process itself. In particular there is still limited attention given to how junior high school students engage with and make sense of digital posters during reading activities.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is a crucial skill in EFL learning, particularly at the junior high school level, where students are still developing their ability to understand and process texts. However, many students continue to experience difficulties in identifying main ideas and locating specific information during reading activities. The use of digital posters, as a form of visual learning media have the potential to support reading activities by helping students identify key ideas and understand textual information more clearly. Therefore, this study aims to explore students' experiences in using digital posters to support their reading comprehension through a qualitative case study approach. The findings of this study are expected to increase students' engagement and support more meaningful interaction with reading texts.

B. Research Questions

The research develops two research questions based on the background described above:

1. What are students' positive experiences of using digital posters to support their reading comprehension?
2. What challenges do students encounter when using digital posters to support their reading comprehension?

C. Research Purpose

According to the mentioned research questions, this study has two primary purposes:

1. To explore students' positive experience of using digital posters to support their reading comprehension
2. To identify the challenges faced by students when using digital posters to support their reading comprehension.

D. Research Significance

Considering the focus on students' experiences of using digital posters for reading comprehension, this study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading instruction.

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study contributes to the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading instruction by providing insights into students' experiences of using digital posters in supporting reading comprehension. This study may contribute to multimedia learning theory, which emphasizes that learning become more effective when information is presented through a combination of words and visual (Mayer, 2019). In this context, the findings are expected to provide a deeper understanding of how learners interact with visual and textual elements in digital posters during reading activities.

2. Practical Significance

a. For Teachers

This study provides teachers with insight into how students experience the use of digital posters in reading comprehension activities.

By understanding students' experiences, including how they interpret key ideas and respond to visual and textual elements, teachers can design and implement digital posters more effectively to support reading activities. In addition, the findings may inform teachers in selecting and organizing visual-based materials that align with students' learning needs and reading strategies, particularly in skimming and scanning.

b. For Students

For students, this study may contribute to a better understanding of how they engage with digital posters during reading activities. By reflecting on their experiences, students can become more aware of how they process information, identify key ideas, and respond to visual and textual input. This awareness may support more active engagement in reading comprehension tasks involving digital media.

c. For Future Research

For future researchers, this study can serve as a reference for further investigation into the use of digital posters and other forms of digital media in language learning. It may also provide insights into the importance of exploring students' experiences in addition to learning outcomes, particularly in qualitative research contexts. Furthermore, this study may open opportunities for future research to examine different aspects of digital media use, such as its impact on specific reading strategies of its application in different educational settings.

E. Research Scope

This research focuses on students' experiences in using digital posters to support specific reading skills in reading comprehension, particularly skimming and scanning. These reading skills are selected because they are closely related to how information is typically organized and presented in digital posters, such as through headings, keywords, bullet points, and visual cues.

The instructional media examined in this study are digital posters. This study focuses on the use of digital posters as a learning media during reading

activities in the classroom. The exploration is limited to how students experience the use of digital posters in supporting their reading comprehension.

The participants in this study are limited to seventh-grade students at junior high school who have experience in using digital posters. The participants are selected because they have developed basic reading comprehension skills and are capable of reflecting on their learning experience. At this level, students are also more familiar with classroom learning activities involving digital media, which makes them suitable participants for this study. By focusing on students who are already familiar with using digital posters in reading activities, this study seeks to explore their experiences and perceptions in a more meaningful and reflective manner.

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to explore students' experiences by examining their interactions and perceptions with digital posters in reading activities. Therefore, this approach is considered suitable for exploring seventh-grade students' experiences in using digital posters in the classroom, particularly in how they understand texts, identify main ideas, and locate specific information. This approach allows the study to capture students' perceptions and experiences in natural learning setting rather than measuring learning outcomes quantitatively.

F. Conceptual Framework

This section presents the conceptual research framework for understanding the flow of thought and focus of the study. The conceptual framework in this study also serves as a guide in analyzing the data obtained during the research process and for ensuring that the discussion does not out of focus.

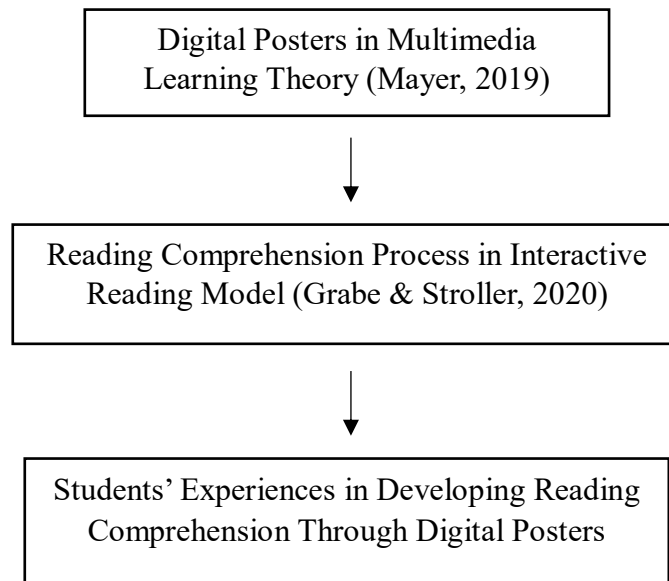


Figure 1. 1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in Multimedia Learning Theory (Mayer, 2019), which emphasizes that multimedia learning occurs when learners actively process information through both visual, textual, and verbal channels, allowing them to construct meaning more effectively. In the context of this study, digital posters function as instructional media that present reading texts through the integration of visual and textual elements. Consequently, multimedia learning theory provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how the design and features of digital posters contribute to students' experiences during reading comprehension activities.

However, the learning domain examined in this study is reading comprehension, which is conceptualized based on the interactive model of reading proposed by Grabe and Stoller (2020). According to Grabe & Stoller (2020), reading comprehension is viewed as an active process in which students construct meaning from written texts by integrating textual information, visual cues, and prior knowledge. From this perspective, reading is not understood as a passive act of decoding symbols, but as a dynamic interaction between the reader and the text. When reading materials are presented in multimodal formats such as digital posters, these comprehensions process are experienced through the integration of textual

and visual information, shaping how students engage with and interpret the reading content.

Within this theoretical perspective, the scope of reading comprehension in this study is delimited to skimming and scanning skills. According to Nation & Macalister (2020), skimming refers to the strategy of quickly reading a text to identify the general idea or main topic, while scanning involves searching for specific information within a text. These strategies are widely applied in academic reading contexts because they help readers process texts efficiently and locate important information more quickly. The use of digital posters is positioned as a mediating instructional tool that supports the application of skimming and scanning strategies. The visual layout, organization of information, and integration of text and images in digital posters are expected to facilitate students' ability to identify main ideas and locate specific information more effectively. In this context, digital posters do not serve merely as presentation tools, but as learning media that shape how reading strategies are applied and experienced during reading activities.

Furthermore, the integration of digital media in language learning environment influences students' learning experiences. According to De Flori-Hansen (2018, as cited in Nur & Ramadhani, 2025) integrating digital media into language instruction not only improves the learning experience but also can develop students' autonomy and motivation which can lead to more effective achievement of learning objectives. From this perspective, digital media are not merely tools for delivering content, but environment that mediate how learners interact with learning materials. In the context of the use of visual media, (Serafini, 2011) argues that visual images and other multimodal elements support readers in interpreting and comprehending text by expanding the perspectives they use to construct meaning. Consequently, students' experiences with digital posters are shaped not only by the content of the texts but also by their perceptions of the learning process itself.

By exploring students' experiences in using digital posters to apply skimming and scanning strategies, this conceptual framework provides a coherent foundation for understanding reading comprehension as a learning process rather than as a measurable learning outcome. This experience-oriented perspective aligns

with the qualitative case study approach and support an in-depth exploration of how digital posters mediate students' reading comprehension in the context of English reading activities in a seventh-grade classroom.

G. Previous Studies

Several previous studies investigating the use of digital media and digital posters in English language teaching have shown their potential to support the English learning process. These studies have examined digital posters from different perspectives, including their use as instructional media, their contribution to reading comprehension, their implementation in Extensive Reading classes, and their role in digital literacy and creative expression.

A study by Harsono et al. (2019), in their study "The Effectiveness of Posters as a Learning Media to Improve Student Learning Quality" examined the effectiveness of posters as instructional media in supporting student learning. This study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches, using the Four-D development model (Define, Design, Development, and Dissemination) in the development of learning materials. The results showed that the use of digital posters as a learning media proved effective in supporting student learning activities. This is evident from the difference in between the mean score before using poster media, which was 60.97 compared to the mean score after using posters, which was 85.86. This finding indicates that posters can increase student engagement and understanding in the learning process.

Another relevant study entitled "Digital Posters to Engage EFL Students and Develop Their Reading Comprehension" was conducted by Ahmad (2019), which investigated the effect of using digital posters on third-year EFL students' reading comprehension and engagement at a higher education institution. This study employed a quasi-experimental design involving 33 participants, divided into an experimental group taught using digital posters and a control group that received conventional instruction. The research instruments consisted of pre-test and post-test which were analyzed using Mann-Whitney U Test to Examine differences in scores between the two groups. The result revealed that there was no statistically significant between the two groups in pre-test ($U = 118.00$; $p > 0.05$) but a

statistically significant difference was found in the post-test ($U = 70.00$; $p < 0.05$). These findings suggest that the use of digital posters can improve EFL students' reading comprehension. Nevertheless, although this study provides quantitative evidence of the effectiveness of digital posters in improving reading comprehension, it does not explore students' learning experiences and perceptions they undergo while engaging with digital posters. Therefore, this study aims to address by exploring students' experiences in supporting reading comprehension through digital posters using a case study approach.

The study entitled "Digital Poster Project as an Assessment in Extensive Reading Class" conducted by Riyanti & Rahmawati (2021), explored the implementation of the digital poster project as a part of the assessment in an Extensive Reading class at the English Education Study Program of Universitas Islam Indonesia. This qualitative study employed a reflective teaching approach to document the project implementation process, assessment rubrics, students' experiences and responses collected through interviews with selected participants. The findings revealed that the digital poster project provided meaningful benefits for digital reading instruction, as all interviewed students agreed that project helped improve their vocabulary, creativity, and served as an effective introduction first-semester students to preparing them for similar academic projects. Despite these valuable insights, the study primarily focused on the implementation of digital poster projects as an assessment tool and did not specifically examine how students experience the process of supporting reading comprehension through digital posters.

A study by Emiliasari et al. (2025) in their study "DMC in EFL Classroom: Its Possible Pedagogical Values to Develop Students' Digital Literacy and Creative Expression" examined the pedagogical values of Digital Multimodal Composing (DMC) in an EFL classroom. This study employed a qualitative case study design involving 28 students from an English Education program. The data were collected through classroom video recordings, field notes, and semi-structured interviews with six purposively selected students. The students were engaged in creating digital posters using Canva as part of the learning activities. The findings showed

that digital poster creation provided opportunities for students to develop their digital literacy and creative expression through the integration of textual and visual elements. The study also indicated that students experienced the process of creating digital posters as a way to express their ideas and engage with learning materials. This finding suggests that digital posters can provide meaningful learning experiences in an EFL classroom by supporting students' engagement with multimodal learning activities.

Based on the review of these previous studies, digital posters have been examined in various ways in English and literacy-related learning contexts. However, the existing studies have predominantly focused on learning outcomes, the implementation of digital poster activities, assessment practices, or broader learning benefits. Although Ahmad (2019) specifically examined reading comprehension and Riyanti and Rahmawati (2021) explored students' experiences, limited attention has been given to how students experience the use of digital posters specifically as instructional media to support reading comprehension. In addition, the challenges that students may encounter while using digital posters during reading activities have received limited attention. Therefore, there is a need to gain a more in-depth understanding of students' positive experiences and challenges when using digital posters to support their reading comprehension.

To address this gap, the present study explores seventh-grade students' positive experiences of using digital posters to support reading comprehension and the challenges they encounter during the reading activities. Using a case study approach, this study focuses on students' experiences within their classroom context rather than measuring the effectiveness of digital posters through pre-test and post-test scores.