

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter conveys the background of research, three research questions, three research purposes, the scope of research, conceptual framework, research hypothesis, and previous studies.

A. Background

Reading is not simply a process of identifying letters and words in a precise sequence, but it is an active process of constructing meaning from written texts. Goodman (1967) explains that reading is a selective process in which readers use available language cues and their expectations to interpret written information. According to Goodman (1967), reading involves an interaction between thought and language, in which readers utilize linguistic information and their expectations to construct meaning from written texts. Therefore, reading can be understood as a meaning-making process that requires readers' active involvement in interpreting and responding to written information.

Reading comprehension refers more specifically to the process through which readers construct meaning from written texts. The RAND Reading Study Group, led by Snow (2002), defines reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. According to Snow (2002), comprehension does not occur merely by obtaining information from texts, but through the dynamic interaction among three essential elements: the reader, the text, and the activity or purpose for reading. The reader contributes cognitive abilities, motivation, vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, and comprehension strategies, while the text provides information that must be interpreted and represented meaningfully. Meanwhile, reading activity involves the purposes, tasks, and processes through which readers engage with texts. From a cognitive perspective, Graesser and Whitten (2000), in their discussion of Kintsch's Construction-Integration model, explain that comprehension involves constructing and integrating information to develop a coherent mental representation of texts.

In the Indonesian English curriculum, particularly in Phase E of the Merdeka Curriculum, students are expected to read and respond to various types of texts, including descriptive texts. The curriculum emphasizes that students should be able to identify specific information, understand the main ideas, and develop simple inferences from written texts. In this context, descriptive text becomes one of the text genres that requires students to understand how information is organized and communicated through language. Derewianka and Jones (2023) explain that genres are goal-oriented social practices that enable people to achieve particular purposes through language. They further state that each genre has its own characteristics and stages to achieve its purpose. Similarly, Knapp and Watkins (2005) highlight that texts are organized according to their purposes and contexts, allowing readers to understand how meaning is constructed through different types of texts. Therefore, understanding descriptive text requires students not only to recognize the information presented in the text but also to construct meaning from the way ideas are organized.

However, students may still experience difficulties in several aspects of reading comprehension. Septia et al. (2022) found that students had difficulties in answering questions related to main ideas, vocabulary, and inferences, with main-idea questions showing the highest percentage of difficulty. Similar difficulties were reported by Ramadhianti and Somba (2023), whose study found that Indonesian EFL students experienced problems in understanding vocabulary, identifying main ideas and supporting details, relating topics to background knowledge, and making inferences from texts. These findings are consistent with Snow's (2002) explanation that reading comprehension involves processes such as vocabulary knowledge, inference, connections among information in a text, and the use of background knowledge. Therefore, difficulties in these processes may affect how readers construct meaning from written texts.

A similar situation was identified during a preliminary classroom observation conducted by the researcher at SMKN Sukasari Sumedang. During the observation, several students appeared to have difficulty understanding English reading texts, particularly when they encountered unfamiliar vocabulary. Some

students also appeared passive and showed limited participation in classroom discussions and reading activities. The reading instruction was primarily conducted using textbooks, printed worksheets, and teacher explanations as the main instructional media. These preliminary observations indicated that reading activities relied mainly on these instructional media, with limited use of varied learning media. Therefore, the preliminary observation provided a practical basis for considering alternative instructional media that could offer students more varied opportunities to interact with reading materials during classroom learning.

These preliminary observations suggest the need to consider instructional media that can provide students with more varied opportunities to interact with reading materials during classroom learning. Learning media are not only tools for delivering information but can also support students in processing information during learning activities. Mayer (2009) explains that multimedia learning involves the use of words and pictures to support learning processes, and learners can develop deeper understanding when information is presented through both verbal and visual representations rather than through words alone. Therefore, appropriately designed learning media can provide additional support for students in processing information and developing understanding of reading materials.

The development of digital technology has brought new possibilities to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in EFL teaching and learning provides opportunities to support learning activities through various digital resources, communication tools, and technology-supported learning environments. Sabiri (2020) explains that ICT integration has contributed to the transformation of teaching environments by creating more learner-centered learning processes and expanding opportunities for teaching and learning. Therefore, the use of technology in language education is not only related to providing digital materials but also to creating learning experiences that allow students to interact with learning resources in different ways. One approach that has emerged within technology-supported learning is gamification, which refers to the use of game design elements in non-game contexts (Deterding et al., 2011). Through the integration of game elements,

gamification provides an alternative approach to designing more interactive learning activities.

In addition to the use of digital learning media such as interactive videos, the advancement of educational technology has introduced gamified learning platforms that can support students' engagement in the learning process. One of these platforms is *Wayground* (formerly known as Quizizz), a digital learning application that integrates game-based elements into classroom activities and assessments. Zhao (2019) explains that Quizizz is a game-based educational application that enables interactive classroom activities through various gamification features, including avatars, visual themes, music, memes, leaderboard rankings, and immediate feedback after students answer questions. These features create an engaging learning environment and encourage students to actively participate in learning activities. In the context of English language learning, Quizizz has also demonstrated its potential as an alternative digital learning medium. Aziz et al. (2021) reported that the implementation of Quizizz in English learning activities increased students' motivation, engagement, and learning achievement. Furthermore, previous research discussed in their study indicated that Quizizz had a positive impact on students' reading ability by providing interactive practice activities through mobile learning environments. Therefore, the integration of *Wayground* in reading instruction can be considered a promising approach to support students' reading practice through interactive activities, competitive learning experiences, and immediate feedback mechanisms.

Previous empirical studies have investigated the use of Quizizz as a gamification-based learning platform in teaching reading comprehension, particularly in descriptive text contexts. Afrida et al. (2025) conducted a quasi-experimental study involving junior high school students and found that the use of Quizizz contributed to improved students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts. The experimental group showed higher improvement compared to the control group after the implementation of Quizizz. Similarly, Ningsih et al. (2024) examined the effect of Quizizz on Grade X vocational high school students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts. Their findings indicated that students who

learned through Quizizz achieved higher post-test scores than those who learned through conventional methods. These studies suggest that gamification-based platforms such as Quizizz have potential to support reading comprehension development through interactive learning activities.

Beyond studies focusing specifically on descriptive texts, previous research has also provided broader evidence regarding the implementation of Quizizz as a gamified learning platform in English reading instruction. Suwaji (2024) investigated the use of Quizizz to enhance vocational students' reading skills and reported that the platform supported students in improving their reading performance through interactive exercises and engaging learning activities. The study involved vocational students and highlighted that Quizizz could provide a more motivating alternative to conventional reading assignments. Similarly, Akhyar and Roslaini (2025) examined the effects of Quizizz on students' reading ability and learning motivation in an Indonesian EFL classroom using a quasi-experimental mixed-methods approach. Their findings indicated that students who learned through Quizizz achieved significantly higher reading performance compared with those receiving conventional instruction, while qualitative findings suggested that gamified features such as immediate feedback, autonomy, and social interaction contributed to students' motivation. Furthermore, Shafira and Sulistyani (2025) discussed the pedagogical potential of *Wayground*, the updated version of Quizizz, in vocational reading instruction. Their review emphasized that features such as instant feedback, time limits, leaderboards, and interactive activities may support student engagement and comprehension development in vocational contexts. However, the authors also highlighted the need for further empirical investigations to examine the effectiveness of *Wayground* through classroom-based studies.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the potential of Quizizz and *Wayground* in improving reading-related outcomes, several limitations remain. First, many studies have examined reading comprehension in general contexts rather than focusing specifically on descriptive texts, which require students to understand text structures, language features, and descriptive information. Second,

existing research has often focused on general English learners, while fewer studies have investigated vocational students learning descriptive texts through gamified platforms. Third, although *Wayground* has emerged as an updated version of Quizizz, empirical evidence regarding its implementation in Indonesian vocational classrooms remains limited. Therefore, the present study aims to address this gap by investigating the effect of *Wayground* on vocational students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts through a quasi-experimental research design.

B. Research Questions

This study formulates the following research questions:

1. What is the students' reading comprehension achievement of descriptive texts taught through gamification using *Wayground*?
2. What is the students' reading comprehension achievement of descriptive texts taught without using gamification through *Wayground*?
3. How significant is the difference between students' reading comprehension achievement of descriptive texts taught through gamification using *Wayground* and those taught without using *Wayground*?

C. Research Purposes

The objectives of the study are articulated in the following manner:

1. To identify students' reading comprehension achievement of descriptive texts taught through gamification using *Wayground*.
2. To identify students' reading comprehension achievement of descriptive texts taught without using gamification through *Wayground*.
3. To examine the significance of the difference in students' reading comprehension achievement of descriptive texts between those taught through gamification using *Wayground* and those taught without using *Wayground*.

D. Research Significances

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical significance in the field of English language teaching, particularly in reading instruction supported by gamified learning in vocational EFL contexts:

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study contributes to the existing knowledge of reading comprehension, gamification, and technology-enhanced language learning in EFL contexts. By investigating the effectiveness of gamification through *Wayground* in teaching reading comprehension of descriptive texts, this study provides empirical evidence related to the use of digital gamification in supporting students' reading comprehension achievement. Furthermore, this study supports the understanding of reading comprehension as a process of constructing meaning from written texts (Snow, 2002), the implementation of gamification through game design elements in non-game contexts (Deterding et al., 2011), and the role of interactive digital learning environments in language learning. In addition, this study extends previous research by focusing on vocational high school students and applying a quasi-experimental design to examine the effectiveness of *Wayground* in reading instruction.

2. Practical significance

The practical significance of this study can be viewed from three perspectives. For English teachers, this study provides practical information about the use of gamification through *Wayground* in teaching reading comprehension of descriptive texts. The findings may help teachers consider *Wayground* as an alternative digital learning medium for providing interactive reading activities. In addition, the use of features such as points, leaderboards, time limits, and immediate feedback may support teachers in creating more engaging classroom activities and providing students with opportunities to practice reading comprehension.

For students, this study is expected to provide learning experiences through interactive reading activities using *Wayground*. The implementation of gamified learning activities may encourage students' participation and provide opportunities for students to practice understanding descriptive texts in a more engaging learning environment.

For future researchers, this study can serve as a reference for further research related to gamification, digital learning platforms, and reading comprehension in EFL contexts. Future studies may investigate the use of

Wayground or other gamification platforms in different educational levels, language skills, text genres, or learning contexts.

E. Research Scope

This section defines the scope and boundaries of the study, including the research focus, variables, participants, research site, and procedures conducted during the research.

This study focuses on examining the effectiveness of gamification through *Wayground* on students' reading comprehension achievement of descriptive texts. In this study, gamification through *Wayground* refers to the use of a digital learning platform that integrates game elements, such as points, leaderboards, time limits, and immediate feedback, into reading learning activities. The study specifically compares the reading comprehension achievement of students who are taught through gamification using *Wayground* and students who are taught without using *Wayground*.

The participants of this study are tenth-grade students at SMKN Sukasari Sumedang in the 2025/2026 academic year. The sample consists of two intact classes from the Computer and Network Engineering (TKJ) program selected through purposive sampling. One class serves as the experimental group, which receives reading instruction through gamification using *Wayground*, while the other class serves as the control group, which receives reading instruction without using *Wayground*.

This study applies a quasi-experimental design involving three main stages: administering a pre-test, implementing the treatment, and administering a post-test. The treatment is conducted through several reading learning activities using *Wayground* in the experimental class, while the control class receives conventional reading instruction. Students' reading comprehension achievement is measured through multiple-choice reading comprehension tests focusing on descriptive texts. This study examines two main variables. The independent variable is gamification through *Wayground*, while the dependent variable is students' reading comprehension achievement of descriptive texts. The assessment focuses on several reading comprehension aspects, including identifying main ideas, finding specific

information, understanding vocabulary in context, identifying reference words, and making inferences from descriptive texts.

The scope of this study is limited to reading comprehension of descriptive texts among tenth-grade vocational students at SMKN Sukasari Sumedang. This study does not examine other English language skills, such as listening, speaking, or writing. Furthermore, the findings are limited to the selected participants and research context; therefore, they may not be generalized to other educational settings.

F. Conceptual Framework

This section presents the conceptual framework of the study, which illustrates the relationship between gamification through *Wayground* and students' reading comprehension, as well as the procedure used to examine its effectiveness. The framework is developed based on relevant theories of reading comprehension and gamification, and it follows the flow of the research design applied in this study.

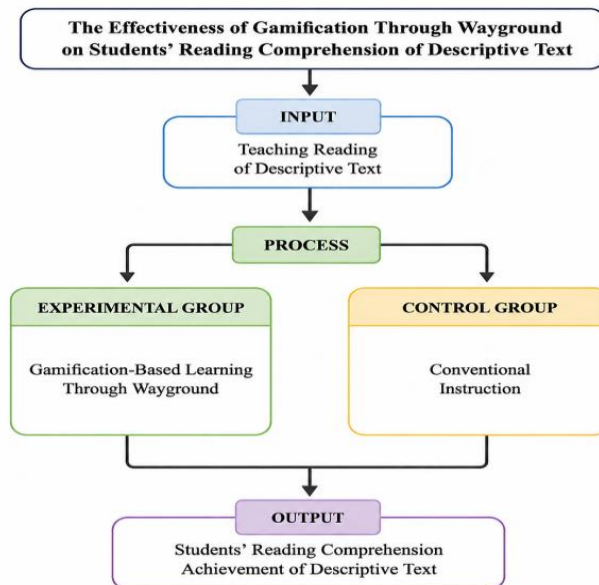


Figure 1.1 The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the relationship between gamification-based learning through *Wayground* and students' reading comprehension achievement of descriptive texts. This framework is developed based on the concept that reading comprehension is an active process of constructing meaning from written texts. Snow (2002) explains that reading

comprehension involves an interaction among the reader, the text, and the reading activity, where readers construct and extract meaning through their involvement with written language. Therefore, students' ability to comprehend descriptive texts depends not only on recognizing words and information presented in the text but also on their ability to interpret and construct meaning from the text.

In the process of learning reading comprehension, appropriate instructional approaches and learning media are important factors that may support students' interaction with reading materials. Digital learning environments provide opportunities for teachers to create more interactive learning experiences. According to Mayer (2009), learning can be supported when information is presented through appropriate combinations of verbal and visual representations, allowing learners to process information more effectively. In this context, gamification-based learning provides an alternative approach by integrating game elements into educational activities. Deterding et al. (2011) define gamification as the application of game design elements in non-game contexts. Through elements such as feedback, competition, and interactive activities, gamification may encourage students' involvement during the learning process.

One implementation of gamification in English learning is through *Wayground*, formerly known as Quizizz. *Wayground* provides various interactive features, including quizzes, immediate feedback, time limits, and leaderboard systems, which can support students' participation during learning activities. These features are expected to create a more engaging learning environment and provide students with opportunities to practice reading comprehension through interactive tasks. In this study, gamification-based learning through *Wayground* is implemented as a treatment for the experimental group, while the control group receives conventional instruction in learning descriptive texts.

Based on this framework, the implementation of gamification-based learning through *Wayground* is expected to influence students' reading comprehension achievement of descriptive texts. The effectiveness of this approach is examined by comparing the reading comprehension achievement between students who receive *Wayground*-based gamification activities and students who

receive conventional instruction. Therefore, this conceptual framework serves as the foundation for examining the differences in students' reading comprehension achievement through a quasi-experimental research design.

G. Hypothesis

Based on the research questions and theoretical framework presented in the previous sections, this study formulates two hypotheses to examine whether the use of gamification through *Wayground* affects students' reading comprehension achievement of descriptive texts. The hypotheses are formulated as the alternative hypothesis (Ha) and the null hypothesis (Ho), as follows:

1. The alternative hypothesis (Ha) There is a significant difference in students' reading comprehension achievement of descriptive texts between students who are taught through gamification using *Wayground* and students who are taught without using *Wayground*.
2. The null hypothesis (Ho) There is no significant difference in students' reading comprehension achievement of descriptive texts between students who are taught through gamification using *Wayground* and students who are taught without using *Wayground*.

H. Previous Studies

Previous studies have explored the use of gamification-based digital platforms, particularly Quizizz, in supporting English language learning and improving students' reading comprehension. Tran Thi Truc Vy and Nguyen Thi Nhu Ngoc (2025) investigated the effectiveness of Quizizz in improving reading performance among Vietnamese EFL learners. Using a quantitative approach with pre-test and post-test measurements, the study involved 100 learners at a language center. The findings indicated a significant improvement in students' reading performance after the implementation of Quizizz, with the post-test scores being higher than the pre-test scores. The study also reported a large effect size, suggesting that gamified activities through Quizizz could support students' reading development and learning engagement.

In addition to reading performance, previous research has also examined the influence of Quizizz on other aspects of English learning, such as vocabulary

development and learner engagement. Chen et al. (2023) investigated the effect of Quizizz-based gamification on vocabulary learning effectiveness and engagement among college EFL learners in China. Through a mixed-method research design, the study compared students who learned using Quizizz with those who received conventional instruction. The findings showed that students who participated in Quizizz-based activities demonstrated greater improvement in vocabulary learning outcomes and reported positive learning experiences. The study suggested that gamification elements, such as scores, rankings, and interactive features, could encourage students' participation and engagement during learning activities.

Several studies have further examined the relationship between Quizizz and reading comprehension in Indonesian EFL contexts. Akhyar and Roslaini (2025) conducted a quasi-experimental mixed-method study to investigate the effects of Quizizz on students' reading ability and learning motivation. The study involved 40 eleventh-grade students who were divided into experimental and control groups. The results showed that students who learned through Quizizz achieved higher reading comprehension scores compared with those who received conventional instruction. The researchers also highlighted that features such as immediate feedback, interactive activities, and competitive elements contributed to students' motivation and participation during reading activities. Similarly, Afrida et al. (2025) examined the effectiveness of Quizizz in improving students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts through a quasi-experimental design involving junior high school students. The findings revealed that the experimental group achieved greater improvement than the control group, with a significant difference in post-test scores between the two groups. These results indicate that gamification-based platforms can provide supportive learning environments for developing students' comprehension of descriptive texts.

Research has also investigated the implementation of Quizizz in vocational education contexts. Ningsih et al. (2024) examined the effect of Quizizz on Grade X vocational students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts through a quasi-experimental design. The findings showed that students who learned through Quizizz obtained higher post-test scores compared with students who learned

through conventional instruction. The statistical analysis indicated a significant difference between the experimental and control groups, suggesting that Quizizz could support reading comprehension development among vocational students. In a similar context, Suwaji (2024) explored the use of Quizizz to support reading skills among vocational school students. Although the study employed a qualitative approach, the findings indicated that students perceived Quizizz positively because its interactive features helped them participate more actively, understand reading materials, and experience a more engaging learning process.

Recently, attention has shifted from Quizizz to *Wayground*, which represents the updated version of the platform. Shafira and Sulistyani (2025) discussed the implementation of *Wayground* in vocational reading instruction and highlighted its potential to support students' comprehension through features such as instant feedback, time limits, leaderboards, and interactive activities. The study emphasized that *Wayground* may provide a more engaging learning environment for vocational students. However, the study was based on a literature-based approach and did not empirically measure the effectiveness of *Wayground* through classroom experimentation.

Although previous studies provide evidence regarding the potential of gamification-based platforms, several research gaps remain. First, most previous empirical studies have focused on Quizizz rather than *Wayground* as the updated platform. Second, although some studies have investigated reading comprehension of descriptive texts, many were conducted in junior or senior high school contexts, while empirical evidence in vocational high school settings remains limited. Third, studies specifically examining the effectiveness of *Wayground* through a quasi-experimental design for improving vocational students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts are still less explored. Therefore, this study aims to address these gaps by investigating the effectiveness of gamification through *Wayground* on vocational students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts using a quasi-experimental research design.