

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

English is one of the international languages that has an important role in various aspects of life, such as global communication which includes the realms of education, tourism, business, and technology (Crystal, 2003). Therefore, English language skills, especially in the aspect of comprehension and communication, has become a fundamental skill that the younger generation, especially students, must possess to compete in the global arena. In this context, effective and engaging English learning is the main key to enhancing learners' motivation and language skills (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

One of the important aspects of learning English is the proficiency in reading comprehension which is part of the receptive ability in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* (Council of Europe, 2020). At the basic level of A2, students are expected to be able to understand short or simple texts, recognize factual information, and understand the content of basic narratives. However, in reality, many students still struggle with understanding English texts due to low reading interest, limited vocabulary, or weak listening skills (Nation, 2013).

Based on the results of surveys and interviews conducted in May 2025 with students from various universities, it was revealed that many students still face difficulties in understanding English texts. These difficulties generally stem from limited vocabulary, grammatical confusion, and weak listening skills caused by fast and unfamiliar pronunciation. One of the Applied Foreign Language students of Diponegoro University class of 2024 mentioned that they found vocabulary and grammar difficult to understand, and that they got confused by the pronunciation of words and sentences when listening to someone speak.

Furthermore, students also revealed that English learning that only relies on text tends to be boring and less effective. They feel more helped by learning media equipped with audio and visuals. One of the Library Science students of Diponegoro University class of 2023 mentioned that learning English with a short story book equipped with audio-visuals was good, because not everyone learned in the same way, such as through physical books that included animation and audio.

In addition, the learning media used so far tends to be monotonous and less interactive, which ultimately results in a decrease in interest in learning. Most respondents had difficulty understanding vocabulary and grammar, even when reading slowly. They also often feel bored with conventional learning methods, especially those that rely only on text (Primary data, survey and interview, May 2025). Yet, 21st-century education demands students to be independent learners, critical thinkers, and capable of utilizing technology as a more effective and enjoyable learning tool.

In response to this phenomenon, innovative solutions are needed in multimodal and applicative learning media that are able to attract students' interest. In this case, the development of interactive digital-based media can be a very effective alternative. One of the potential media is an interactive short story anthology book combined or collaborated with audio narration. The stories raised with the theme of profession and daily life were chosen so that readers could feel closer and motivated with the content of the story. The use of audio in English learning can help learners to develop listening skills which also play an important role in strengthening understanding of the context and meaning of texts. The integration of written text, visualization, and audio creates a richer and more immersive learning experience.

According to Rahmawati and Rakhmawati (2022), the use of audio short stories can improve students' listening skills. This study shows that the use of short stories equipped with audio can effectively improve the listening skills of students and students in Indonesia. Also, according to research conducted by Tanrikulu (2020), the use of digital storytelling in listening

learning has a positive impact on student understanding. The research shows that digital storytelling can improve students' listening skills, motivate them to learn, and be more effective than learning using regular voice recordings. This shows that learning media that combines text and audio can significantly improve English comprehension.

In addition, Dahlia, Syahri, and Mulyadi (2021) found that the interactive read-aloud technique can improve readers' understanding of narrative texts. This technique shows a significant improvement in their understanding of narrative texts. Therefore, the integration of short stories, audio narration, and interactive features is a strategic step in improving the English understanding of A2 level students. With the various problems and opportunities that exist, it is very important to develop an innovative learning media that can support students' ability to understand English.

Thus, this study is not focused on directly measuring how effective this media is on student learning outcomes, but rather on the process of developing, designing, and characteristics of interactive short story anthology books based on audio narration as an alternative to A2 level English learning media. This research aims to produce a prototype of learning media that is applicable, innovative, and adaptive to the learning needs of the current era. In the development of this media, it is hoped that a learning product can be created that integrates or upholds the values of literacy, technology, and pedagogy in a single anthology book that is rich in content and functions.

1.2 Problem Formulation

To answer the focus of developing learning media that is in accordance with the needs of A2 level students, the formulation of the problem in this study are as follows:

- a. What types of learning media are relevant in improving text comprehension and listening skills in A2 level learners in English language learning?
- b. What is the process of developing an interactive short story anthology book based on audio narration as an English learning medium that is in accordance with the A2 level?

- c. Why make a short story anthology book with a professional theme as an English learning medium for A2 level?

1.3 Objectives of The Research

This research aims to achieve several things related to the development of A2 level English learning media, namely:

- a. To identify the types of learning media that are relevant in improving text comprehension and listening skills in A2 level learners in English language learning;
- b. To describe the process of developing an interactive short story anthology book based on audio narration as a learning medium that is in accordance with A2 level English language competencies;
- c. To explain the rationale for creating a short story anthology book with a professional theme as an English learning medium for A2 level learners, including how its theme, content, and features meet learners' needs and enhance their language skills.

1.4 Significant of The Research

1.4.1 Theoretical Contributions

This research is expected to make a positive contribution to the development of English learning theory and practice, especially in the field of reading comprehension which is equipped with vocabulary and listening through the use of audio narration media that is integrated in interactive short stories.

1.4.2 Practical Contributions

- a. For the Author

Authors can gain experience in creating learning media that is equipped with audio narrative as well as understand more about the effective media testing process for A2 level. This research is also a means to hone academic skills during lectures and critical thinking in the application of English language learning.

b. For Readers

Readers, especially students, lecturers, and researchers, can gain insights into the use of interactive short story-based media with audio narration support in improving students' ability to understand texts and listen. In addition, this research can also be used as a reference in the development or study of similar media in the future.

1.5 Output

The output used is an interactive short story anthology book titled *Kaleidoscope of Careers*, which is equipped with interesting image visualizations, a row of English vocabulary and their meanings, basic grammar structures, and audio narration that can be accessed through the barcode listed on the last page of the book before the page about the authors. The book consists of 86 pages in total, including both the main content and supplementary sections.