

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

The Indonesian Ministry of Education implemented a new curriculum called the Independent Curriculum after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Independent Curriculum was first implemented in the 2022-2023 school year, while some schools were still conducting online learning. However, after a complete lockdown, students can now learn in offline situations. The independent curriculum was created with the aim of improving the quality of the learning system in Indonesia. It was developed as a curriculum framework and it is more flexible, focuses on basic material, and develops student's uniqueness and abilities.

Teachers play a very important role in curriculum development and implementation. Students will be motivated to be active and trained to develop critical thinking skills through learning designs that are no longer teacher-centered and that utilize different learning media (Hayati & Herawati, 2022). Teachers can organize and structure learning materials, textbooks, and content in the teaching and learning process by collaborating effectively with school curriculum development.

Learning media are described as media that contain information or instructions and that can be used in the methods of learning. Learning media are media that convey information or instructions that contain

reasons that are very important for the students to be able to develop concepts, skills, and abilities. The effective learning media that are commonly used in teaching and learning activities today are video, pictures, PowerPoint, and audio media (Hasan et al., 2021). There are various types of learning tools or media used in learning activities in schools. Visual media: refers to learning media that are only accessible through the sense of sight. This includes both non-projected visual media and projected visual media. Audio media: is a tool that contains messages in auditory form, which can stimulate students' thoughts, feelings, attention, and ability to understand the subject matter. This category includes sound cassette programs and radio programs. The use of audio media in the learning process aims to improve listening skills. Audio-visual media: this media combines audio and visual elements, commonly known as see-and-hear media. This combination enhances the presentation of learning materials to students, making it completer and more optimal. Additionally, to a certain extent, this media can replace the role of the teacher. The use of audiovisual media in education allows for the teacher to act as a facilitator of learning, providing convenience for students in the learning process. Examples of audiovisual media include video or television programs, instructional videos, and sound slide programs (Firmadani, 2020).

Digital technology is a type of wireless technology that uses signals as a medium to convey messages. The development of digital

technology brings many changes, especially in equipment that used to be analog but has now turned digital. Since the emergence of COVID-19, digital media has played a crucial role in facilitating the learning process. Its importance has been particularly evident during the pandemic. Even though the pandemic has subsided, digital media continues to be an essential tool in teaching and learning. It is considered an alternative or bridge for delivering learning materials to students. Digital learning media is appealing to students because it is engaging and can create a fun learning atmosphere.

The basis for the use of learning media in the learning process is explained in the Qur'an. The word of Allah Swt. in surah An-Naml verse 29-30:

قَالَتْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ إِنِّي أُلْقِيَ إِلَيَّ كِتَابٌ كَرِيمٌ
إِنَّهُ مِنْ سُلَيْمَانَ وَإِنَّهُ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In this verse there is a story about the Hud-hud bird who was assigned by Prophet Sulaiman to deliver a letter to Queen Balqis. In the process of delivering the letter, the bird Hud-hud delivered the letter through a gap in the ceiling of the royal building of the country of Saba' where Queen Balqis was alone. The verse explains that the letter here becomes a tool or medium to convey information to Queen Balqis. This letter is a visual form contained in surah An-Naml verse 29 (Gunawan & Pasaribu, 2022). In the context of learning media, the story of the bird

Hud-hud who delivered a letter to Queen Balqis is one example of the use of media to convey information and knowledge. The letter carried by the bird Hud-hud can be seen as a picture of effective learning media, because it can convey information clearly and accurately to Queen Balqis.

Additionally, the word of Allah Swt. in Surah An-Naml verse 44:

قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي الصَّرْحَ ۖ فَلَمَّا رَأَتْهُ حَسِبَتْهُ لُجَّةً وَكَشَفَتْ عَنْ سَاقِهَا ۚ قَالَ إِنَّهُ صَرْحٌ مُّمَرَّدٌ مِّن قَوَارِيرَ ۖ قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

This verse illustrates that the da'wah of the prophet Sulaiman uses modern media, namely the appearance of visualization of 3-dimensional moving objects, which project an image of the pool that seems to appear on the surface of the floor. So, it can be concluded that the tools and media implied in this verse are 3-dimensional audio-visual images (Gunawan & Pasaribu, 2022). The relationship between learning and communication in education is very important. When Prophet Sulaiman met Queen Balqis, their meeting was facilitated with advanced technology to create a comfortable and conducive atmosphere. Therefore, in the learning process, the use of media that can improve communication and facilities that make learners feel comfortable is necessary so that learning objectives can be achieved optimally.

There are many relevant studies conducted by researchers. One of them is a study conducted by (Wilson & Nurkhamidah, 2023) in which his findings indicated that a significant number of students exhibited a subpar level of English proficiency during classroom instruction. Due to these circumstances, teachers refrained from penalizing students for errors in the learning process, as per an independent curriculum approach, to prevent undue stress and apprehension. Nevertheless, teachers encouraged students to explore learning materials independently. This study centers on enacting the independent curriculum, with the English teacher highlighting the independent curriculum's implementation as an obstacle for English teachers in their teaching practice. Considering the current situation, English teacher bears a huge responsibility for not only develop modules and create student worksheets and assessments but also for to mee the learning needs and diverse competencies of each student in the classroom.

The second research is from (Simanjuntak et al., 2021). Based on the findings of this research, it can be inferred that utilizing YouTube as an e-learning tool for English language acquisition is both engrossing and valuable. The outcomes of the research concentrate on the use of YouTube as a medium for e-learning while also including student perceptions. It not only encourages learners to engage with online English content during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis but also provides accessibility to pertinent learning materials. The third research is from (Fauzan & Kasim, 2020), which his research finding indicate that teachers and students consider that

the use of Duolingo media is effective in learning English because it can increase students' willingness to do assignment at home through Duolingo media and language skills in learning English. Based on the finding of this research it can concluded that Duolingo is an effective tool for learning English and can increase students' motivation to complete assignment at home.

However, this research differs from the previous three. This research focuses on digital learning media implementation in English classes within the Independent Curriculum. Therefore, this research aims to objectively describe student and teacher activities in the English classroom, specifically focusing on the digital learning media used based on the implementation of an independent curriculum. On the other hand, this research investigated the teachers challenges of using digital learning media in English class.

B. Definition of Key Terms

The researcher provides definitions of key terms used in this study to facilitate comprehension and prevent misunderstandings. The following section presents the definitions of key terms deemed essential for an accurate understanding of the subject matter.

1. Digital Learning Media

Digital learning media refers to tools, materials, and resources used to convey lesson information to students and support the learning and teaching process. It includes learning media that can be processed,

accessed, and distributed through digital devices. In this research, the digital learning media used include educational game such as Wordwall and Quizizz. Artificial Intelligence such as GPT and Gemini. Educational video such as YouTube. In addition, PowerPoint, and other supporting media.

2. The Independent Curriculum

The Independent Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intra-curricular learning where content will be optimized so that learners have sufficient time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies. Teachers have the flexibility to choose various learning tools so that learning can be tailored to students' learning needs and interests. In this research, the application of interesting learning media is closely related to the implementation of an independent curriculum where currently some schools have utilized technology in the learning process.

C. Research Questions

Based on the background description above, the formulation of questions in this study is as follows:

1. How does the implementation of digital learning media for English classes within an independent curriculum?
2. What are the challenges faced by English teachers when using digital learning media in the English class within an independent curriculum implementation?

D. Objectives of Study

In this study, the researcher has the following research objectives:

1. To identify the implementation of digital learning media for English classes within an independent curriculum.
2. To find the challenges faced by English teachers when using digital learning media in the English class within an independent curriculum implementation.

E. Significance of Study

Based on the research objectives to be achieved, researchers hope that this research can provide information and have benefits for teachers, and other researchers who discuss the implementation of digital learning media.

1. For teacher, conducting this research intends for teacher to realize and improve their understanding about of the use of appropriate learning media in the learning process so that students are more motivated to learn English.
2. For student, it is hoped that this research can raise awareness of the importance of learning media in the success of the teaching and learning process.
3. For further research, other researchers can examine the same thing at different levels of students and can also only focus on teachers' experiences or students' experiences about digital learning media.