

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Research Background**

Reading is one of the skills in English subject. Reading English is an important part of language learning as it helps students develop other related skills such as grammar, vocabulary, and writing. Not only in the learning process, reading is needed in various aspects of life. Reading is often considered a boring activity, so innovative strategies are needed to increase students' interest in reading. The development of the times and technology makes reading also experience changes. If previously reading was only through sheets of text, now reading is switching to digital form. So, today many people have used digital technology as a media to read. This reading activity is also known as digital reading.

According to Nordquist in research from Lim F.V. & Toh, W. (2020), digital reading is defined as the activity of information from texts presented via digital devices such as computers, tablets, smartphones and e-readers. The digital reading process often involves the consumption of multimodal texts, which include a combination of images, videos, and other media elements in addition to verbal language in a text (Buccellati, 2008). This type of digital multimodal text can include e-books, interactions in social media, and articles published on the website. The use of digital reading materials is very widespread, and students can easily access them via their smartphone devices.

This can be an effective means of improving students' reading comprehension abilities.

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand the meaning of the text being read. A person's ability to understand texts is influenced by their tenacity and ability to process the information they get. Reading activities can help the student who has difficulty learning. Through reading activities, a student can gain new knowledge and opportunities, especially in the context of reading texts in a foreign language such as English. This provides students with the opportunity to obtain diverse information, enjoy the process of reading, and engage in various activities as carried out by the global community based on the knowledge gained from literacy. Improving reading skills is also the key to success in the academic context (Iftanti, 2015).

Improving students' reading comprehension can be achieved through the use of digital media. Considering that we are in an all-digital era, we must understand technology better and adapt it for ease and practicality, particularly in terms of reading. Maybe, for now, most people are reluctant to read through printout documents. Therefore, the use of modern platforms and digital media has an important role. Print media, which are currently less popular with the public, are widely available in the form of electronic books that can be accessed more easily and practically.

The emergence of technology and the internet has given rise to new ways of reading. This has also given birth to a new book industry. This transformation can have a positive impact on people's reading and writing

activities. This change is beneficial because it allows reading to occur anytime and anywhere, thereby increasing reading knowledge and experience. Interest in reading should increase in line with the ease of reading activities. But on the contrary, changes in digital reading in Indonesia have unfavorable results. According to the results of research conducted by Central Connecticut State University in March 2016, Indonesia is in 60 ranked out of 61 countries in terms of interest in reading.

Reading activities have different purposes. The first purpose is reading for entertainment or just a hobby. Usually, the type of text read is fiction. Examples are novels, comics, short stories, and others. The second is reading for academic purposes or increasing knowledge. Reading activities with this purpose are also known as Academic Reading Texts. Examples of academic reading texts include traditional books, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and journal articles. However, there are still many students who read academic texts just to find answers to a question without knowing the meaning of the text. Not all English students can understand the reading text well. Sometimes they can also have difficulty in reading English texts. Especially in today's digital era, students are faced with a variety of reading materials. Although the current digital era has many conveniences to read, of course, these conveniences are also accompanied by several obstacles.

Digital reading is part of English as a foreign language students' academic activity in this digital era. Accessing reading material through digital media online is indeed easier, more practical, faster, more effective, and

efficient. Almost any type of reading material can be obtained according to readers' wishes in a matter of minutes or even seconds. Besides that, digital reading activities can be done anytime and anywhere. Digital reading does bring many benefits to students. Especially in meeting educational needs such as finding learning materials and lectures in the form of e-books, scientific journals, and others. But behind these many advantages, there are still many students who find challenges and difficulties in digital reading.

In the context of research on digital reading, there are challenges that readers face when interacting with text via a screen, such as difficulties in switching between browsers and challenges in maintaining focused attention. On the other hand, readers develop special strategies when carrying out digital reading activities, such as searching with keywords. Therefore, understanding how students engage in digital reading for academic purposes is significant, as well as exploring how they overcome obstacles that arise in the digital reading process.

There are several studies related to the difficulties in students' reading comprehension. Nindya (2021) researched to find out the challenges faced by English learners when reading in an online environment. The results of the study indicate that students do face some problems when reading in an online environment. The problems mentioned related to the material, purpose, speed, and amount of online reading are difficulties in selecting material or text to read, health problems related to online reading, unsupported facilities, and difficulty maintaining focus on the text. In addition, Yolanda (2019)

conducted research on students' difficulties in understanding English reading texts. The results of this study indicate that students' difficulties in reading comprehension include difficulties in language knowledge, the learner's background knowledge, motivation, lack of reading strategies, and the reading process.

Previous studies have addressed the same issue, but before delving into the topic, it is very important to identify the research gap. After reviewing the existing literature, it becomes clear that most of the studies focused on digital reading in general, without a specific focus on reading comprehension of academic texts. As a result, this study aims to explore more deeply the challenges students face in digital reading comprehension on academic text. The title chosen for this research is "Students' Digital Reading Comprehension Challenges on Academic Text". This study is intended to provide a comprehensive analysis of the constraints students face in digital reading for academic purposes.

## **1.2 Research Question**

To guide the research, research question is formulated as follow:

1. What challenges do the students have in digital reading comprehension on academic text?

## **1.3 Research Purpose**

Relating to the research question above, the purpose of this research is to explore the challenges faced by 3<sup>rd</sup> semester students of English education

study program class R001 at Universitas Jambi in digital reading comprehension on academic text.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Research**

After achieving its purposes, it is hoped this research will bring significances for students and further researchers. For Students, this research will help students to find out the challenges that they faced in their digital reading comprehension on academic text. For Further Researchers, this research hopefully can be an input and used as one of the sources for further research.

#### **1.5 Limitations of the Research**

The researcher limits the research by focusing on the digital reading comprehension challenges on academic text through smartphone, that faced by 3<sup>rd</sup> semester students of English Education, class R001 at Universitas Jambi.