CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

Reading comprehension means understanding what you read by using your knowledge and thinking about the meanings of words (Snow, 2002, p. 32; Wigfield et al., 2016, p. 1). Reading comprehension is crucial as it allows you to acquire new knowledge and enhance your critical thinking abilities. It can be understood as an interactive process that combines knowledge-driven and word-based approaches (Perfetti and Stafura, 2014, p.23; p.32). Silva and Cain (2015, p. 1) emphasize that foundational language skills, such as vocabulary, play a crucial role in both understanding and producing complex communication. The Active View of Reading (AVR), developed by Duke and Cartwright (2021), offers a helpful framework for understanding and improving reading. First, it identifies a broader and more diverse set of reading components that are modifiable and suitable for intervention. Additionally, it shows how word recognition and language comprehension are closely connected, with certain skills linking the two. The model also includes self-regulation as an important part of reading, recognizing how students manage their focus and motivation. Furthermore, it takes into account the role of cultural influences on reading. By naming specific skills that can be developed through instruction, the AVR has the potential to promote fairness in education. Research also shows that each skill in the model can be improved with teaching, which makes the AVR a valuable tool for assessing and supporting students' reading abilities (Burns, 2023, pp. 32-32).

Today, teachers are showing a growing interest in adopting innovative teaching strategies. This study focuses on word recognition, which is one of the many factors contributing to the complexity of reading comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), as noted by Arguedo et al. (2023, p. 2-3). Specifically, it explores two notable instructional methods: gamification and lyrical music. An instructional method refers to the structured arrangement of learning experiences or events designed by the teacher to support and promote student learning. This approach involves organizing external learning opportunities to help facilitate the learning process effectively (Patel, 2020, p. 2). The researcher identifies gamification as an instructional method due to its intentional design and application of game-like elements to foster engaging and structured learning experiences. Similarly, lyrical music is considered an instructional method as it is strategically used by the teacher to support student learning. By investigating these methods, the study seeks to see if they can improve students' word recognition skill and, consequently, contribute to improving their reading comprehension skills.

The use of gamification as an instructional technique is not a recent concept in the field of teaching and learning. It entails the integration of game elements and mechanics into non-game contexts, such as educational setting (Deterding et al., 2011, p.9). Gamification integrates elements such as competition, rewards, challenges, and interactive features to foster an engaging and immersive learning environment. Gamification in vocabulary learning has been a preferable learning approach adopted by English as Second Language (ESL) lecturers in tertiary academic institutions worldwide due to its convenience (Lam, 2022, p. 95; Diaz, et.al., 2022, p.12; Thiagarajah, 2022, p.1060). As stated earlier, vocabulary learning

goes beyond simply memorizing words; it involves providing students with the necessary tools to engage meaningfully with texts and enhance their reading comprehension abilities.

In the context of reading comprehension, gamification has been identified as a highly effective tool for developing innovative teaching methods as well. Nitiasih and Budiartha (2020, p. 116) stated that one effective method for creating innovative teaching media for reading comprehension is through gamification. Currently, gamification has been developed and applied as an integrated teaching tool. Gamification involves adopting game mechanics and dynamics to address challenges, engage participants, and enhance the learning process (Nitiasih & Budiartha, 2020, p. 116). Given that today's students are constantly interacting with technology, and considering the benefits of using gamification, this study employed gamification as a tool for teaching reading comprehension. Suwarni et al. (2023, p. 1374) highlighted that platforms like *Quizizz* offer engaging features such as audio, images, music, and fun games, which enhance student interest in learning and make assessments more enjoyable. Their study proved that the use of *Quizizz* increases student motivation, encouraging active participation, which is crucial for achieving learning goals. Additionally, the ranking system fosters a competitive atmosphere, motivating students to strive for the best performance and encouraging them to answer quickly and accurately. In Asmara's study (2022, p. 26), students' reading abilities were initially low, but noticeable improvements occurred after using the *Quizizz* app. This progress highlights how *Quizizz* helps reduce student frustration and enhances reading comprehension, making it an effective tool for improving reading skills. Below are some findings collected by the researcher to assess the

extent to which gamification in the learning process can enhance students' reading comprehension.

Table 1.1 Research on the Effects of Gamification on
Improving Students' Reading Comprehension

No	Researchers	Research Title	Year	Summary of the Research
1	Nitiasih, P. K., & Budiartha, L. G. R. (p. 227)	Increasing Students' Reading Comprehension through Gamification Based on Balinese Local Stories	2020	Using gamification based on Balinese local stories as a teaching media significantly improved fifth-grade students' reading comprehension. Gamification offers a promising method for improving students' vocabulary and reading comprehension, particularly through engaging and culturally relevant content.
2	Asmara, C. H., Muhammad, R. N., & Almubarokah, Q. (p. 26)	The Effect of Online Learning using *Quizizz* Application to Improve English Reading Skills of Higher Education Students	2022	Gamification, specifically through the use of *Quizizz*, has been successful in improving students' reading comprehension. The research indicated that students demonstrated significant gains in their reading ability and independence, as evidenced by the positive changes in their pretest and posttest scores, along with a reduction in frustration levels when engaging with descriptive and recount texts.

Source: Supporting Research Journals

Their study revealed significant gains in students' comprehension and independence, as reflected in improved pretest and posttest scores and reduced frustration levels when engaging with descriptive and recount texts. These findings underscore the potential of gamification as an effective instructional strategy for fostering reading comprehension across different educational levels.

Utilizing songs in the process of teaching and learning is not a novel concept, either. Wilson and Gambrell (1988) define word recognition as "the breaking of the visual code of symbols into sounds" (as cited in Hansen et al., 2014, p. 21), meaning the process of translating written letters into spoken sounds. This process is closely linked to phonological awareness, which is a meta-cognitive skill allowing individuals to recognize and distinguish sound patterns (Anvari et al., 2002, p.115). Being able to convert written cues into sounds helps students identify words or parts of words more quickly, thus improving reading speed. Research consistently demonstrates a strong connection between phonological awareness and reading skills in both children and adults (e.g., Darrow, 2008, p. 32), with higher levels of phonological awareness linked to improved reading outcomes. Darrow's study also highlights preliminary research showing a correlation between children's reading abilities and their capacity to accurately distinguish pitches (Fisher & McDonald, 2001; Hansen & Bernstorf, 2002). Furthermore, Anvari, Trainor, Woodside, and Levy (2002) found significant correlations between music skills, phonological awareness, and reading development in 4- and 5-year-old children.

In his study, Sevînç (2018, pp. 57-59) demonstrated that significant improvements in vocabulary learning were strongly linked to exposure to songs (lyrical music), rather than just instrumental music (non-lyrical music). The notable progress in the song group was likely due to the pedagogical integration of listening to music, discussing it, and recalling words from the lyrics in the context of vocabulary learning. This suggests that the combination of listening, reading, and discussing song lyrics in class may enhance the learning process. Furthermore,

Sevînç's findings align with Hayati & Mohmedi's (2011) study, indicating that presenting words in both audio and visual forms through song lyrics likely reinforced the vocabulary learning experience. Below are some findings collected by the researcher to assess the extent to which lyrical music in the learning process can enhance students' reading comprehension.

Table 1.2 Research on the Effects of Lyrical Music
on Improving Students' Reading Comprehension

No	Researchers	Research Title	Year	Summary of the Research
1	Darrow, A.-A. (p.32)	Music and Literacy	2008	Music enhances literacy development by improving phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and reading fluency. Research shows that music experiences, such as pitch discrimination, can aid in decoding language and word recognition. Music-based interventions, when aligned with literacy goals, have been shown to significantly boost reading skills and student engagement. While early studies indicate the benefits of music for reading, more research is needed to determine the most effective methods and types of music interventions.

2	Arzu Sevinç (p. 56)	The Effect of Instrumental Music and Songs on Vocabulary Learning, Reading Comprehension and Motivation in English as a Foreign Language: A Quasi-experimental Study with Turkish High School Students	2018	Lyrical music can significantly enhance reading comprehension, particularly when students engage with the lyrics in an educational setting, thus providing a practical approach for improving students' learning outcomes in literature.

Source: Supporting Research Journals

Research shows that music enhances reading comprehension and language acquisition. Darrow (2008) found that music improves phonological awareness, word recognition, and reading fluency, while Sevinç (2018) demonstrated that lyrical music aids comprehension when integrated into lessons. Both studies highlight music's potential to boost literacy skills and student engagement.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of gamification as an alternative approach to improving word recognition skills and enhancing the comprehension of informational texts. The researcher also aims to investigate the effectiveness of using lyrical music as a technique for developing word recognition and vocabulary acquisition, evaluating its role in improving ESL students' understanding of informational texts. This research brings novelty by focusing on how gamification and lyrical music enhance vocabulary development, which subsequently improves students' comprehension of informational texts. Unlike previous studies that broadly examined the effects of these strategies on

reading comprehension without specifying text types, this research centers on informational texts such as nonfiction literature and biographies. Conducted for the first time in this particular setting, the study fills key gaps in the field. First, while informational texts are crucial in academic and professional contexts, their role in studies on gamification and lyrical music remains underexplored. These texts form the foundation of much of the reading required in high school, higher education, and professional settings, making this focus particularly relevant. Second, the use of lyrical music to support vocabulary and comprehension among high school students, an age group often overlooked in favor of younger learners, is addressed in this study. Finally, prior research has not clearly evaluated the suitability of song genres for high school learners. To bridge this gap, this study incorporates popular songs by Taylor Swift, assessing their appropriateness and effectiveness as tools for enhancing vocabulary and comprehension in the lyrical music experimental class.

1.2 Problem Identification

Holsworth (2018, p.81) emphasizes that many ESL students struggle to efficiently process reading texts due to insufficient word recognition skills, an issue also prevalent among ESL students at Mahabodhi Vidya School. These students often face challenges in identifying main ideas and specific details in reading passages. The issue becomes clear when analyzing the students' unit test results, which cover four skill areas: reading comprehension, listening comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary. As illustrated in Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2, the majority of students exhibit significant difficulties in the reading comprehension section, where their performance is notably weaker compared to other skill areas. This trend
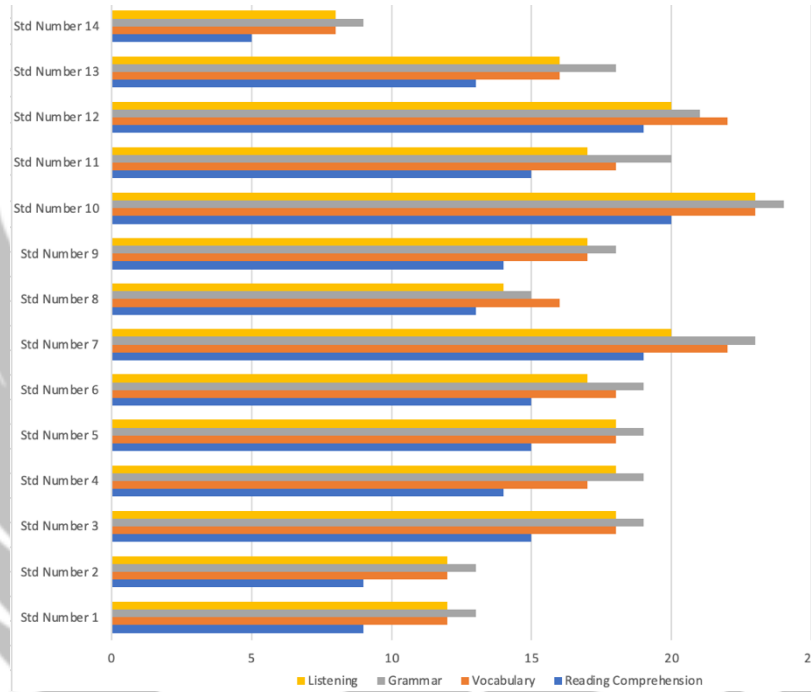
highlights a pressing need to address students' challenges with reading comprehension. Students frequently seek help when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary, and when the volume of unknown words becomes too great, they often exhibit reluctance to continue reading. Furthermore, students' abilities to comprehend and apply reading strategies vary, influenced by factors such as their educational background, reading experience, interests, and personal preferences. While some students excel in using certain strategies, others may struggle with the same approaches. Understanding these differences is crucial, as they significantly impact students' learning outcomes. Those who effectively apply specific strategies can achieve higher levels of text comprehension, whereas others may face difficulties in understanding the material.

Figure 1.1 12 Social B Students' English Daily Test Results –
Gamification Experimental Group 1
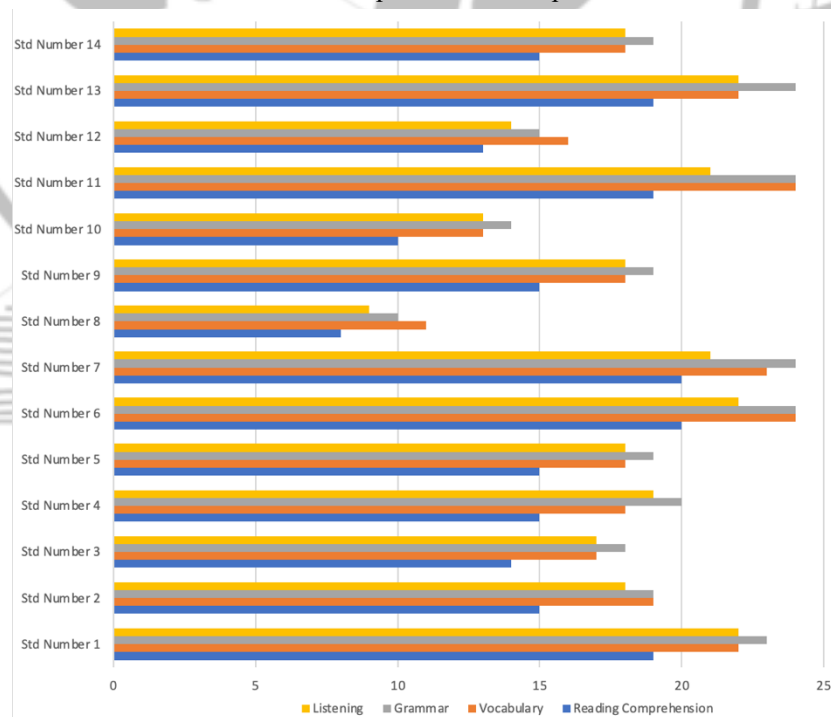
Source: Mahabodhi Vidya High School's Scoring Ledger 2024

Figure 1.2 12 Social A Students' English Daily Test Results –
Lyrical Music Experimental Group 2

Class 12 Social A, which is the group for the lyrical music experiment, comprises 14 students, with 8 males and 6 females. Class 12 Social B, the gamification group, also has 14 students, evenly divided with 7 males and 7 females. The experimental groups were chosen from the social studies classes, which typically perform lower in English compared to the science class, from which the control group was selected.

In Ostojic's study (2023, p.124), it is explained that reading comprehension is a multifaceted process that involves word recognition skills – integrating lexical features, activating contextual meanings, determining sentence meanings, making inferences about causal relationships, and drawing conclusions (Scarborough et al.,

2009; Cain & Oakhill, 2006; Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). For instance, a student with strong language comprehension but weak decoding skills may still fail to understand the text (Bishop & Snowling, 2004). The theory has been extensively researched in languages with transparent letter-sound correspondences, such as Spanish and Finnish, where comprehension plays a dominant role in reading success (Florit & Cain, 2011). However, in languages like English, where letter-sound relationships are less transparent, decoding becomes more critical (Nation & Snowling, 2004; & Cain, 2012). This theory explains why students may struggle with reading and underscores the importance of both decoding and comprehension in reading success.

Teaching reading comprehension is a complex task that involves transferring knowledge through targeted methods, strategies, and materials to help students become efficient readers. Teachers play a central role in this process by motivating students, selecting appropriate texts, creating relevant reading assessments, and employing effective strategies (Harmer, 2007, p.108). In response to these challenges, the researcher, who also serves as the teacher, employs a vocabulary building strategy to enhance the students' word recognition skills. Termed the conventional strategy, the approach involves introducing key vocabulary from the text, providing definitions, and guiding students to apply this knowledge within the context of the reading material. The significance of vocabulary acquisition for comprehension is well-supported in literature; Laufer (1997, p. 23) emphasizes that effective comprehension is unattainable without an adequate understanding of the text's vocabulary. This strategy aligns with the practices of conventional teaching, which Kaprwan (2017, p. 497) defines as "long-

established customs that society traditionally used in schools." However, conventional teaching methods have been critiqued for being predominantly teacher-centered, often limiting student engagement and hindering their personal and professional development. Moreover, concerns persist about whether conventional approaches ensure that accurate and comprehensive information effectively reaches all students.

For Indonesian students, whose native language exhibits clear decoding systems akin to those in Spanish and Dutch, decoding strategies are less commonly utilized when reading Indonesian texts, as these students typically rely more on language comprehension. The Simple View of Reading (SVR) posits that reading comprehension stems from the interplay of word recognition (decoding) and language comprehension, offering educators a focused framework for addressing specific reading challenges (Ostojic, 2023, p. 124). However, its limitations in explaining reading difficulties beyond these two areas led the researcher to explore the Active View of Reading (AVR), which integrates additional factors such as motivation, engagement, and self-regulation (Duke & Cartwright, 2021, p. 10). The AVR provides a more comprehensive and flexible model, emphasizing the overlap between decoding and comprehension while accommodating diverse reading difficulties and enabling targeted interventions to enhance overall reading outcomes

1.3   Problem Limitations

The study identifies several key issues that have not been sufficiently addressed in existing research. One major concern is the gap in understanding how Indonesian students respond to gamification and lyrical music. While these methods

have been explored in other contexts, there is limited research on their effectiveness for ESL students in Indonesia. Additionally, the application of gamification and lyrical music specifically for improving reading comprehension has not been fully examined in the Indonesian educational setting. As a result, the study will be refined to focus on the context of SMA Mahabodhi Vidya in Jakarta Barat. By narrowing the scope to this school, the research will particularly examine how gamification and lyrical music can improve reading comprehension among ESL high school students. This limitation ensures a more targeted investigation into the effects of these methods within a specific educational context, while addressing the identified gaps in research.

1.4   Research Questions

Based on the research background, problem identification, and research limitations, the research problems are formulated as follows:

1. Does the implementation of gamification result in a significant difference between pretest and posttest scores in reading comprehension?

2. Does the implementation of lyrical music result in a significant difference between pretest and posttest scores in reading comprehension?

3. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores in reading comprehension for students who follow conventional instruction (control group)?

4. Is there a significant difference in reading comprehension among students exposed to gamification, lyrical music, and conventional instruction?

1.5　Objectives of the Study

The objectives of conducting this research are as follows:

1. To examine whether the implementation of gamification significantly affects students' reading comprehension by comparing their pretest and posttest scores.

2. To examine whether the implementation of lyrical music significantly affects students' reading comprehension by comparing their pretest and posttest scores.

3. To examine whether the implementation of conventional instruction significantly affects students' reading comprehension by comparing their pretest and posttest scores.

4. To compare the effectiveness of gamification, lyrical music, and conventional instruction in improving students' reading comprehension.

1.6　Benefit of the Study

Based on the findings of this research, the author anticipates that the study will yield both theoritical and practical advantages. These benefits are outlined below.

1.6.1　Theoretical Benefit

This study offers several theoretical contributions to the field of language education, particularly in the context of English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction in Indonesia. By focusing on the effectiveness of gamification and lyrical music in improving reading comprehension, the study expands existing

theories on innovative instructional methods and their impact on language learning. The research will contribute to a deeper understanding of how gamification—through elements like points, rewards, and interactive challenges—affects ESL learners' ability to comprehend written texts. Additionally, the study will provide insights into the role of lyrical music as an alternative learning tool, suggesting that the integration of music with meaningful lyrics can enhance vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension in a unique and engaging way. Furthermore, this research is anticipated to serve as a valuable resource for other researchers, offering insights into the variables explored and providing a broader understanding of the topic.

1.6.2   Practical Benefit

This study provides several practical benefits for educators, school administrators, and policymakers, particularly in the context of improving reading comprehension for ESL students in Indonesia. The findings will offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of gamification and lyrical music as instructional tools, enabling teachers to adopt innovative and engaging methods that cater to diverse learning styles. By implementing gamification, teachers can enhance student motivation and create an interactive learning environment, which could lead to improved reading comprehension skills. Similarly, incorporating lyrical music into lessons could offer an alternative approach for reinforcing vocabulary and comprehension in a more memorable and enjoyable manner.

For school administrators and policymakers, the study highlights the potential of integrating non-traditional teaching strategies into the curriculum. The

research findings could encourage the adoption of gamification and music-based methods in broader educational settings, offering a more holistic approach to language learning. Additionally, by comparing these methods to conventional instruction, the study provides evidence that can inform decisions about curriculum design and teaching resources at SMA Mahabodhi Vidya and other schools facing similar challenges.

On a broader scale, the practical benefits of this study could lead to the development of professional development programs for teachers, equipping them with new tools and strategies for improving reading comprehension in ESL students. The insights gained from this research may also inspire further studies in other regions, contributing to the ongoing improvement of ESL teaching practices in Indonesia.

1.7   Research Paper Organization

The organization of this research consists of five chapters, each with specific detail.

Chapter one provides an introduction that addresses key aspects related to the background of the study. It is followed by the problem identification associated with the background, necessitating the establishment of the limitation of the study. Based on these limitations, research questions are formulated, which are addressed through a series of studies and serve as the objectives of this research. The benefits of this research are also discussed to highlight its potential usefulness.

Chapter two outlines the theoretical framework, detailing the variables analyzed in the study. It includes a literature review that explores theories related to word recognition, incorporating gamification and lyrical music, based on the works of earlier researchers in the field. This chapter also introduces the conceptual framework and research hypotheses.

Chapter three provides an explanation of the research methodology.This chapter delineates the research design and procedures that are utilized for data collection, processing, analysis, and interpretation. Additionally, it offers a clear description of the research setting and subjects.

Chapter four addresses the research questions formulated in chapter one. The research questions are answered by presenting the findings and discussing the results obtained from the research. This chapter provides an explanation of the data analysis results obtained from the research subjects and the interpretation of the data pertaining to each research variable, while also linking them to the existing theoretical framework.

Chapter five comprises the conclusion and recommendations. In this chapter, the conclusion drawn from the research findings are presented, along with the recommendations that can be beneficial for future research endeavors.