

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The development of 21st-century literacy requires students to be able to combine various modes of representation, particularly through reading-viewing skills. Exley (2024) emphasizes that reading-viewing is an intermodal process, namely the ability to integrate meaning from written and visual texts simultaneously. This ability is increasingly important because learning materials are oriented toward multimodality. In line with this, Mulyadi and Wikanengsih (2022) show that visual thinking strategies can improve students' viewing skills by encouraging active participation and critical engagement. Pratiwi's (2024) research also stresses the need to integrate digital and visual literacy into the curriculum so that students can adapt to changing patterns of modern communication. Pedagogically, reading-viewing skills provide substantial benefits, such as enhanced cognitive development, memory, vocabulary, emotional intelligence, and communication ability. Findings by Pangestika et al. (2023) further confirm that reading-viewing skills play an important role in strengthening students' multimodal literacy.

However, the integration of these skills in schools still faces challenges. Sukirman (2024) states that limited access to technology and a lack of appropriate pedagogical approaches make it difficult for students to effectively combine information

from texts and visuals. This condition is also reflected at SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu, where teaching practices tend to be lecture-centered, reducing opportunities for students to practice reading and viewing actively. Psychological factors such as fear of making mistakes, low self-confidence, and minimal classroom support further worsen students' ability to understand texts and visual content.

Based on the findings of Deleña (2025), although some students demonstrate relatively strong reading skills, a considerable number still experience difficulties in three main areas of reading. First, challenges in *word reading*, which refers to the ability to recognize and read words in a text. Although this aspect is statistically categorized as satisfactory, many students continue to face obstacles that affect their reading fluency. Second, difficulties in *oral reading* are reported by approximately 73% of students, indicating a lack of fluency and confidence when reading texts aloud in front of teachers or peers. Third, difficulties in *reading comprehension* are reported by 70% of students, who struggle to grasp the overall meaning of texts, connect ideas across sections, and develop a deep understanding of the reading material. These findings suggest that students' reading difficulties are not limited to mechanical aspects but also involve comprehensive text understanding, which is a crucial skill in school learning. In addition to student-related factors, *teacher-related factors* also present significant challenges, as teachers play a central role as facilitators in the

reading process. Limited instructional guidance, ineffective teaching strategies, and insufficient instructional support may impede the development of students' reading abilities Diga, (2023). In the classroom context, these challenges are further intensified when students are required to engage with intellectually demanding texts, such as lengthy novels or academic readings with complex structures and vocabulary, causing many students to feel overwhelmed when expected to comprehend such texts independently without intensive teacher support Gallagher, (2023).

In response to these challenges, Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) emerges as an alternative pedagogical approach that offers a relevant and meaningful solution. IBL emphasizes the importance of questioning, exploration, analysis, and active interaction with learning materials, enabling students not merely to receive information passively, but to construct understanding independently and in depth, both from written texts and visual media. Through structured learning strategies oriented toward active thinking processes, this approach has been shown to enhance students' reading comprehension Ridwan & Anas (2025).

Consistent with these findings, previous studies have also demonstrated that Inquiry-Based Learning has a significant positive impact on reading ability. Al Khamaiseh (2023) found that through the core phases of inquiry—namely questioning, investigating, exploring, analyzing, and drawing conclusions—

students are able to develop more comprehensive, systematic, and critical reading skills. Thus, IBL not only strengthens students' comprehension of textual content but also fosters higher-order thinking skills that support overall literacy development.

Based on these phenomena and empirical findings, this study, entitled “Exploring Inquiry-Based Learning in Improving Reading–Viewing Skill (A Case Study in Seventh Grade Students),” was chosen to explore the extent to which the IBL model can help develop students' reading and viewing skills at SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu. This research is expected to provide practical contributions for teachers in designing more communicative, multimodal, and inquiry-based instruction, as well as serve as a reference for further research related to this field.

B. Research Question

How is inquiry-based learning implemented in developing seventh-grade students' reading-viewing skills at SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu?

C. Research Objective

To explore and describe the implementation of Inquiry-Based Learning in developing seventh-grade students' reading–viewing skills at SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu.

D. The significances of the Research

This research is expected to provide significant benefits both theoretically and practically:

1. Theoretically

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the development of learning theory, especially in the context of inquiry-based learning. The results of the research are expected to enrich the existing literature on effective learning models in improving reading-viewing skills, and become a reference for the development of new learning models that are more in line with the needs of education in Indonesia. In addition, this research also aims to increase understanding of the application of inquiry-based learning approaches in language learning contexts and their impact on students' literacy skills.

2. Practically

Practically, this research has important implications for various related parties. The results of this study are expected to provide new insights and strategies for teachers in implementing the inquiry-based learning model in the classroom, so that they can design more interesting and interactive learning activities. Students are expected to directly benefit from the implementation of this learning model, which can improve their reading-viewing skills, as well as contribute to improving academic achievement and

interest in learning. In addition, the results of this study can also serve as a reference for the school in formulating better curriculum development policies and programs, as well as improving the quality of education at SMPN 20 Bengkulu City.

E. Definition of Key Terms

1. Inquiry-Based Learning

Inquiry-based learning is defined as a learning approach that emphasizes the process of questioning, exploration, and investigation, where students are encouraged to be actively involved in the learning process through questions, discussions, and experiments, so that they can build knowledge and skills independently.

Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) is a learning approach that places students at the center of the learning process through systematic investigative activities. In this model, students do not merely receive information but actively pose questions, formulate problems, explore data sources, analyze findings, and construct understanding both independently and collaboratively. IBL emphasizes higher-order cognitive processes such as critical thinking, problem-solving, reasoning, and reflection.

2. Reading-Viewing Skills

Reading-viewing skills are literacy skills that integrate the activity of reading written texts with observing and interpreting visual media in order to achieve a deeper understanding of information. These skills encompass the ability to interact effectively with both written and visual texts, identify the relationships between them, and analyze the meanings generated through the integration of textual and visual elements. Through reading-viewing, students not only comprehend information at a literal level but also develop critical thinking skills toward various forms of multimodal texts as part of a comprehensive literacy practice.