

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, research problem, research objectives, research hypothesis, assumption, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of The Study

In the 21st century, student success is influenced by their reading comprehension skills (Kissau & Hiller, 2013). Improving their understanding of what they read is a great challenge for students worldwide. This is an essential skill for making significant progress in your studies. During the reading process, students must understand the content of the reading. They must master this reading skill, and the goal is not to learn to read but to read to learn (Alyousef, 2006). When practising reading, reading comprehension becomes essential because it includes more than just the reader's response to the text (Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). The surprising facts about reading comprehension among students in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, many students still have difficulty in reading comprehension (Sulistiyo, 2016). The World's Most Literate Nations, conducted by Central of Connecticut State University, reported that Indonesia is ranked sixth among sixty-one Southeast Asian countries regarding reading interest (Miller & McKenna, 2016). This phenomenon describes the factual condition of Indonesian people's interest in reading, which is currently in a severe crisis, especially among students.

The comprehension of reading texts is essential in language learning. Woolley (2011) stated that reading comprehension is the process of understanding a text. The goal is to thoroughly understand what is explained in the text rather than understanding the meaning of individual words or phrases. The readers are considered successful when they understand the meaning intended by the writer. In this case, Indonesian language learners may not find difficulties in understanding Indonesian texts as reading material, but it will be more complicated when they read English texts (Setiyadi, 2016).

EFL learners still have poor reading comprehension when understanding English texts. Indonesian EFL learners' poor reading comprehension causes a lack of vocabulary, reading motivation, prior knowledge of the given information in the text, and learning strategies (Hamra & Syatriana, 2010). Lack of vocabulary makes it difficult for students to understand the text, so they find difficulties in answering the questions given by the teacher. It has been confirmed that limited vocabulary affects the reading comprehension of Indonesian students (Floris & Divina, 2009; Garcia-Castro, 2020; Sutarsyah, 2008).

Many educators and language experts argued that increasing one's vocabulary is crucial to learning a new language (Alqahtani, 2015; Kurniarahman, 2023). A student can only read, write, speak, or utter with a large enough vocabulary. An EFL learner needs to possess a large enough vocabulary committed to memory to understand foreign language text, make foreign language statements, or even compose sentences in foreign languages. This is due to the fact that reading, writing, and producing in the target language are all part of learning a foreign language. One major obstacle to learning foreign languages is the difficulty of committing large amounts of vocabulary to memory in the target language. Students' words can still be understood even if their sentence structure needs to be corrected. However, something would only be understood if their vocabulary was limited (Rasouli, 2016).

Apart from that, students are less motivated to read English texts in a foreign language and have difficulty understanding the text because they are too lazy to read the entire text. Naturally, students are not interested in reading or analyzing English texts. This is because they need to be used to incorporating relevant activities into their daily lives. Furthermore, Cahyono & Widiati (2006) argued that their study habits cause a decline in Indonesian students' interest in understanding English texts. Students read English texts only when the teacher gives them assignments (Cahyono & Widiati, 2006). While poor background knowledge also contributes to low reading comprehension levels (Cahyono & Widiati, 2006).

Lack of prior knowledge is also believed to be another cause of students' reading comprehension difficulties. Zuhra (2015) found that students had

difficulty understanding English texts because they lacked prior knowledge. This related phenomenon occurred because the lessons were not appropriately learned, and the students had not read similar texts previously (Zuhra, 2015). In contrast to related conditions, understanding English texts requires learners to make inferences based on extensive prior knowledge (Neuman et al., 2014). Therefore, Indonesian language learners will always have difficulty reading comprehension without sufficient prior knowledge achievement (Karanja, 2015).

Furthermore, Teachers' teaching strategies are probably the leading cause of students' reading comprehension failure. Teachers usually ask students to read, read aloud, and translate sentences separately. Naturally, this condition affects students' motivation, and they will feel bored with the conventional strategies teachers implement (Pradana, 2017).

The deficiency in reading comprehension skills is attributed to various factors, including teachers' conventional teaching strategies. Many teachers lack proficiency in diverse learning strategies, leading to student disinterest and low motivation. The predominant use of the lecture method further exacerbates the issue, with teachers dominating the learning process, leaving students with minimal opportunities to express opinions and enhance their abilities. Consequently, students exhibit reduced motivation for reading, perceiving it as monotonous since teachers primarily instruct them to read and respond to related questions without fostering active engagement.

Related to this issue, the circumstances of teaching and learning activities must be attractive to motivate students to develop reading comprehension. The Question-Answer Strategy (QAR) and the Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) Strategy will likely improve reading comprehension. These two reading comprehension strategies aim to increase student involvement in learning to read and help students understand each text (Moreilon, 2007).

The question-and-answer relationship (QAR) strategy will likely improve reading comprehension, especially recounting text. The Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy has been developed as an approach to thinking and discussing effective and familiar sources of information. When answering questions, QAR becomes a method used during the reading process to enhance

comprehension. This approach teaches students that each question has distinctions, and knowing how to identify question types can assist them in providing answers. QAR forms a three-way relationship between the question, the text content, and the reader's knowledge (Raphael, 1986).

Raphael & Au (2005) stated that QAR allows students to answer questions by distinguishing four types of questions based on the answers required: Right There, Think and Search, Author and Me, and On My Own. In Right There questions, the answer is stated directly in the text; the words used to create the question and the words used to answer the question are found in the same sentence. The answer to the Think and Search question is found in the text but needs to be stated directly because the reader must think and search or piece together different parts of the text to find the answer. The answers come from various places in the section. In contrast, the answer is not in the text in On My Own and Author and Me. In On My Own, readers must apply existing knowledge and experience to answer the question. Meanwhile, the Author and Me, the reader, must think about what we already know, what the author wants to say, and how these things can be combined.

In essence, QAR instructs students in three comprehension techniques: identifying information, analyzing text structures and their informational conveyance, and recognizing when inference is necessary (Raphael, 1986). Through QAR, students can discern potential answer choices by categorizing questions by type and monitoring their understanding of the text.

Apart from that, another method to improve students' reading comprehension is using the SSR strategy. Hunt (1970) stated that the Sustained Silent Reading strategy involves students reading silently for some time, but that does not mean they read without sound. The reader can probe for the answers. Sustained silent reading does not require saying every word. A silent reader says a word only silently, referring to pronunciation, emphasis, or intonation. In addition, they read a text the readers gave and were shown how to make time to read so they read more. Good readers use what they know about language and words to communicate what they read. To understand the text meaningfully, readers suspect that using Sustained Silent Reading can improve reading skills

because it can encourage students to read more and interact with the text, especially recount text.

A recount text chosen by the researcher will be given to students. Anderson & Anderson (1998) stated that recount texts retell past events, usually in the order they occurred. It presents past experiences in a series of events in detail (Cahyono, 2011). The social function of the recount text is to retell some events that happened in the past for specific purposes: to inform or entertain the listener or readers (Gerot & Peter, 1994). The generic structure of recount text is the content of a text that consists of orientation, events, and re-orientation. Orientation serves as the introduction, providing the context or setting. Then, an event contains a series of occurrences or a storyline. Re-orientation includes a conclusion that summarizes the recounted events (Gerot & Peter, 1994).

Recount texts are worthy of being studied by students because these texts contain stories of the author's experiences that we can encounter daily. However, when students answer questions about recount text, students often need help answering text-based questions. QAR strategies can help students maximize their reading by showing them how to find and use information in texts to answer teacher questions (Lehrn & Osborn Jean, 2005). Teachers can ask students to answer comprehension questions to determine whether they understand what they read. This may indicate that students need better reading skills if they can answer many questions correctly.

As researchers indicated, MTSN 3 Kediri students also faced a similar situation. The study revealed that the students' challenge in learning English lies in their reading comprehension skills. Many struggle to grasp the content, even though they can read the words in a passage accurately. Despite being able to pronounce words, they often find it difficult to comprehend their meanings and answer questions.

Moreover, the study noted that teachers predominantly still employed traditional methods to teach English, particularly reading, resulting in students' lack of understanding and subsequent boredom when encountering reading text. Consequently, students struggled to master English skills, particularly in reading, and lacked interest in English texts, leading to difficulties in comprehending the

meaning of the texts and answering reading comprehension questions. The student's difficulties in comprehending the meaning of the texts, these problems were also faced by students in research previously conducted by Siagian (2020), Arisman et al. (2021), Mutiara (2022), and Zulfitri (2023). To address these issues, they employed a range of techniques and methods.

Among the techniques, methods and strategies teachers use to address students' reading challenges is the Question Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy. The researchers suggest implementing this strategy in the classroom to support students at the studied school. The QAR strategy effectively enhances students' reading comprehension, particularly in tasks such as identifying the main idea, making inferences, and discerning implied and specific information. Some previous studies have been conducted on applying question-answer relationships in teaching reading comprehension.

The study by Siagian (2020) found a significant influence of using the question-and-answer relationship (QAR) strategy on students' reading comprehension in class X of Senior high school. The weaknesses are the lack of references, funding, the researcher's proficiency in data analysis, and constraints on the researcher's time and knowledge. This research showed that the Question and Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy was an aspect of reading comprehension. In the Question and Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy, the teacher empowers students with ample opportunities to independently solve problems and draw conclusions based on the information provided in the reading material.

Another research from Arisman et al. (2021) also discovered notable variances in reading comprehension among seventh-grade students at Junior High School when comparing those instructed with the Question-Answer Relationship Method (QAR) versus conventional teaching methods through narrative texts.

Mutiara (2022) also conducted a study to examine the impact of using question-and-answer relationship strategies (QAR) on eleventh-grade students' reading comprehension. Narrative text was one of the texts that the researchers concentrated on in this research. The ineffective reading comprehension approach in narrative texts hinders students from fully grasping the content.

The latest research conducted by Zulfitri (2023) stated that this research aims to prove the effectiveness of using the relationship between question-and-answer strategies and students' reading comprehension skills in descriptive texts. This study used a quantitative research method with a Pre-experimental design. In this study, the investigator employed an experimental research design comprising an experimental group and a control group. Both groups underwent pre-test and post-test assessments. The experimental group received a QAR treatment, whereas the control group received a conventional treatment.

Referring to previous research, researchers found that there was a gap, namely the QAR strategy and traditional methods. This research is different because it uses the QAR and SSR strategies. Based on the description above, the researcher conducted an entitled **“The Effectiveness of Question Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy on Students’ Reading Comprehension in Junior High School”**.

B. Research Problem

Based on the background above, the research problem is as follows: Do the students taught by the Question Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy perform better than the students taught by the Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) Strategy in terms of reading comprehension?.

C. Research Objectives

This research aims to investigate whether the students taught by the Question Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy perform better than the students taught by the Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) Strategy in terms of reading comprehension.

D. Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this research was formulated as follows:

1. The null hypothesis (H₀): The students taught by the Question Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy have the same performance as the students taught by the Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) Strategy in terms of reading comprehension.

2. The alternative hypothesis (Ha): the students taught by the Question Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy perform better than the students taught by the Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) Strategy in terms of reading comprehension.

E. Assumption

The writer assumed that the students taught by the Question Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy perform better than the students taught by the Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) Strategy in terms of reading comprehension.

F. Scope and Limitations of Research

This research focuses on the effectiveness of the Question Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy on students' reading comprehension in class 8G and class 8D at MTsN 3 Kediri. Two variables were used in this research: the independent variable and the dependent variable. The independent variable was the use of reading strategies in the form of QAR and SSR strategies, and the dependent variable in this research was reading comprehension between groups. Researchers need more time to research to maintain teaching and learning hours at school. Ideally, research like this is carried out for six months (Miller et al., 2020). However, researchers could only do this within one month (6 meetings).

G. Significance of The Study

The practical benefits of this research finding are expected to:

1. For Teachers

The researchers hope that English teachers can use the QAR strategy to teach reading methods effectively. Teachers can provide students with insight into understanding reading material by using QAR as an alternative approach to reading comprehension. One approach in teaching reading is question and answer relationship (QAR).

2. For Students

The researchers hope that by using the Question Answer Relationship technique, students will easily understand what they have read and answer questions, thereby increasing their reading comprehension.

3. For Further Researchers

The researchers hope this research can increase insight and knowledge and provide direct experience to discover the influence of the QAR Strategy in learning to read.

H. Definition of the Key Terms

1. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is an active and dynamic thinking activity used to understand and interpret information in the text and analyze the meaning of the text by using information and ideas to fill in the gaps (Bos & Vaughn, 2009).

2. Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy

QAR is an integrated strategy that provides teachers and students with a shared language regarding past knowledge and questioning techniques (Maccceca, 2007). Students are forced to read strategically and are encouraged to use existing knowledge. Students can independently determine the solution to the problem from the resulting text.

3. Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)

Sustained silent reading refers to a dedicated time of undisturbed silent reading, typically lasting between 15 to 30 minutes. During this period, students can select a book of their preference and focus on enhancing their reading comprehension without interruption (Stahl, 2004).

4. Recount text

A recount is a text that narrates previous events, typically presenting them chronologically. Its purpose is to give the reader a detailed account of what transpired and the timeline of those occurrences. In essence, a recount text serves as reading material that recounts and imparts information about a past event in a structured manner (Anderson & Anderson, 2003).