

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher present an overview to explain the rationale for conducting this research. This chapter includes the background of the study, research problems, objective of the study, hypotheses, significance of the study, scope and limitations, as well as the definition of key terms.

A. Background Of The Study

Reading comprehension is widely acknowledged as a complex cognitive process that goes beyond the mere recognition of written symbols. It involves the ability to extract, interpret, and evaluate information in order to construct meaning from texts (Snow, 2018). Effective comprehension requires readers to identify main ideas, understand supporting details, draw inferences, and recognize relationships among ideas within a text (Grabe & Stoller, 2019). As a result, reading comprehension is considered a fundamental academic skill that underpins students' learning achievement across subjects, particularly in contexts where written texts are the primary source of knowledge.

Reading is not a passive activity but an interactive process between the reader and the text through which meaning is actively constructed (Shahrokhi & Jalili, 2017). Through reading, learners gain access to new information, expand their knowledge, and develop intellectual capacities. Furthermore, reading activities combined with discussion can foster learners' cognitive growth and positively influence their attitudes and learning habits (Husna et al., 2018).

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), reading plays a central role because it exposes learners to vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and discourse structures that are rarely encountered in everyday communication. Alyousef (2016) emphasizes that reading comprehension involves integrating textual information with readers' prior knowledge, highlighting the importance of both linguistic competence and cognitive engagement.

The process of reading comprehension is closely supported by the use of appropriate reading strategies. Pang et al. (2017) identify several strategies, including predicting, skimming, scanning, summarizing, and questioning, which help readers process texts more effectively. Nunan (2015) further argues that reading strategies are particularly important for EFL learners because they enable students to cope with unfamiliar vocabulary and complex sentence structures.

The effective use of reading strategies allows learners to become more autonomous readers and improves their overall comprehension performance. However, many students are only able to read words without understanding the meaning conveyed by the text. They fail to obtain the information provided and are unable to determine which information is important. In such cases, reading becomes a mechanical activity with little academic value. According to Harris and Graham (2007), if a student is unable to find meaning from texts, knowing how to read words has little help. Therefore, comprehension is a crucial process that develop meaningful interaction between the reader and the text.

At junior high school level, particularly in Indonesia, students frequently experience difficulties in comprehending English texts. Limited vocabulary mastery, insufficient grammatical knowledge, low reading interest, and inadequate use of reading strategies often hinder students' comprehension. A preliminary study conducted at MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung revealed that all grade students struggled to understand English texts, especially in identifying main ideas, locating specific information, and interpreting meanings. These difficulties were largely caused by limited vocabulary knowledge, lack of appropriate reading strategies, and low confidence in reading English texts.

These classroom challenges are reflected in broader educational assessments. Internationally, the programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 reported that Indonesian students scored 359 in reading literacy, ranking 64th out of 81 participating countries (OECD, 2023). This result is significantly below the OECD average score of 476, indicating serious concerns regarding students' literacy skills. At the national level, data from Indonesia's National Assessment (Asesmen Nasional) 2023 show that approximately 45.8% of junior high school students are categorized as needing intensive intervention in reading literacy, with 42.7% of students in East Java requiring additional support (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). These findings underscore the urgency of improving reading comprehension instruction in Indonesian secondary education.

Previous studies have consistently reported that students reading comprehension performance is influenced by multiple factors. Suryani (2019) found that students often struggle with inferential comprehension due to limited vocabulary mastery and insufficient use of reading strategies. Similarly, Widyastuti (2021) reported that students reading comprehension is significantly influenced by their reading interest and their ability to apply effective reading strategies. Grabe and Stoller (2019) emphasize that reading comprehension emerges from the interaction of motivation, strategy use, and cognitive processing.

Among these factors, reading interest plays a crucial role in determining students engagement with texts. Reading interest refers to the degree to which learners enjoy reading and perceive it as an interesting and meaningful activity (Thomas, 2001). Students with high reading interest tend to be more active in seeking information, apply reading strategies more effectively, and comprehend texts more easily. Conversely, students with low reading interest often avoid reading activities and experience greater difficulty in understanding texts. Fitria (2019) states that reading enables learners to acquire new knowledge and ideas without excessive cost, and her findings indicate that vocabulary, grammar knowledge, and reading interest significantly influence students' reading comprehension.

Research on reading interest further highlights its importance in students' academic success. Khairuddin (2013) revealed that reading interest plays a vital role in improving students' achievement both academically and personally. Dalman (2013) concludes that reading interest involves diligent engagement in reading activities carried out with pleasure and full awareness to construct meaning and develop intellectual capacity. Gary and Timothy (1998) also emphasize the role of teachers in creating learning activities that stimulate students interest in reading and encourage positive reading habits.

Contemporary research has strengthened the theoretical foundation of the relationship among reading interest, reading strategies, and reading comprehension. Contemporary research by Kim and Wagner (2020) extends the Simple View of Reading by incorporating motivational factors, proposing that reading interest serves as a mediator in the relationship between reading skills and comprehension outcomes. García-Sánchez and López-Escribano (2021) also demonstrate that intrinsic reading motivation significantly predicts reading comprehension and written expression quality in EFL contexts. Moreover, a longitudinal study by Chen et al. (2023) involving secondary school students across multiple countries found that reading interest accounted for a substantial proportion of variance in reading comprehension scores over time.

Based on the description above, at MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Gresik, which is the researchers former junior high school, information obtained from English teachers indicates that students reading comprehension test results texts. This is evidenced by students' test results, many of which fall below the Minimum

Standardized Score (KKM) of 75. In addition, students show limited understanding of appropriate reading strategies. Considering these identified problems, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled ***“CORRELATION AMONG READING INTEREST, READING STRATEGY, AND READING COMPREHENSION SKILL OF THE STUDENTS AT MTS TARBIYATUS SHIBYAN PETUNG GRESIK.”***

B. Problem of the study

Based on the background of the study, the research problems are formulated as follows:

- a. Is there any significant correlation between students reading interest and their reading comprehension among all grade students at MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Gresik?
- b. Is there any significant correlation between students reading strategies and their reading comprehension among all grade students at MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Gresik?
- c. Is there any significant correlation between students reading interest and their reading strategies among all grade students at MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Gresik?
- d. Is there any significant correlation among students reading interest, reading strategies, and reading comprehension across all grade students at MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Gresik?

C. Objective Of The Study

Based on the research problems above, the purposes of this study are formulated as follows:

- a. To identify whether there is a correlation between students reading interest and their reading comprehension among all grade students at MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Panceng Gresik.
- b. To identify whether there is a correlation between students reading strategies and their reading comprehension among all grade students at MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Gresik.
- c. To identify whether there is correlation between students reading interest and their reading strategies among all grade students at MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Gresik.
- d. To identify whether there is correlation among students reading interest, reading strategies, and reading comprehension across all grade students at MTs Tabiyatus Shibyan Petung Gresik.

D. Hypothesis

Based on the problem of the study and o of the study, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

Ha: There is a significant positive correlation between students reading interest and their reading comprehension of all grade students at MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Gresik.

H0: There is no significant correlation between students reading interest and their reading comprehension of all grade students at MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Panceng Gresik.

Ha: There is a significant positive correlation between students reading strategies and their reading comprehension of all grade students at MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Gresik.

H0: There is no significant correlation between students reading strategies and their reading comprehension of all grade students at MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Gresik.

Ha: There is a significant positive correlation between students reading interest and their reading strategies of all grade students at MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Gresik.

H0: There is no significant correlation between students reading interest and their reading strategies of all grade students at MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Gresik. Ha: There is a significant positive correlation among students reading interest, reading strategies, and reading comprehension of all grade students MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Gresik.

H0: There is no significant correlation among students reading interest, reading strategies, and reading comprehension of all grade students MTs Tarbiyatus Shibyan Petung Gresik.

E. Scope and Limitations of the Study

Based on the background of the study and the identification problem of the study. The researcher focuses on the research that investigates the correlation between reading interest in descriptive texts, and reading strategy, reading comprehension skills of the students junior high school students to know if there is any significant correlation among the variables.

F. Definition of Key Terms

To improve the reader's understanding, the researcher provides further explanations for the terms used:

a. Reading Interest

Reading interest refers to an individual's tendency or desire to engage in reading activities, characterized by a strong willingness and enthusiasm for reading. It is often associated with the enjoyment and pleasure derived from reading, which can significantly influence a person's motivation to read and their overall literacy development.

b. Reading Strategy

Reading strategy is the technique carried out or the application of methods carried out to understand the text or reading material read. with reading strategies, students can improve their comprehension and can overcome difficulties in reading a text

c. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension skill is students' ability in understanding and getting any information from what they read in English text. This is a very important skill so that students can draw conclusions obtained and express them in their own language. This involves several interconnected skills that knowing how to read words has ultimately little value if the student is unable to construct meaning from text.