

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter discusses the relevant theories and previous studies that form the foundation of this research. The chapter discusses reading, reading goals, narrative text, teaching and learning to read in vocational high schools, challenges with teaching and learning to read, Wattpad-based learning, and previous studies.

2.1 Reading

Reading, alongside writing, speaking, and listening, is a fundamental ability in English language learning that is essential for academic success and efficient communication. It is a cognitively demanding process that requires learners to decode written symbols and construct meaning from them (Landerl et al., 2022). Reading comprehension activates various mental processes, including language understanding, visual and orthographic recognition, attention, working memory, and higher-order thinking (Marquez Osorio, 2025).

The development of reading skills is influenced by several interrelated factors, such as learners' metacognitive awareness, reading interest, family background, and school environment—including instructional methods and classroom management (Teng & Zhang, 2021). Reading involves more than identifying words on a page; it requires interpreting and connecting the text with prior knowledge and context. Reading, one of the key skills in English learning, helps to vocabulary enhancement, improved pronunciation, and enhances other language abilities such as speaking and writing. (Nwosu et al., 2021).

Reading comprehension in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) requires a complete understanding of texts as well as the capacity to access, understand, and apply information. Two widely recognized approaches in reading instruction are extensive and intensive reading. Extensive reading encourages learners to read large quantities of text for general understanding and enjoyment, promoting reading fluency and vocabulary growth (Abdul Rahman & Mohamad, 2023). On the other hand, intensive reading emphasizes detailed analysis of shorter texts to develop comprehension accuracy, vocabulary knowledge, and grammatical awareness (Lecturer at Khurasan University et al., 2024). Saba and Noreen (2020) also emphasize that extensive reading significantly supports vocabulary development, reading fluency, and positive learner attitudes toward reading, making it an effective component in language acquisition programs.

2.2 Reading Purpose

The purpose of reading varies depending on the learner's goals, context, and motivations. Understanding various reading purposes in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) allows educators to develop customized instruction. Reading can be categorized into three broad types: academic, professional, and recreational (Yulia et al., 2024), each offering unique contributions to a learner's intellectual and personal development.

Academic reading focuses on processing information from textbooks, journal articles, and other scholarly sources. This type of reading is central to students and researchers, as it fosters critical thinking, expands theoretical understanding, and enhances the ability to comprehend complex texts. Academic

reading requires the use of advanced cognitive strategies, such as analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information (García-Sánchez & García-Martín, 2021). Effective academic reading also involves techniques like skimming, scanning, annotating, and summarizing to support comprehension and retention.

Professional reading involves engaging with work-related documents such as reports, manuals, and policy guidelines. This form of reading is especially relevant for vocational students, as it equips them with the skills necessary for interpreting industry-specific materials and prepares them for real-world employment scenarios. Exposure to authentic workplace texts enables students to better understand job expectations and enhances their readiness for professional environments (Miller & Konstantinou, 2022).

Recreational reading, or leisure reading, includes reading for enjoyment—such as fiction, storytelling, and digital literature. This type of reading promotes creativity, emotional development, and intrinsic motivation. Research shows that students who frequently engage in leisure reading tend to demonstrate greater empathy, reduced anxiety, and improved language proficiency (Krashen, 2022). In recent years, digital platforms like Wattpad have become increasingly popular among EFL learners as accessible sources of engaging narrative content. Wattpad offers diverse stories that align with students' interests, encouraging reading habits and providing authentic exposure to the English language (Kim, 2023).

For vocational students, using reading materials that match their interests and educational needs can help improve their understanding of the text. Contextualized texts—such as narratives related to business, hospitality, or

engineering—make reading more relevant and engaging. According to Guthrie and Wigfield (2021), when students clearly understand the purpose of reading, they are more motivated and willing to engage with reading tasks.

Incorporating various reading purposes into instructional strategies, especially through engaging platforms like Wattpad, can improve EFL learners' comprehension while fostering a positive reading culture.

2.3 Narrative Text

Narrative text tells a story by providing a series of events involving people, settings, conflicts, and resolutions. It can take many forms, including literature, folktales, and digital media. (Forchtner, 2021). In the context of EFL learning, narrative texts are effective in enhancing reading comprehension, critical thinking, and cultural awareness, as they provide contextualized language input and expose learners to varied vocabulary and grammar structures (Djarmika et al., 2023). In vocational education, narratives serve as a valuable tool for encouraging students to interpret character motivations, predict outcomes, and relate textual content to personal experiences—skills that develop both literal and inferential comprehension (Jarke & Macgilchrist, 2021).

The generic structure of narrative texts typically consists of three main elements: (1) Orientation, which introduces the characters, setting, and initial situation; (2) Complication, which presents the conflicts or problems that the characters must face; and (3) Resolution, which provides the solution or outcome of the conflict, often accompanied by a Re-orientation or moral value at the end of the story (Bogaerds-Hazenbergh et al., 2021; Boyd et al., 2020). This structure helps

learners in following a logical order of events and improving their ability to identify primary ideas, supporting details, and suggested meanings in the text.

In addition, the language features of narrative texts are characterized by several distinctive elements, such as the frequent use of past tense to describe events, action verbs to narrate activities, and linking words or temporal conjunctions (e.g., *then*, *after that*, *suddenly*) to indicate the sequence of events. Narrative texts also employ direct and indirect speech to reflect dialogues between characters, adjectives and adverbs to describe settings and emotions, as well as complex sentences that allow for detailed and expressive storytelling (Ekalia et al., 2023; nugraha, 2020). These features provide EFL learners with authentic exposure to linguistic patterns that are essential for both comprehension and production of narratives.

The appeal of narrative texts can be amplified through digital platforms such as Wattpad, which allow students to access engaging, relevant, and emotionally resonant stories that align with their interests. Research shows that personal connection to reading materials significantly increases motivation and focus (Ni Made Yuniari et al., 2025). Wattpad enhances this engagement by offering interactive features like comments, serialized content, and genre-specific recommendations, making reading more dynamic and enjoyable. By incorporating narrative texts through Wattpad into EFL instruction, educators can foster a more immersive and personalized reading experience that supports language development, strengthens comprehension skills, and promotes a lifelong interest in reading (Son & Liang, 2020; Matiychak & Petrenko, 2024; Portnova & Valero,

2020; Khoir et al., 2024; Halizah & Rohmana, 2024).

2.4 Teaching and Learning Reading for Vocational High School

Teaching reading in vocational high schools presents both distinct challenges and opportunities, particularly in enhancing EFL learners' comprehension. Unlike general academic settings, vocational education emphasizes career-oriented skills, requiring reading materials that are aligned with specific industries such as engineering, hospitality, or business (Dahalan et al., 2024). Therefore, reading instruction must adopt a contextualized approach that combines theoretical understanding with practical application. This includes the use of real-world documents such as manuals, technical reports, and blueprints to bridge the gap between classroom content and industry relevance. In this context, digital platforms like Wattpad offer a modern alternative to traditional materials, providing access to diverse genres, including narrative texts, that can be integrated into thematic or industry-related learning. Moreover, technology plays a crucial role in facilitating flexible, engaging, and multimodal reading experiences that cater to varied student preferences (Norman, 2023).

Recent developments in vocational pedagogy emphasize differentiated instruction to address the varied linguistic backgrounds and reading proficiencies of EFL learners. Differentiated learning technologies, such as adaptive digital reading platforms, allow for personalized content delivery that matches students' needs and proficiency levels (Vaganova & Bulaeva, 2020; Tomlinson, 2021). Wattpad, as a widely accessible and interactive reading tool, can support these individualized approaches by offering a vast selection of graded stories, interactive

features, and language exposure opportunities. Additionally, strategies like scaffolding, guided reading, and peer-assisted learning are critical in supporting comprehension and helping students engage with complex texts (Church & Fletcher, 2021; Yu & Tsao, 2024). Integrating these approaches into EFL instruction in vocational schools allows teachers to support literacy development and create a more interactive reading environment. Vocational high school (SMK) is a type of secondary education in Indonesia that aims to prepare students with both academic knowledge and practical skills for specific fields such as engineering, business, information technology, and hospitality. Unlike general senior high schools, vocational schools emphasize applied learning and workplace readiness, equipping learners with competencies required in professional industries (Meirawan, 2015; Nurlatifah & Kurniady, 2019). Students in vocational education are expected not only to master theoretical concepts but also to demonstrate technical expertise that can be directly applied in real-world contexts. Therefore, English instruction in vocational schools must reflect these goals by integrating language skills with vocational content, ensuring that students can communicate effectively in both academic and professional settings.

2.5 Problem in Teaching and Learning Reading

Reading in vocational education faces several significant challenges, one of which is low student motivation. Many EFL learners in vocational settings struggle to engage with traditional reading materials that do not align with their interests or career goals (Simanjuntak et al., 2025). Unlike students in general academic environments, vocational students tend to prioritize practical skills over reading

comprehension, making it harder for educators to build a strong reading culture. The limited availability of texts that are relevant to vocational fields further reduces students' motivation, as they often feel disconnected from the materials provided.

Vocabulary limitations also pose a major barrier to reading comprehension. Learners with a weak foundation in vocabulary typically struggle with both fluency and understanding (Dong & Dong, 2020). This issue is particularly pressing in vocational education, where students are often required to understand technical or industry-specific terms that may be unfamiliar to them. Without adequate support strategies, such as glossaries or context-based learning, students may find it difficult to grasp essential concepts needed for their future professions.

Another factor is the lack of effective and varied teaching strategies. Many educators continue to rely on outdated methods, such as rote memorization or isolated reading tasks, which fail to meet the diverse needs of vocational students (Tomlinson, 2021). Combined with limited access to resources like books, digital tools, and trained teachers, this hinders students' reading development. However, studies have shown that integrating digital platforms such as Wattpad, along with engaging and relevant reading materials, can significantly enhance EFL learners' comprehension (Macaruso & Prescott, 2020). Therefore, using modern technologies and learner-centered approaches is essential to improving reading outcomes in vocational education.

2.6 Wattpad-based Learning

Digital reading platforms such as Wattpad have emerged as effective tools in EFL reading instruction, particularly for vocational learners. Wattpad provides students with authentic, engaging, and student-friendly reading materials that stimulate interest and motivation. Studies have shown that Wattpad encourages extensive reading habits and improves engagement due to its relatable content and interactive features (Putri & Aisyah, 2023). These features help students immerse themselves in stories, increasing their willingness to read and participate in discussions, which contributes to improved reading comprehension.

The integration of Wattpad in language learning aligns well with technological developments and the growing availability of online educational resources. According to Rizal et al. (2024), using Wattpad in the classroom creates a dynamic and interactive learning environment where students can engage with a wide variety of genres and narratives. The platform supports learner autonomy and accommodates different reading levels and preferences, allowing students to choose texts that suit their interests. This flexibility not only enhances vocabulary acquisition but also builds reading fluency and confidence (Djamdjuri et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the use of Wattpad has been linked to improved reading comprehension and vocabulary mastery in EFL contexts. Paringja and Fatriana (2024) found that Wattpad-based reading significantly improved students' comprehension skills compared to traditional methods. The stories on Wattpad often provide contextual clues through narrative flow and dialogue, helping learners understand new vocabulary and cultural nuances more effectively (Samosir et al.,

2024). By integrating Wattpad into reading instruction, educators can foster a more engaging, accessible, and student-centered learning experience, especially for vocational high school students.

2.7 Printed book

Printed books are still one of the most essential resources in EFL classrooms, especially in formal school contexts where teachers need structured guidance. A printed book generally provides reading texts, vocabulary lists, comprehension questions, and exercises that follow the curriculum systematically (Krisdian et al., 2023). This makes it easier for teachers to plan lessons, ensure coverage of syllabus objectives, and evaluate students' progress in a standardized way. As (Solhi et al., 2021) points out, printed books play a central role in maintaining consistency in language instruction while also serving as a reliable reference for both teachers and learners.

However, recent studies highlight that while printed books are practical and curriculum-friendly, they may sometimes feel rigid and less engaging for learners. (Müller et al., 2023) emphasize that printed books often lack contextual relevance and flexibility compared to digital platforms, which can reduce students' motivation. Therefore, many educators recommend integrating printed books with more innovative tools to balance structure and creativity. A blended approach combining printed books with digital platforms such as Wattpad can provide learners with both the systematic framework of traditional materials and the dynamic engagement of interactive reading experiences (Anghelo Josué et al., 2023).

2.8 Previous Study

Previous research has demonstrated that digital platforms like Wattpad can positively impact EFL learners' reading comprehension. Putra et al., (2024) found that students who engaged with texts through Wattpad showed significant improvement in understanding and analyzing reading materials. The accessible and engaging nature of Wattpad texts helps reduce cognitive overload, allowing learners to focus more on comprehension rather than being overwhelmed by complex language structure (Rizal et al., 2023). This finding is consistent with recent improvements to Cognitive stress Theory, which suggests that lowering unnecessary cognitive Stress can improve learning outcomes. (Kalyuga, 2021).

Several other studies have also supported the effectiveness of Wattpad as a reading tool. Paringja and Fatriana (2024) reported that Wattpad-based extensive reading activities improved students' narrative text comprehension. Similarly, Rizal et al. (2024) observed that learners demonstrated notable gains in both literal and interpretive reading skills after using Wattpad in the classroom. In addition, Djamdjuri et al. (2022) it was emphasized that Wattpad not only supports students' reading skills but also creates a more engaging English learning experience.

Beyond measurable skill improvement, students' perspectives toward using Wattpad in learning have also been largely positive. According to Sari and Iskandar (2024), students found Wattpad more enjoyable and engaging compared to traditional textbooks, and they appreciated how it helped them understand the context of stories even when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary. In this context, Wattpad can be considered an effective edutainment tool that encourages active

participation during reading activities. (Reflina Sinaga et al., 2024).