

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the researcher was present several pieces of literature related to the research. The following literature is necessary to provide a theoretical explanation in line with the topic:

A. Reading Skill

Bojovic (2010) argued that reading is a complex, meaningful, interactive, comprehension, and flexible activity that requires sufficient time and resources to develop. Reading is a rapid process in which readers must maintain a sufficient flow of information to make meaningful connections and draw conclusions essential for comprehension. He also emphasized that readers have goals in reading, whether for entertainment, information, or research. Readers generally expect to understand what they read. Reading is also flexible, as readers employ various strategies to enhance efficiency. Finally, Reading develops gradually; readers do not become fluent instantly.

According to Yung et al. (2024), reading is not merely a passive activity but a dynamic interaction between the reader and the reading material, in which graphic knowledge is combined with the readers' social and situational factors. It is defined as the ability to read, comprehend, and interpret written texts on a page or other reading material, reading skills are essential for processing information efficiently. Strong reading skills enable individuals to navigate written works quickly and effectively.

Pradnyadewi and Kristiani (2021) stated that reading is the most efficient way to get new information about various aspects of ideas. Reading is

one of the important receptive skills that students must master because it can improve their English skills in general and expand their English vocabulary. Therefore, reading is a good way to gain new ideas, information, and experiences that can help students enrich their knowledge of English. Reading can be challenging for students because it is an active process that needs a lot of practice and ability. In addition, reading is a complex activity because it depends on the level of reasoning and language skills of students.

Pandey (2023) explained that reading is considered a receptive skill. However, readers must be active most of the time to understand the text. One must maintain flow, fluency, intonation, stress, speed, silence, volume, and mechanics. It seems that reading material can help one become a good writer (Morley, 2007). The idea seems relevant to explain why reading is beneficial for readers. Reading is an interactive, goal-oriented, and critical process. Reading ability needs extensive reading habits (Adhikari, 2013).

1. Reading Comprehension

Sweet and Snow (2003) declared that the definition of reading comprehension is the process of extracting and constructing meaning simultaneously. Both meanings refer to understanding how printed text represents words and engaging in the accurate and efficient translation of printed text into speech, namely, extracting, while formulating representations of the information presented, which inevitably requires the construction of new meaning and the integration of new information with old, that is, meaning construction. Therefore, the words extracting and

constructing emphasize both the importance and the insufficiency of text as a determining factor in reading comprehension.

Kendeou et al. (2016) stated that reading comprehension is one of the most complex human activities. To understand the sentence, for example, a person must process words visually, including identifying their phonological, orthographic, and semantic representations, and connect those words using syntactic rules to understand the basic meaning of the sentence. However, understanding the basic meaning of each sentence is not enough. A person must integrate that meaning across sentences, draw on relevant background knowledge, generate inferences, identify text structure, and consider the author's purpose and motives.

Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) discussed that reading comprehension is the process of uncovering and giving meaning through interaction and engagement with written language. This process is a task involving reader and text factors, which occurs within a broader social context. Comprehension is a process in which readers create meaning by interacting with the text through a combination of previous knowledge and experience, information in the text, and the reader's views related to the text.

Butterfuss et al. (2020) assumed that reading comprehension needed the formation of a coherent mental representation of the information in the text. Reading involves three interrelated elements: the reader, the text, and the activity, all of which exist within a broader sociocultural context. The inherent complexity of reading comprehension has given rise to various influential models and frameworks that attempt to explain the basic

processes of reading comprehension. For example, the activation of previous knowledge and the integration of incoming information with active memory content. Other models and frameworks try to explain the components that make up reading comprehension, including decoding, vocabulary, and language comprehension.

2. The Level of Reading Comprehension

Richards (1985), as cited in Viani and Roswati (2025), proposed a comprehensive taxonomy of reading comprehension that distinguishes four different levels, although in educational practice, there are three levels, including literal, inferential, and critical are most often emphasized. These levels represent a continuum of cognitive engagement, involving from basic comprehension to complex analytical reasoning. Each level plays a crucial role in forming readers' ability to interact meaningfully with texts and to gain insights at both the surface and deeper levels.

a. Literal Comprehension

According to Nurjanah and Putri (2022), literal reading, as a low level of comprehension, includes behaviors in the learning process that are considered crucial as the basis for higher-level comprehension growth. Literal comprehension requires students to extract specific information from a paragraph (Saadatnia et al., 2017). This requires the ability to process words individually and recognize words individually to understand the meaning of long sequences of words that include propositions and sentences.

b. Inferential Comprehension

Basaraba et al. (2013) discussed inferential comprehension. At this stage, readers are not only asked to recognize that the facts come from a text, but also to interact with the text to draw conclusions about meanings that are not explicitly stated in the text (Applegate et al., 2002; Snider, 1988). At this stage, it is not enough for readers to simply recognize and understand what the author said. Instead, readers are asked to manipulate the information in the text to find connections between the main ideas and details, and to use that information to interpret and draw conclusions about the meaning intended by the author (Vacca et al., 2009). Each of these tasks, unsurprisingly, places greater cognitive processing on readers, as they are required to hold some of the information presented in the text in working memory while searching for other information presented in other parts of the text.

According to Alptekin (2006), as cited in Saadatnia et al. (2016), in inferential comprehension, or reading between the lines of text, readers go beyond the literal meaning of the text to understand what the text says and what it discusses through knowledge-based processes such as synthesis, summarization, generalization, and extrapolation. Therefore, inference naturally involves reasoning beyond the text. While in literal comprehension, readers focus on explicitly stated information and rely heavily on their linguistic resources. They tend to reduce their dependence on the text in inferential comprehension and connect the content of the text with their reasoning and pragmatic

knowledge to form a coherent mental representation of what is discussed in the text. Therefore, it can be said that the readers' dependence on the text itself decreases as the inference becomes richer and deeper.

Soto et al. (2019) assumed that when readers with higher inferential abilities read a text, they are more likely to encounter disruptions at the level of the situation model representation. That happened because they frequently make inferences and connect information to previous knowledge. They are more likely to notice inconsistencies at this deeper level of understanding. Whereas, readers with lower inferential skills were make fewer inferences and possibly lack to notice disruptions at the situation model level, they were more often experience difficulties in constructing their text-based knowledge.

c. Critical Comprehension

Viani and Roswati (2025) stated that critical comprehension represents the highest level of reading and involves evaluating the content of a text in terms of credibility, logic, and relevance. In this stage, readers judge the author's intention, detect bias or assumptions, critique the strength of arguments, and compare the text with external knowledge or alternative perspectives. Critical comprehension is closely related to critical thinking and very important for academic discourse, decision-making based on accurate information, and civic participation. It empowers readers to question the validity of information, form independent judgments, and consider ethical implications.

B. English Novel

Gareis (2009) and Tsai (2012) stated, novels do not contain elements commonly found in traditional textbooks, such as vocabulary lists, grammar tables, writing exercises, and pictures. However, novels have an authenticity and appeal that textbooks lack. Novels are unedited, unabridged, natural in both spoken and written language, and written to convey meaning. Imagination, fantastic possibilities, engaging storylines, and the use of language in real life contribute to readers' involvement and appeal to a wide range of audiences. The novels' shortcomings in presenting curriculum material in an organized and systematic manner may require extra effort in course planning, but it is the quality that provides a different atmosphere in language classes. When using novels in class, teachers act as narrators and facilitators rather than instructors. Students are no longer passive language learners, but active readers of authentic texts that give them a real perspective on the real world.

McKoon and Ratcliff (1992) discussed that inference is defined as any information that is not explicitly stated in the text. This definition includes relatively simple inferences as well as complex and detailed inferences, as well as inferences that add new concepts to the text and inferences that connect parts of the text. For example, combining clues in a mystery novel to determine the murderer is also an inference. Defining inference broadly in this way highlights the different levels of processing required to produce different inferences. Baron and Alawiyah (2023) emphasize that fiction novels have a positive influence in improving abilities from comprehension levels including literal, inference, and critical comprehension. Literal comprehension can be measured

by identifying word meaning and meaning context, inferential comprehension can be measured by identifying the main idea and identifying context-meaning relations in the text, and critical comprehension can be measured by analyzing the process of text that is implemented to comprehend daily life.

C. Reading English Novel

Rahman and Muntiningsih (2016) discussed novels as a type of literary work. Novels are known to be longer than short stories. As the name suggests, short stories only describe brief events that are not too complicated, while novels usually describe something much more complex. However, readers who are motivated to learn more about the complexity will be more curious to find out the ending of the story. defined a novel as an experience that occurs within the boundaries of writing, prose, narrative, length, and protagonist (Smiley, 2005). It can be emphasized, traditional epics are written in poetic form; they clearly distinguish themselves from other poetic forms based on length, narrative structure, character development, and storyline that are called novels (Klarer, 2004). There are five essential components of a novel, namely: plot, characters, setting, conflict, and resolution.

According to Suoth et al. (2023), there are several basic points regarding the use of novels in the learning process, especially in English language learning. Among them, novels add enjoyment to students' reading activities, offer a variety of unexpected storylines, interesting life challenges, character development, and distinctive language. All of these will guide students towards their happiness and make them want to read the novel until the end of the story.

When reading a novel, students will experience various emotions evoked by the characters and the story.

D. Difficulties in Reading Comprehension

Siahaan et al. (2022) stated, the difficulties in reading comprehension can be identified as follows:

1. **Difficult to Understand the Meaning of Vocabulary**

When reading texts, students frequently do not understand the meaning of words in the text, which makes it difficult for them to grasp the content of the text. This can be seen from their inability to answer questions about the information in the text. They tend to guess the answers.

2. **Difficult to Understand Long Sentence**

Difficulties in understanding long sentences occur when students encounter many words in the text that they do not understand, which is caused by their misunderstanding of the text structure and understanding the main idea conveyed in the text.

3. **Difficult to Find the Main Topic**

Students often find it difficult to draw conclusions about the author's intentions related to the topic in the reading text. It can be seen from their inability to answer questions, for example, when asked to determine the main idea of the text. Sometimes they are confused about the main idea of the text, so they often ask their friends.

4. **Difficult to Understand Grammar**

A lack of understanding of sentence structure makes it difficult for students to identify information from the sentences they read in the text. This difficulty is evident in their inability to translate and explain the text.

5. Difficult to Make Conclusion

Difficulty drawing conclusions means difficulty finding conclusions from the text. To draw conclusions, students are expected to understand the content of the text. However, students' reality is still difficult to experience. It can be confirmed because of their inability to answer when asked to explain the conclusions of the text.

According to Septia et al. (2022), there are several internal factors that influence students' reading comprehension, which readers generally encounter during the reading process, namely (Westwood, 2008):

1. Difficulty understanding long sentences

One common problem that most students often face is difficulty understanding long sentences with complex structures.

2. Difficulty in applying reading strategies

Students who are not proficient in reading strategies often fail to understand texts. Students who are not yet familiar with reading strategies such as skimming and scanning for specific information will have difficulty understanding the texts they read. There are several characteristics of students who do not use reading strategies effectively.

- a. Students read the text word by word and rely too heavily on visual cues, which significantly slows down their reading speed and hinders their comprehension.

- b. Students focus too much on details, often missing the main ideas of the text.
 - c. They focus too much on the form of the text, neglecting its meaning.
3. Difficulty Concentrating.

Difficulty concentrating while reading can be caused by psychological factors. Poor concentration prevents students from understanding the text. Difficulty concentrating is one of the reasons for students' low reading proficiency, as concentration is a key factor in good and effective reading.

E. Overcoming the Difficulties in Reading Comprehension

Salataci and Akyel (2002) stated, extracting meaning from text has long been a focus of attention because the process of extracting meaning provides valuable information about the readers' cognitive processes during reading. Reading strategies are usually divided into two main categories: cognitive and metacognitive.

Cognitive strategies help readers construct meaning from texts. In general, research in the field of first language (L1) and second language (L2) reading divides cognitive strategies into two categories: bottom-up and top-down. According to Aebbersold and Field (1997) as cited in Salataci and Akyel (2002), while reading, readers' minds repeatedly engage in various processes.

- 1. Bottom-up strategy, readers begin by processing information at the sentence level. For that reason, they focus on identifying the meaning and grammatical category of words, sentence syntax, text details, and so on.

2. Top-down strategies, when processing the information provided by each sentence, they examine how that information fits together, using top-down strategies such as background knowledge, prediction, understanding the main idea of the text, and skimming (Barnett, 1988; Carrell, 1989).

Metacognitive strategies are strategies that serve to monitor or regulate cognitive strategies (Devine, 1993; Flavell, 1981). That strategy includes evaluating the results of problem-solving efforts, planning the next steps, monitoring the effectiveness of actions taken, testing, revising, and evaluating learning strategies (Baker & Brown, 1984). Therefore, skimming a text for key information involves the use of cognitive strategies, while assessing the effectiveness of skimming to gather information from a text is a metacognitive strategy. In the context of first language (L1) and second language (L2), many studies have been conducted on the use of cognitive strategy instruction and the impact of metacognitive strategy instruction on L1 and L2 reading (Devine, 1993).

While Banditvilai (2020) argued, strategies are believed to influence readers in adjusting their reading behavior to overcome text difficulties, task demands, and other contextual variables. According to Adams and Patterson (2008), the types of reading strategies are identified as follows:

1. Skimming

Skimming is a reading technique for speed reading. The purpose of skimming is to get a general idea of the structure of the text and the main ideas of a paragraph in a book. To do skimming, the readers read through the paragraphs quickly and skip the details. They read the first sentence of

each paragraph. Each paragraph usually contains a topic sentence which states the main idea.

2. Scanning

Scanning is a reading skill that allows readers to find specific information quickly. With scanning, readers already know what type of information they are looking for before they start. Scanning is very important for improving your reading skills. The goal of scanning is to obtain specific information. The purpose of scanning is to obtain specific information.

3. Prediction

The meaning of prediction is the use of existing knowledge about patterns or systems to anticipate what is likely to happen in new situations (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Many studies show that good readers use their experience and background knowledge to make predictions and formulate ideas while reading (Block & Isael, 2005). This strategy also allows for student interaction that increases their interest and improves their understanding of the text (Oczkus, 2003).

4. Questioning

Questioning can help students monitor their understanding and stay engaged and interested in reading. Readers can use the questioning process before, during, and after reading. The questioning process requires readers to ask themselves questions to construct meaning, improve understanding, find answers, solve problems, seek information, and find new information (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000).

F. Previous Studies

There are several previous studies that discuss reading comprehension, especially the difficulties in reading comprehension.

The first previous study was conducted by Miranda (2023) entitled “An Analysis of the Student’s Difficulties in Reading Comprehension at the Second Grade in Junior High School of Al Azhar Ajung”. This study aimed to analyze: (1) the student’s difficulties in reading comprehension; (2) how the student’s difficulties in reading; and (3) why the student’s difficulties in reading comprehension occur in the way they do at MTs Al Azhar Ajung. From those aims, the studies are focused on difficulties and factors in reading comprehension at the second grade in junior high school Al Azhar Ajung. Based on these objective studies, there are three of the results in those studies: (1) the students’ difficulties in reading comprehension, including lack of vocabulary, the meaning of sentences, understanding the content of the text, and the meaning of the words in the reading; (2) the aspects of difficulties in reading comprehension are finding the main idea in the reading text, understanding vocabulary, making conclusions from the reading, and understanding the entire reading or the implied meaning of the reading text; (3) the difficulties in reading comprehension can happen caused by less able to work on difficult questions given by the teacher, students lack interest or interest in reading English texts and lack of understanding of students' vocabulary.

The next research from Sapitri et al., (2022) entitled “Analysis on Students’ Difficulties in Reading Comprehension Report Text”. The research identified the most dominant difficulties in reading comprehension faced by the

eleventh-grade students of SMA Swasta Islam Terpadu Daar Al Uluum Kisaran and the factors causing the students' difficulties in reading comprehension. This research focused on reading comprehension of report texts. Through reading comprehension of report texts, it is hoped that students will be able to understand the text and obtain the information contained therein. From the objective study that researcher found the difficulties in reading comprehension were decide the main idea, locating reference, understanding vocabulary, making conclusion, detail information and have limited vocabulary, from those difficulties in reading comprehension the students cannot understand text they reading and the factors they found were lack of interested in learning reading because they did not want to read English text, lazy and afraid to read the English text, lack of motivation to learn reading because reading was boring, and the last factor came from unsupportive environment that from home and school. That unsupportive environment at home because of the lack of support and attention from parents while at school because the facilities were not conducive to improving reading comprehension.

The last research from Fitri at al., (2022) entitled "An Analysis Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension of Descriptive Text". The purpose of the study explained about the kind of difficult aspect in reading comprehension faced by the students at eighth-grade of SMPN 1 SINTOGA. This research focused on reading comprehension of descriptive text, which explained that descriptive text is one of genres that text must be taught to junior high school students, especially eighth-graders. In this study, the topics, main ideas, word references, and location information were examined. It can be

concluded that most students have difficulty reaching conclusions on reading comprehension tests. For that reason, the study of reading comprehension difficulties including difficulties in language, topics and genres, comprehension tasks, negative expectations, vocabulary, and reading strategies.

Based on the previous studies above, there are similarities between previous studies and this study, including the difficulties in reading comprehension and the use of the same method, namely qualitative. The previous studies only focus on the difficulty, such as the difficulties in reading comprehension faced by students and why they experience difficulties in reading comprehension. Therefore, this study has a different research topic, that is to discuss the difficulties in reading comprehension faced by students and ways to overcome those difficulties. The reading materials used by the previous study were short stories including descriptive text, report text, and examined text or text given by teachers, while this study uses English novel as reading material that support this research. This study also uses different school with previous studies, by focusing on the EFL students in the 7th semester of English Education at UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri who have experience in reading English novels. The researcher selects them because they have completed reading skill courses in the previous semesters that have studied language in depth and in line with objective of the research.

Based on that explanation, the researcher wants to know more about the difficulties in reading comprehension faced by students when they read English novels providing more complex text, various vocabulary, and more detailed character description. When they get those difficulties in reading

comprehension, with the difficulties they face, they must have ways to overcome those difficulties in reading English novels. Therefore, this research was focus on analyzing English novel reading difficulties and ways to overcome them in English Education's 7th semester students at UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri.