

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

Reading is one of the critical skills in language learning because reading is an activity to get new information and knowledge of a written text. Reading activities aim to get many facts, main ideas, plot, and conclusions from the text. Another goal is to classify, assess, evaluate, and compare one view with another (Wahyono, 2018). It is essential for everyday life and academic success to be able to read and comprehend. Many studies in Alharbi (2015) have shown that reading to young learners predicts their future reading success (Cid, 2009; Cullinan & Bagert, 1996; Egan, 2014; Kung, 2012; Leckie, 2013). Reading allows students to explore their skills and potentials, raise comprehension, improve concentration, and gain higher levels of success. Hence, it is vital for English lessons in reading comprehension to be appropriately absorbed to add insight and improve reading skills.

Reading comprehension includes various strategies that English learners can use to develop their reading skills. According to Fitriana (2018), comprehension will not happen without using a strategy because reading strategies will help students comprehend the text and overcome problems or knowledge gaps when doing reading activities. As a process, reading strategies involve processing text that will vary according to the nature of the text, the reader's objectives, and the context of the situation. Readers need to understand the strategy to gain a sense of the text. According to Souhila

(2014), reading strategies are effective techniques EFL learners use in reading comprehension. With the right strategy, students can correctly understand the information or knowledge needed without taking much time. Experts and previous researchers have developed numerous strategies for reading comprehension and reading teaching. According to Fairbairn 2001 (as cited in Roomy & Alhawsawi, 2019), English language students need to make it easier to complete their studies by acquiring more skills and strategies to deal with academic and non-academic reading texts critically and creatively. In addition, learning and comprehending various reading comprehension strategies can be a provision for English students to apply in reading classes for their students in the future.

For some students, especially at the university level, reading is considered a challenging skill. It requires not only the understanding of sentence constructions, but also vocabulary stock. The reading strategy is one of the methods to help students improve their reading skills and make it easier to grasp the meaning of the text (Susanti & Fitrawati, 2020). However, it should be noted that each student has his or her own choice of reading strategies that are expected to help develop their reading comprehension and overcome reading difficulties. Teachers have the responsibility to assist the students as well as to show them the effective reading strategies to help them read effectively.

Susanti and Fitrawati (2020) stated that several reasons could affect students using different reading strategies: the first is to handle reading

difficulties. Students should be aware of the reading difficulties that affect their reading ability. By knowing the cause, students can use the right strategy according to the student's problems. The second is to monitor and direct the reading process efficiently. In reading, students must focus and make the best use of time. Effective readers will identify which parts of the text are essential and need more profound analysis by applying reading strategies and saving time during the reading process. Thirdly, helping students remember what they have read. Students will recognize the text if they know the reading process and strategies. Reading strategies help students connect ideas in the text and draw conclusions about the text based on their comprehension.

The reading strategies used by each student are different according to their comfort and habits. The use of strategy must be compatible with the students' choice of strategies. The wrong selection of methods in teaching affects the students' feelings in learning so that students are accidentally trapped and unmotivated to learn. Thus, it is essential to develop students' reading skills, which can be achieved by using strategies under students' preferences. Then, suggest whether the strategies they use to follow the reading material and will facilitate them in achieving the interest or knowledge they need. In Albiladi (2018), many researchers have investigated reading strategies to improve language learners' reading comprehension skills (Chomphuchart, 2006; HoFang, 2008; Nordin, Rashid, Zubir, and Sadjirin, 2013). Besides that, researchers have looked at key factors related to the use of that strategy. Some of these factors include gender (Denton, et al, 2015),

reader proficiency level (Denton et al. 2015; Nordin et al. 2013), type of text (HoFang, 2008), the genre of text (Chomphuchart, 2006), and the purpose of reading (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002). There is no conclusive research to show that one strategy or method improves students' reading comprehension more effectively than another. However, some research indicates that several reading comprehension strategies can be educationally successful in language learning environments (Alharbi, 2015).

This research is to identify the most decisive contribution of reading strategies used by English Education Department students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto for their reading comprehension. It is crucial to understand these preferences to improve learning methods and students' reading comprehension skills, especially in EFL classes. In addition, knowing students' preferences will help teachers achieve their goals in teaching language in the classroom. Since students' beliefs will impact students' attitudes during the teaching and learning process, teachers need to know how they want to be taught and what they want to learn.

B. Reason for Choosing Topic

The researcher chose this topic because each student has a different learning preference. Likewise, students' reading strategies vary according to their preferences. Knowing students' preferences in a reading process can help teachers determine how they learn in reading classes according to students' needs. This is related to student beliefs that affect student attitudes during the teaching and learning process. Understanding students' preferences in using

reading strategies will make students part of the reading comprehension learning process needed to help achieve learning objectives in EFL classes.

C. Research Question

This research aims to find answers:

1. What are the preferable reading strategies for reading comprehension?
2. What are reasons for using particular reading strategies?

D. Aim of Research

This research aims to:

1. Identify the students' preferences on reading strategies for reading comprehension.
2. Know the reasons for using those reading strategies.

E. Significance of Research

1. Theoretically

This research provides a meaningful contribution for lecturers and students to understand the preferences of reading comprehension strategies. Students' preferences can be a reference for lecturers to create more effective and interesting learning in the reading class.

2. Practically

- a. The Lecturers

This research can be a valuable reminder for lecturers that students have reading strategies. This research can be a reference for lecturers in determining reading strategies suitable for students' needs.

b. The Students

This research can be a reference for students to explore reading strategies which is expected to be mastered by students.

c. The Future Researchers

This research provides information to future researchers about students' preferences in using reading strategies for reading comprehension. This research is expected to be reference for further research on reading comprehension strategies.

F. Clarification of Terms

To ease the reader get the point of this research idea, the following clarification of terms hopefully will help:

1. Reading Strategies

Brown (2007) defines strategy as "a specific method of approaching a problem or task, a mode of operation to achieve certain goals, a planned design to control and manipulate certain information." Students can apply various strategies to understand, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate the texts they read. This can improve students' understanding and reduce students' barriers to understanding what they read.

Pani (2004, as cited in Karami 2008) defines reading strategies as "the mental operations involved when readers approach texts effectively to understand what they are reading." In line with that, Alexander, Graham, and Harris (1998) argue that a strategic reader will use his strategy to get to a goal, whether it understands the text in book chapters, appreciates a

work, or understands instructions about specific information or valuable knowledge. A reading strategy is a deliberate and goal-directed effort to control and modify the reader's efforts to decode text, understand words, and construct meaning.

Having good intentions and trying to be strategic is a good starting point. Students need to believe that compelling reading results from using strategies, and teachers may need to provide more explicit motivation to use and practice these strategies.

2. Reading Comprehension

Snow (2002) defines reading comprehension as "the process of extracting and forming meaning simultaneously through interaction and involvement with written language". Readers are encouraged to extract information from the text to construct the meaning of the text. Comprehension always plays an essential role in reading because the main reason for reading is for students to understand what they are reading. Students cannot get any ideas written in a text or book if they do not know what they have read.

3. Student Preferences

Sullivan (2016) states that the term 'preference' refers to individuals' stable likes and dislikes. These likes and dislikes may be present or future-oriented. It can be concluded that student preferences are things that they like and dislike. Preference is also related to something frequently used or chosen in an activity to achieve specific goals.