

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

Reading comprehension is regarded as one of the most crucial language skills in the process of learning English, especially within the EFL context. Numerous studies suggest that students often struggle with text comprehension due to a limited vocabulary, inadequate background knowledge, and a lack of reading experience .

(Kusumawardani et al., 2022) discovered that Indonesian junior high school students frequently face obstacles in understanding English texts, which impedes their ability to identify main ideas, supporting details, and draw inferences.

Furthermore, the reading literacy achievement of Indonesian students remains a significant concern. According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Indonesia obtained a reading score of 359, which is considerably lower than the OECD average score of 476. Moreover, only about 25% of Indonesian students achieved the minimum proficiency level in reading. These findings indicate that many students still face difficulties in understanding, interpreting, and evaluating written texts. Therefore, improving students' reading comprehension skills remains an important issue in English language teaching (OECD, 2023).

This underscores the necessity of promoting both language proficiency and reading habits to ensure that students can cultivate effective and independent reading comprehension skills. In addition to reading, speaking is also an essential English skill taught at the junior high school level. Students are expected to be able to express simple ideas orally in English. However, previous studies have shown that many EFL students still face difficulties in speaking, including limited vocabulary, low confidence, and anxiety when using English orally. These oral

language limitations are closely related to reading ability, as insufficient vocabulary mastery and limited exposure to spoken English hinder students' comprehension of written texts and overall language development.

Nonetheless, several studies conducted in the Indonesian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) setting have found that students routinely struggle with reading comprehension.(Khafidhoh & Abdullah, 2022). eighth graders had a limited grasp of English texts due to their poor vocabulary, lack of reading techniques, and weak prior knowledge. These limitations cause students to have difficulty understanding the major themes, supporting data, and inferences from the text, which leads to a superficial grasp of the material.

Other research also emphasizes the significant influence of environmental and contextual factors on reading challenges. In a research conducted at a rural middle school, (Aprilia et al., 2025) discovered that pupils had limited exposure to English reading resources outside of class, which resulted in poor reading frequency. Students have a hard time internalizing linguistic structures and achieving automaticity in comprehending English texts if they do not practice reading regularly. Additionally, variables pertaining to the instructor have a significant impact on reading proficiency. According to research by many instructors in rural schools have trouble implementing interesting reading activities due to a lack of instructional materials, large class sizes, and curriculum time limitations. Because of these instructional restrictions, instructors are unable to offer the focused reading instruction, feedback, or scaffolding that students need in order to enhance their comprehension.(Ikhsanudin & Lestari, 2023)

Additionally, studies indicate that reading material that is genuine and meaningful can greatly improve learning. According to the use of authentic texts increased students' vocabulary and engagement. However, many schools in rural areas lack the necessary reading resources,

digital infrastructure, or current textbooks, which restricts instructors' ability to consistently use such methods. These results are reflected in the challenges that students describe.(Kusumawardani et al., 2018).

According to (Chotimah & Cahyani, 2023) children who grow up in highly localized linguistic contexts tend to have poorer working memory and phonological awareness in foreign language acquisition, which makes it more difficult for them to decode and understand English text in later classes.

In addition, the availability of learning resources may affect the teaching and learning process. Limited English reading materials, inadequate learning facilities, and the lack of supporting technology may create challenges for teachers in providing varied and effective reading instruction. Therefore, teachers need to apply appropriate strategies to support students in developing their English reading skills.

Based on preliminary observations and informal interviews conducted at SMPN 14 Kaur, it appears that some eighth-grade students still have difficulty understanding English reading passages. These preliminary findings indicate that reading comprehension remains one of the challenges in English language learning at this school. Therefore, further research is needed to examine the challenges faced by English teachers in teaching reading comprehension

Therefore, understanding the challenges faced by teachers is important for improving reading instruction. Research on teachers' challenges in rural schools, including SMPN 14 Kaur, is needed because teaching conditions may differ from those in urban or better-resourced schools.

Based on preliminary information obtained from the English teacher at SMPN 14 Kaur, Grade VIII students are taught under the Merdeka Curriculum, in which reading is emphasized as one of the essential English language skills. In teaching reading, the teacher primarily uses printed textbooks and also utilizes digital media, such as an infocus

projector, to present reading texts and learning materials. This condition indicates that teachers use various instructional media to support students' reading development. Therefore, teachers are required to be creative and adaptive in selecting appropriate teaching strategies and instructional media that match students' needs and classroom conditions. In this context, teachers play an important role not only as knowledge providers but also as facilitators who guide students in developing their reading comprehension skills.

Although numerous studies have discussed students' difficulties in reading comprehension and the effectiveness of various teaching strategies in EFL contexts, most of these studies primarily focus on students' problems such as limited vocabulary, low motivation, and lack of reading habits. In addition, several studies have explored teaching strategies that can improve students' reading comprehension skills.

However, there is still limited research that specifically investigates the challenges faced by teachers in implementing these strategies, particularly in rural school contexts. Previous studies tend to highlight general constraints such as limited resources, large class sizes, and time constraints, but they do not deeply explore how teachers experience these challenges in real classroom situations and how they adapt their strategies accordingly.

Furthermore, research focusing on junior high school level, especially in rural areas like SMPN 14 Kaur, remains scarce. Each school has unique characteristics in terms of student background, facilities, and learning environment, which may influence the teaching and learning process differently. Therefore, findings from other contexts cannot be fully generalized to this setting.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to fill the gap by exploring in depth the challenges faced by English teachers in teaching reading skills to eighth-grade students at SMPN 14 Kaur, as well as

identifying the strategies they use and the solutions they implement to overcome these challenges in a specific rural EFL context.

B. Research question

Based on the research background ,the researcher formulated the research questions such :

- 1.What challenges do teachers face in implementing those strategies?
- 2.What strategies do English teachers at smpn 14 kaur use in teaching reading skills ?
- 3.What Solutions did teachers implement to overcome challenges in applying reading skills strategies ?

C. Research objective

The objective of this research are as follows :

- 1.To analyze the challenges faced by teachers in implementing those strategies.
- 2.To identify the strategies used by English teachers at smpn 14 kaur in teaching reading skills.
- 3.To examine the solutions implemented by teachers in overcoming challenges in teaching reading skills.

D. Significant Research

This research has significant theoretical and useful significant :

- 1.Theoretical Significant : this study's findings should advance our understanding of English language instruction,particularly with regard to reading skills techniques.
- 2.Useful significane : Teachers might benefit from the study's insights into practical methods for raising pupil's reading skills.
 - a. It can assist kids improve their reading habits and become more motivated.
 - b.The result can serve as a guide for future researchers doing studies on teaching methods and reading skills.

E. Definition of the key terms

This study discusses the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English reading skills to eighth-grade students at SMPN 14 Kaur, so the researcher needs to explain several terms used in this study:

1. Reading Skill

Reading skill refers to the ability to understand and interpret written texts. It includes recognizing words, understanding vocabulary, identifying main ideas, finding specific information through skimming and scanning, making inferences, and summarizing the text.

2. Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies are methods or approaches used by teachers to help students learn effectively. In this study, they refer to the approaches used by English teachers to develop students' reading skills.

3. Challenges

Challenges refer to the difficulties faced by English teachers when teaching reading skills to Grade VIII students. These challenges may include limited student vocabulary, low reading interest, pronunciation difficulties, limited instructional time, and differences in students' reading abilities.

4. Solutions

Solutions refer to the actions or efforts taken by English teachers to overcome the challenges they face in teaching reading skills. In this study, solutions include simplifying learning materials, explaining vocabulary, encouraging students to use dictionaries, providing additional guidance, and motivating students through praise and rewards.