

CHAPTER 1

INTROCUCTION

1.1 *Background*

Reading is one of the most important language skills for students in school. By reading, students can obtain various information, increase their knowledge, and develop their thinking skills. Almost all subjects require reading skills because the subject matter is typically presented in written form. This means that students with good reading skills are more likely to understand school lessons effectively. On the other hand, students with low reading skills usually also have difficulty learning (Jeremy Harmer, 2007; David Nunan, 2003).

According to Anderson (2008) Reading becomes increasingly important at the junior high school level because students are required to engage with longer and more complex texts across various subjects. Reading is not only a matter of pronouncing words, but also involves understanding, interpreting, and being able to connect the information in the text with pre-existing knowledge. Therefore, reading is considered the basis of the learning process.

At the junior high school level, reading has a more important position because students have begun to be exposed to longer and more complex texts. For example, in Indonesian lessons, students are asked to find the main idea, answer reading questions, or analyse the content of the story. In English lessons, they learn to understand simple texts related to daily life. Even in other subjects such as science and social studies, students have to read explanations of concepts and story problems that are quite complicated. This condition shows that reading

ability affects almost all aspects of learning (William Grabe & Fredricka L. Stoller, 2011; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019).

However, many students still experience difficulties in reading comprehension. They often struggle to identify the main idea of a text, locate important information, and understand the meaning of unfamiliar words or passages. Some students need to read a text several times before they can fully understand its content. These difficulties may negatively affect their academic achievement, as students with limited reading comprehension skills tend to perform less successfully in academic tasks, whereas those with stronger reading skills generally achieve better learning outcomes.

Each student has different ways of approaching reading activities. When reading a text, students often employ various strategies to help them understand the content more effectively. Some students focus on identifying the main idea, while others search for specific information, predict the content of the text, or summarize important points after reading. The strategies used by students play an important role in determining how well they comprehend a text and may contribute to their academic achievement. According to Oxford (1990), learning strategies are specific actions taken by learners to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, and more effective. In reading activities, these strategies are reflected in the use of reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, predicting, and summarizing. These strategies help students process information more efficiently and improve their understanding of written texts.

Grabe & Stoller (2013) emphasized that students who have an awareness of reading strategies will find it easier to control their understanding of the text. They know when to read fast, when to read deeply, and how to mark important information. This is different from students who do not use strategies. They tend to read from beginning to end without a clear goal, making it easier to feel bored and have difficulty understanding what they read.

It is important to research this issue because a student's learning success is not only determined by how diligently they study, but also by how they learn. If students have the right reading strategy, then they will have an easier time understanding the subject matter, and their academic results will improve. However, if they don't use strategies, then they will most likely have trouble understanding the lessons, and their performance decreases.

Research on the relationship between reading strategies and academic achievement has actually been conducted in various schools and contexts. For example, research conducted by Cabot and O'Malley (1994) showed that the use of learning strategies, including reading strategies, is closely related to students' success in language learning. However, research with a focus on SMP Negeri 3 Kupang Barat is still rare. In fact, each school has different student characteristics, both in terms of background, motivation, and learning style. Therefore, this research is considered important to be conducted. The goal is to find out what reading strategies are used by students of SMP Negeri 3 Kupang Barat, as well as how these strategies relate to their academic achievements. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide a clearer picture of the real condition of students in the school.

In addition, this research also has practical benefits. For students, this research can provide awareness that reading with certain strategies can help them learn more effectively. For teachers, the results of this research can be an input to develop reading teaching methods that are more in line with the needs of students. As for schools, this research can be the basis for improving the quality of language learning, especially reading skills, so that students' academic achievement can improve overall.

Previous studies have shown that students who apply reading strategies tend to demonstrate better comprehension and learning outcomes. However, students' use of reading strategies may differ depending on their learning environment and academic context. SMP Negeri 3 Kupang Barat has students with diverse backgrounds and varying exposure to English reading materials. These conditions may influence how students apply reading strategies and how these strategies are reflected in their academic achievement.

Therefore, this research is conducted to describe students' reading strategies and their academic achievement in English learning at SMP Negeri 3 Kupang Barat. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to understand how students use reading strategies during reading activities and how these strategies are related to their academic achievement.

In this research, the term relationship refers to a descriptive relationship interpreted from qualitative data. The relationship discussed is not statistical or correlational, but describes how students' reading strategies are related to their academic achievement based on observation, interview and documentation.

1.2 Research Problems

Based on the background above, researchers can determine the problem formulation as follows:

1. What are the reading strategies commonly used by students at SMP Negeri 3 Kupang Barat?
2. How do students' reading strategies related to their academic achievement?

1.3 Aim(s) of Study

Based on the questions asked, the author sets the objectives of this research as follows:

1. To describe the reading strategies used by students at SMP Negeri 3 Kupang Barat.
2. To describe students' academic achievement as reflected in their reading comprehension performance.

1.4 Significance of Research

This study has two important parts of significance: implications and applications.

1.4.1 Implications

This research is expected to provide a better understanding of how students use reading strategies and how these strategies relate to their academic achievement. This aligns with Banat and Pierewan's (2019) findings, which state that reading strategies, particularly metacognitive strategies, can help students not only comprehend texts but also influence their learning outcomes. Islam (2022) also emphasized that students who habitually use

reading strategies consciously typically have better reading comprehension and higher academic achievement.

Therefore, this research is also expected to provide new insights for teachers and schools, emphasizing that reading is not simply about pronouncing or recognizing words, but rather about how to use appropriate strategies to truly understand the content of the reading.

1.4.2 Applications

The results of this study are expected to provide tangible benefits to learning activities in schools. For teachers, the results can help them improve their reading instruction by emphasizing strategies rather than simply reading text. This aligns with research by Hidayah and Addinna (2023), which showed that teachers who use strategies such as think-aloud and scaffolding can improve students' reading comprehension. Consequently, teachers can adjust their teaching methods to focus more on strategies that encourage students to actively understand the content of the reading.

For students, the results of this study can also be beneficial, as they can practice simple strategies such as skimming, scanning, or summarizing. Research by Prasetyo and Al Farhan (2020) explains that summarizing activities have been shown to help students strengthen their reading comprehension. Consequently, students not only benefit from this strategy in language learning but can also use it to understand texts in other subjects.

Schools can also benefit from this research by using it as a basis for developing programs that support reading activities. Anderson (2021) emphasized that school support in the form of targeted reading activities can increase students' interest in reading and comprehension. Consequently, schools can foster a stronger reading culture, which in turn impacts students' academic achievement.

Furthermore, this research is also useful for other researchers. Its findings can serve as a starting point for future research addressing reading strategies and academic achievement. Banat and Pierewan (2019) stated that metacognitive reading strategies not only help students comprehend texts but also positively impact their learning outcomes. Consequently, this study paves the way for further research to identify reading strategies that better suit the needs of junior high school students.