

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

English is one of the international languages that plays an important role in the fields of communication, education, science, and technology. In Indonesia, English is taught as a mandatory subject at the junior high school level to equip students with the language skills necessary to face global challenges. Referring to the Merdeka Curriculum, English language learning is directed toward developing students' communicative competence through the mastery of six language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, watching, writing, and presenting information in various forms of texts (MINISTRY of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology [Kemendikbudristek], 2022). Through these language skills, students are expected to communicate effectively, think critically, and actively participate both in academic contexts and real life.

In English language learning, there are four basic language skills that students must master, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Johnson (2008) classifies these skills into two categories. First, based on the medium of communication, language skills consist of oral skills (listening and speaking) and written skills (reading and writing). Second, based on the nature of language use, these skills are categorized into receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). Among these four language skills, reading is considered one of the most essential receptive skills

because it allows students to acquire information, expand knowledge, and develop critical thinking thru written texts.

Reading is not merely the activity of recognizing written words or pronouncing sentences correctly. On the contrary, reading is a complex cognitive process that requires the reader to construct meaning from a text by integrating linguistic knowledge, background knowledge, and reading experience. Therefore, the main goal of reading is comprehension. Students are expected not only to be able to decode words but also to understand the message the author wants to convey, identify the main ideas, interpret supporting details, draw conclusions, and evaluate the information presented in a text. In other words, reading success is reflected in the students' ability to understand and interpret written information meaningfully.

The importance of reading comprehension is also reflected in the English learning objectives at the junior high school level. Students are expected to understand various types of texts, such as descriptive, narrative, procedural, anecdotal, and report texts. Good reading comprehension allows students to obtain information from textbooks, learning materials, newspapers, magazines, and digital media. As a result, reading comprehension becomes one of the key factors affecting students' academic performance because many learning resources are presented in written form.

However, in reality reading comprehension remains one of the most challenging language skills for many students. In many English classes, reading activities are often limited to asking students to read a passage silently

and answer comprehension questions afterward. Such activities tend to emphasize the result of reading rather than the process of constructing meaning from the text. As a result, many students are able to read words fluently but still struggle to identify the main idea, find specific information, interpret implied meanings, connect ideas between paragraphs, and draw conclusions from the text. This condition shows that reading comprehension involves more than just decoding written symbols; it requires appropriate strategies that help students process information effectively while reading.

Students can use various methods to understand a text. Some students prefer to identify their reading goals before starting, while others skim the text to get the general idea or look for specific information. Some students infer the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context, while others reread difficult sections repeatedly to improve comprehension. These differences indicate that students naturally use various reading comprehension strategies during the reading process. Therefore, understanding the strategies used by students becomes important because it provides valuable information about how they approach reading tasks and construct meaning from written texts.

Although students use various methods to understand a text, the success of reading comprehension does not solely depend on the students' language proficiency. This is also influenced by the strategies they use while reading. Reading strategies enable learners to process text information more effectively, overcome comprehension difficulties, and achieve their reading goals. Therefore, understanding students' reading strategies is considered

important because it provides insights into how students interact with written texts and how they construct meaning during the reading process.

Brown and Lee (2015) define reading strategies as conscious techniques used by readers to facilitate comprehension before, during, and after reading. These strategies play an important role in helping students understand written texts more effectively, overcome comprehension difficulties, and achieve their reading purposes. Therefore, understanding students' reading strategies is essential because it provides insights into how they process information and construct meaning while reading.

Several previous studies consistently show that students use various reading strategies when comprehending English texts. Hasibuan et al. (2022) found that students use different reading strategies with varying frequencies, indicating that each learner develops their own preferences when facing reading tasks. Similarly, Basae et al. (2021) reported that students combine bottom-up and top-down strategies to facilitate their understanding of English texts. Additionally, Lestari and Syahdan (2019) revealed that students tend to use various reading strategies rather than relying on just one strategy, while Sunggingwati and Ungau (2023) concluded that the use of effective reading strategies contributes to better reading performance. Recently, Sari and Fauziyyah (2025) also reported that students often use various metacognitive reading strategies depending on their reading goals and learning contexts. These findings consistently show that students naturally utilize various reading strategies to comprehend English texts.

Other research also supports the importance of reading strategies in English language learning. Huang (2009) emphasizes that strategic reading behavior allows learners to manage their comprehension process more effectively. Similarly, Putra and Suzanne (2022), Martina et al. (2023), Nisrina (2023), and Puspitasari et al. (2025) report that students' awareness and use of reading strategies significantly support their ability to understand written texts. Overall, these studies indicate that identifying students' reading strategies is important because it provides valuable information about students' reading behaviors, which can help teachers design more effective reading instruction.

However, despite the growing number of studies on students' reading strategies, previous research has predominantly focused on identifying general categories of strategies or examining their relationship with reading achievement. As a result, limited attention has been given to providing a more detailed description of the specific reading comprehension strategies employed by students during the reading process. Therefore, further investigation is needed to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of students' strategic reading behaviors in English reading comprehension.

To address this gap, this study adopts the reading comprehension strategy framework proposed by Brown and Lee (2015). This framework provides a more detailed description of students' strategic reading behaviors by identifying ten specific reading comprehension strategies performed before and during reading. Compared with broader classifications used in previous studies, Brown and Lee's framework offers a more comprehensive perspective

for analyzing how students understand written texts. Therefore, this framework is considered appropriate for investigating students' reading comprehension strategies in the present study.

Additionally, based on initial observations made by the researcher during teaching practice at MTsN 1 Kota Pariaman from July to December 2025, some students demonstrated various ways of understanding English texts. Some students prefer to identify the main idea before reading the entire text, while others focus on specific information or deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context. However, teachers have not yet obtained a comprehensive picture of which reading comprehension strategies are most and least frequently used by students. As a result, information regarding students' strategic reading behaviors is still limited, making it difficult for teachers to understand students' reading characteristics and design reading instruction that accommodates students' actual reading preferences.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study titled "An Analysis of Students' Reading Comprehension Strategies at MTsN 1 Kota Pariaman." This research is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of students' reading comprehension strategies based on the framework of Brown and Lee (2015). In addition, the findings of this research are expected to contribute to English teachers by providing useful information regarding students' strategic reading behaviors, which can serve as a reference for developing more effective reading instruction.

During the teaching practice (PPL) conducted by the researcher at MTsN 1 Kota Pariaman for approximately six months, several phenomena related to students' reading comprehension were observed. In reading lessons, the English teacher generally introduces the type of text to be studied before explaining its characteristics and language features. After the explanation, students are asked to read the text aloud in turns, while the teacher occasionally discusses unfamiliar vocabulary that appears in the reading.

Although the teacher had provided an explanation before the students read the text, differences in the students' reading behaviors remained clearly visible. Some students prefer to read the comprehension questions first before reading the text so they know what information to identify. Other students tend to predict the content of the text from its title, infer the meaning of unfamiliar words from the surrounding context, or reread certain parts of the text several times to ensure their understanding. Interestingly, some students are still able to understand the overall message of the text even if they do not understand every unfamiliar word. This observation shows that students naturally apply various reading comprehension strategies when interacting with English texts.

Additionally, vocabulary is often identified as one of the main challenges faced by students during reading activities. Many students struggle when encountering unfamiliar words. Nevertheless, some students are able to overcome their vocabulary limitations by making logical guesses based on context, allowing them to understand the general meaning of the text. This

phenomenon shows that reading comprehension success does not only depend on vocabulary knowledge but is also influenced by the strategies used by students during the reading process.

Based on observations in this class, the researcher realized that students exhibited different patterns of strategic reading behavior. However, these differences have not yet been identified and explained systematically. As a result, teachers have limited information regarding which reading comprehension strategies are most frequently or least frequently used by students. Such information is important because understanding students' strategic reading behaviors can help teachers design reading instruction that is more responsive to the actual needs and learning characteristics of the students.

Therefore, this research is conducted to analyze students' reading comprehension strategies based on the Brown and Lee (2015) framework. By identifying the strategies most and least frequently used by students, the findings of this study are expected to provide useful information for English teachers in developing reading instruction that aligns with students' reading behaviors and encourages a more enjoyable and effective English learning experience.

In addition, previous studies have mainly focused on identifying the types, categories, or frequency of reading strategies used by students. Limited attention has been given to describing how students use particular reading comprehension strategies when dealing with English texts. Identifying which

strategies students use can provide information about their strategic reading behavior, but examining how students apply these strategies can provide a deeper understanding of how they approach reading tasks and respond to different comprehension needs. Therefore, the present study not only identifies the reading comprehension strategies used by students and determines the most frequently used strategy, but also explores how students use these strategies when reading English texts.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the following problems are identified:

1. Students demonstrate different levels of ability in comprehending English texts.
2. Students employ various reading comprehension strategies when reading English texts.
3. Teachers have limited information regarding the reading comprehension strategies that are most and least frequently used by students.
4. Students' reading comprehension strategies have not yet been systematically identified based on the Brown and Lee (2015) framework.
5. The reasons underlying students' selection and use of certain reading comprehension strategies have not yet been sufficiently explored.

C. Limitation of the Problem

The participants are limited to ninth-grade students at MTsN 1 Kota Pariaman. The quantitative phase focuses on identifying the reading comprehension strategies used by students and determining the most frequently used strategy through a questionnaire based on the Brown and Lee (2015) framework. The qualitative phase focuses on exploring how students use reading comprehension strategies when reading English texts through semi-structured interviews.

This research does not investigate the effectiveness of particular teaching strategies, measure students' reading achievement, or examine the relationship between reading comprehension strategies and other variables, such as vocabulary mastery, reading motivation, or reading comprehension performance. Furthermore, the findings are limited to the context of MTsN 1 Kota Pariaman and therefore may not be generalized to students in other schools or educational contexts with different characteristics.

D. Formulation of the Problem and Research Question

Based on these limitations, the problem can be formulated as follow:

1. What types of reading comprehension strategies are used by students at MTsN 1 Kota Pariaman, and which strategy is the most frequently used?
2. How do students use reading comprehension strategies when reading English texts?

E. Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to provide a comprehensive overview of the reading comprehension strategies used by students based on the framework of Brown and Lee (2015). Specifically, this research aims to:

1. Identify the types of reading comprehension strategies used by students at MTsN 1 Kota Pariaman and determine the most frequently used strategy.
2. To explore how students use reading comprehension strategies when reading English texts.

F. Significance of the Research

Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the literature on reading comprehension strategies, particularly those proposed by Brown and Lee (2015). Unlike many previous studies that primarily used the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS), this research provides an overview of students' reading comprehension strategies based on the ten strategies proposed by Brown and Lee. In addition, this research provides an understanding of not only the strategies used by students but also the reasons underlying their selection or use of particular strategies. Therefore, the findings are expected to contribute to the development of research on reading comprehension strategies in English language teaching, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in Indonesia.

For English teachers, this research provides information about how students approach English reading tasks in the classroom. The findings identify the reading comprehension strategies used by students, the most frequently used strategy, and the reasons why students select or use particular

strategies. This information can give teachers a clearer picture of students' actual reading behaviors and the factors underlying those behaviors. Based on this information, teachers can consider students' existing reading strategies when selecting teaching techniques, designing reading activities, and providing guidance to support students in developing their reading comprehension strategies.

For students, this research provides information about various reading comprehension strategies that can be used when dealing with English texts. By becoming aware of the strategies they use and the reasons for using them, students may better recognize their own reading behaviors and consider different strategies according to their reading purposes and the demands of the reading task. This awareness may support students in becoming more strategic and independent readers.

For future researchers, this research provides empirical information about students' reading comprehension strategies and the reasons underlying their strategy choices in the context of MTsN 1 Kota Pariaman. The findings can serve as a reference for researchers interested in reading comprehension strategies, particularly those based on the Brown and Lee (2015) framework. The research can also provide a basis for further studies using different research designs, educational levels, participants, or variables related to reading comprehension.