

# CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

English, as a global language, is widely used in education, science, business, and technology, serving as a key medium for international communication and collaboration (Graddol, 2019). Crystal (2021) highlights its dominance in science and technology, making literacy in English crucial for developing nations. English proficiency is a vital skill for global engagement, including for Indonesian students. Harmer (2020) emphasizes its role in preparing students for international education and work, while Tomlinson (2022) notes its impact on boosting competitiveness and enhancing critical thinking. Consequently, English is integrated into curricula at various levels, including junior high schools.

At the junior high school level, students are expected to master basic skills in English: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, all of which support one another in achieving comprehensive language competence. In line with Johnson and Farrel's (2023) opinion, the integration of these skills establishes a critical foundation in language ability development, as combining these four skills can strengthen students' comprehension in communication and improve their effectiveness in processing information.

Reading comprehension plays a key role in language learning, supporting both proficiency and critical thinking (Carrell, 2021). Anderson (2020) highlights that deep reading fosters understanding of ideas within a text, strengthening analytical skills across academic contexts. Beyond word recognition, it involves interpreting meanings, drawing conclusions, and evaluating information. Goodman (2022)

emphasizes that effective reading connects textual information with prior knowledge, enhancing comprehension of new material. These skills are crucial for developing critical and analytical thinking, benefiting not only English learning but also other subjects.

Teaching reading comprehension often encounters challenges that hinder its effectiveness. Observations and research at UPT SMP Negeri 10 Medan reveal several factors contributing to students' low reading comprehension skills. These include a lack of interest and motivation, as students often find reading English texts boring and difficult, especially when the material does not align with their interests or abilities. Additionally, teaching methods tend to be monotonous, focusing excessively on technical aspects like vocabulary and grammar, which fail to promote critical thinking or deep text comprehension.

Limitations in teaching materials and learning media significantly impact learning. Unvaried or irrelevant materials can reduce student motivation, while limited time and a heavy curriculum hinder innovative, student-centered teaching approaches. The shift toward student-centered learning emphasizes understanding students' experiences, including their perceptions, challenges, and needs in reading comprehension, to design more adaptive and effective teaching strategies. However, research on students' experiences in English reading comprehension at the secondary level remains scarce. This study addresses this gap by using a qualitative approach to explore students' perceptions, challenges, and strategies in learning reading comprehension. The findings aim to guide educators in creating more relevant and engaging teaching methods.

This research refers to several relevant previous studies as follows:

In (Nguyen, 2022) found that According to this study, teachers have been using techniques including questioning, predicting, retelling, and picturing to promote reading comprehension. Additionally, it showed that the majority of the students gave enough feedback on the tactics used by their teachers. According to these findings, teachers should inform students of the instructions before they read the text and utilize tactics for teaching reading comprehension in line with each student's level of ability and personality to encourage greater engagement.

Then according to (Natsir & Anisati, 2020) found that The Interviews revealed that teachers' efforts are crucial in helping students develop reading skills, with students' attitudes toward reading also playing a significant role. However, teachers did not fully apply expert-recommended strategies, such as teaching students to read with interest, predict meanings, and build topic knowledge, due to limitations in the teaching environment. Improving the learning environment through appropriate teacher interventions can enhance students' reading competency.

Next according to (Ummah, 2020) The results of this study using the strategy of Directed Reading Activity (DRA). DRA is a strategy used to expand and strengthen students' reading skills. In short this strategy guides students to get information from a text read. So that in its implementation students can more easily understand the text of connecting the various student knowledge that students have. Before it was to build its own understanding and this assumption, this strategy was considered effective because it was able to build a teaching learning process. Making classes more conducive, students are also trained to build good cooperation, students

capable of discussion and critical thinking as well as developing understanding after reading.

Specifically, this study is expected to contribute in several ways. First, it will provide insights into the factors influencing students' reading comprehension skills from their own perspective, enriching the literature in the field of English language education. Second, the results can help educators and policymakers identify students' needs in reading comprehension learning, so that the policies and teaching practices implemented can better meet students' needs in the field. Third, this research is expected to inspire teachers to develop more creative and responsive teaching strategies to increase student motivation and engagement in learning.

Thus, this study has the potential to contribute to improving the quality of reading comprehension learning in secondary schools, enabling students to master this skill more effectively and develop sharper analytical abilities. In the long term, enhancing students' reading comprehension skills is expected to help them achieve higher academic success and better prepare them to face challenges in an increasingly competitive global world.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

1. What are students' experiences in participating in reading comprehension instruction in English classes at UPT SMP Negeri 10 Medan currently?
2. "What factors influence students' experiences in reading comprehension learning in the classroom?"

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

1. To understand students' experiences in participating in reading comprehension instruction in English classes at UPT SMP Negeri 10 Medan currently.
2. To identify the factors that influence students' experiences in reading comprehension learning in the classroom

#### **1.4 Research Benefits**

This research is expected to provide benefits as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefits

To contribute to the literature and the development of theories in the field of English language education, particularly in enhancing students' reading comprehension.

2. Practical Benefits

- a. For Educators: To provide deep insights into the factors affecting students' reading comprehension as well as suitable approaches in developing more creative, interactive, and relevant teaching methods that meet students' needs.

- b. For Policymakers: To facilitate policymakers in designing more adaptive curricula and educational policies, considering the challenges and needs of students in the field.

- c. For Students: To enhance their motivation and engagement in learning English through more interesting methods that support the development of critical thinking skills.