

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Reading is an important skill in learning English, especially in understanding narrative texts, which is a fundamental component of the curriculum in junior high school. Narrative texts play an important role in developing students' reading comprehension, as they involve understanding characters, plots and moral values. However, students at SMP N 7 Medan often experience difficulties which can be caused by several factors, both internal and external factors.

Internal factors that affect students' ability to understand narrative text include reading interest, storyline understanding, ability to write narrative text, motivation in reading and writing, confidence in telling stories. High interest in reading, such as interest in a particular genre, can increase frequency and enthusiasm in reading. Good language skills make it easier for students to understand and process information in the text. According to researchers who identified key factors that affect students' reading comprehension. Vocabulary is one of the most significant determinants of reading ability. Studies have shown that students with higher levels of vocabulary knowledge tend to have better reading comprehension skills. In addition, reading habits significantly affect comprehension, as students who engage in regular reading tend to be better at understanding narrative texts (Ihsan 2019). In addition, the use of effective reading strategies, such as the Story Mapping Technique, has been proven effective in improving students' reading comprehension (Imana Annisa 2020), (Etty Pratiwi 2021). However, despite these techniques, there are still many students who experience difficulties due to lack of motivation, lack of exposure to reading materials, and ineffective teaching techniques (Juaeriah 2021). Therefore, it can be concluded that the interaction between active reading strategies and consistent reading habits is a determining factor in improving students' ability to understand narrative texts.

External factors such as learning strategies and learning media also affect students' ability to understand narrative texts, support from the school environment, including the availability of interesting reading materials and access to library facilities, also play an important role in the ability to read narrative texts. Students who have access to different types of reading tend to be more motivated to practice and develop their literacy skills. This conducive environment gives students the opportunity to directly apply the reading strategies they learn and practice reading habits on an ongoing basis. In this context, (virgi Wulan Ari, Testiana Deni Wijayatiningsih 2021) emphasized the importance of the teacher's role in facilitating access and providing strategic direction for reading, in order to improve student learning outcomes. In conclusion, good environmental support, coupled with effective teaching strategies, together form a strong foundation to support students' ability to read and understand narrative texts.

According to the data we found at SMP N 7 Medan, the ability to read narrative texts of junior high school students still faces various challenges. When we conducted initial observations at SMP N 7 Medan, it showed variations in students' ability to read narrative texts. Some students get grades that are not good enough from the average school grades. From the data, some students show a good understanding of the storyline, characters, and messages contained in the text. However, some other students have difficulty in understanding important elements in narrative texts, such as conflict, setting, and theme. Therefore, we conducted research and observation at SMP N 7 Medan.

According to research (Novia Wulan Ari, Testiana Deni Wijayatiningsih 2021) emphasizes the importance of the teacher's role in facilitating access and providing strategic direction for reading, in order to improve student learning outcomes. In conclusion, good environmental support, coupled with effective teaching strategies, together form a strong foundation to support students' ability to read and understand narrative texts. Her research shows that interactive reading strategies play a significant role in improving students' comprehension of narrative texts. This strategy involves group discussion activities and the use of open-ended questions that encourage students to think critically and collaborate. In addition, (Acera 2023) found that good reading habits strengthen this skill, as students who engage in regular reading activities tend to have a better understanding of narrative structures and elements.

Based on the explanation above according to the study, considering the importance of reading skills in language learning and the challenges faced by students at SMP N 7 Medan, it is necessary to investigate the factors that influence their ability to read narrative texts. Identifying these factors will help educators implement effective strategies to improve students' reading comprehension.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEMS

This research analyzes the factors that influence the reading ability of students at SMPN 7 Medan. Specifically, this observe seeks solutions to the subsequent sub-problems:

1. What are the factors that affect the students' reading ability at SMP N 7 Medan?
2. What are the dominate internal factors which affect students of SMP N 7 Medan in reading narrative text?
3. What are the dominate external factors which affect students of SMP N 7 Medan in reading narrative text?

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To find out the factors affect ability to read narrative texts of students in grade VIII of SMP N 7 Medan.
2. To find out the internal factors study examined include interest in reading and vocabulary.
3. To find out external factors include the teacher's teaching method and the learning environment in the classroom class.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This research is expected to provide the following benefits:

1. **For teachers:** This study provides insight to teachers about the factors that influence students' reading ability. With this understanding, teachers can design more effective and interesting teaching strategies, and create a learning atmosphere that supports students' interest in reading.

2. **For students:** Through this study, students are expected to understand the importance of narrative reading and how certain factors can affect their ability. This research can also encourage students to be more active in reading activities and improve their literacy skills.
3. **For Future Researchers:** The results of this study can be a reference for other researchers who want to conduct further studies on reading ability, especially in the context of education in Indonesia. This research can also open up opportunities for further exploration of effective teaching methods.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

From the significance of the research This study focuses on the factors that influence students' narrative text reading skills at SMP N 7 Medan. This study is limit to students in a particular grade level and does not cover other schools. This study mainly motivational and environmental factors that affect reading comprehension and did not investigate advanced linguistic analysis.