

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Reading is a complex, purposeful, interactive, comprehension and flexible activity that requires a lot of time and resources to develop. Readers read for a variety of reasons, such as entertainment, information, or research. Reading for motivational purposes is an important aspect of being a good reader. Reading is an interactive activity which means that the reader uses information from his/her background knowledge as well as information from the printed page. Reading is also interactive, which means that many skills work together simultaneously in the process. In reading, readers usually expect to understand what they read. Readers use various strategies to read efficiently. Readers will also learn to read gradually as they will not become fluent instantly. Reading is the most important skill required by humans.(Bojovic, 2010)

Reading is saying words and getting words from printed materials. This process involves analyzing and organizing a variety of complex skills, such as thinking, reasoning, integrating, problem-solving and learning. All these skills are used to provide explanations to the reader. Reading learning in schools emphasizes comprehension, reception, and understanding of written concepts or ideas. To achieve this, a student must have the ability to understand word by word, groups of words or phrases, sentences, or texts as a whole. Reading activities carried out at school involve thinking, reasoning, and emotions, and are tailored to the theme and type of reading they are dealing with.(Erwin Harianto, 2020)

In today's technological era, theoretical learning methods are slowly forming a passive atmosphere. Especially in language lessons, one of which is English. There are still many teachers who do not use English learning methods that suit their students, so students feel burdened and think that English lessons are very difficult and make them afraid to learn them. Lack of self-confidence is one of the influences. The large number of vocabulary and sentence structures that

are different from Indonesian make many students lazy to follow this lesson and tend to be embarrassed when reading for fear of being wrong. The majority of schools tend to focus on reading and writing, they neglect listening and speaking. Whereas listening, speaking, reading and writing are the most important parts of English that must be mastered. When students are taught to read at school, they only read the assigned text but they do not understand what they read. Without reading comprehension, students will not be able to understand the meaning of the text they read. Therefore, reading comprehension is an important skill that students should have. Reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from text, the purpose of which is to gain an understanding of the text rather than deriving it from individual words or sentences. This shows that reading ability continues to play an important role in broadening students' perspectives.

Based on the researcher's experience during field experience practice (PPL) in one junior high school and the experience of some of the author's close friends in other schools, there are still many students who lack interest in reading, especially English. The causes of students' low interest in reading are reading materials that are less interesting and monotonous, limited vocabulary, and limited libraries at school or in the neighborhood. These things cause many students to have difficulty in understanding the meaning of written text even though they know how to read it. To overcome these problems, teachers as mediators and facilitators must be able to provide teaching by using techniques or media as teaching aids to facilitate learning. There are many types of media such as pictures, apps, diagrams, graphs, maps, flashcards, and others. Teachers can use applications as media in learning, especially learning to read to students. The use of applications as learning media will help learning to be more interesting and not boring. One of the innovative and relevant media for the current generation is the Webtoon application. Webtoon uses pictures and illustrations to present the story. Many webtoons feature stories that are socially and culturally relevant to students' daily lives, trends, and interests, thus increasing students' reading interest. The format of attractive images and little text can help students who are not used to reading or have difficulty understanding text become more comfortable and

engaged. By using webtoon apps, students can add new vocabulary, expressions, and sentence structures that appear in stories on webtoon.

Webtoon is a web-based comic that has five accessible languages. Webtoon can also be considered as a tool to spread modern humor (Rahman et al., 2022), or as a collection of story images posted online (Dian Bagus Harmoko, 2017). This app is very popular in South Korea and around the world. The app contains various comic titles categorized into several genres, such as drama, comedy, horror, fantasy, and slice of life. (Sabrina Ghina Fauziyyah, Maya Dewi Kurnia, 2022). In addition, the enthusiasm of Webtoon readers continues to increase, encouraging the production of better comics. The platform often holds competitions for budding comic artists, and many types of comics are available for free. (Viqri Khaikal hidayatulloh, 2021)

In addition to interesting webtoons, there is an Indonesian writer who managed to attract the world's attention through his writing in an article published on CNN Indonesia (Putra, n.d.). With 88 local webtoonists featuring their local works, webtoons can also attract students' interest in writing. Webtoon is a type of comic that contains a light story with a quick ending, making readers feel comfortable. Webtoon can also be used as a medium to support school literacy programs. Literacy is a person's language ability that includes speaking, writing, reading, and listening to journals. However, literacy here is centered on reading culture. This is due to the lack of student interest in reading. If seen now, there is a correlation between traditional and digital comics, webtoon is one of the trends that is becoming a hype and trend among the younger generation. One of the most related phenomena to this is the declining number of book publications. This clearly has an impact on traditional comics as well. When traditional comic books could not compete with other media content such as videos, webtoons grew in popularity. The comic industry made a comeback with the rise of the internet as a new medium. Because it can be accessed easily, many readers turn to digital media such as webtoon. Beginning with curiosity about what a webtoon is, readers then enthusiastically look forward to chapter after chapter. (Darmawati, 2022)

Teachers can use this learning model to make English learning interesting so that students can remember newly learned English vocabulary from webtoon stories. This gives students a real experience that has special meaning. By using this learning model, students' interest in reading can increase. This will help them to develop thinking ability, problem-solving skills and become independent learners. In addition, this learning model encourages students to work in groups to help each other solve complex problems. This learning model can also help students complete academic tasks, help them understand difficult concepts, and improve critical thinking skills (Amin Khudlori, Achmad Bahtiar Efendi, 2022). However, the use of Webtoon apps in education is still relatively new, and further research is needed. It is important to understand how teachers can act as facilitators and mediators in using Webtoon to improve students' reading skills. As facilitators, teachers are expected to direct and support students in exploring Webtoon content, as well as applying effective reading strategies. As mediators, teachers are expected to help students connect the content they read to their experiences and knowledge, and talk about what they know about the topic.

Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the role of teachers as facilitators and mediators in the use of Webtoon applications to improve students' reading skills with the research title "The Role of Teachers in Developing Students' Reading Comprehension Through The Implementation of Webtoon Application"

1.2. The Research Problem

Based on the background of study, the problem of the study is formulated as the follows: "How is the teacher's role as a mediator and facilitator in developing students' reading comprehension by using webtoon apps?"

1.3. The Objective of Research

Based on the background and the problem of this study, the objective of the study is to determine the role of the teacher as a mediator and facilitator in developing students' reading comprehension using webtoon.

1.4. The Significances of Research

The results of this study are expected to be useful for:

1. Teachers, the results of this study are expected to help teachers in improving students' understanding in reading and increasing students' interest in learning actively and independently, especially by using webtoons as a source of inspiration for teachers to implement effective learning strategies at school.
2. Students, the results of this study are expected to improve student learning outcomes, increase student interest and ability to learn further.
3. The results of this study can encourage other students of English Education Department to conduct similar research.
4. The results of this study can be used as a reference for other researchers to conduct other research related to the topic of this study.

