

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Reading requires a greater level of focus than any other language skill (Shanahan, 2016). Since reading has to deal directly with text, people tend to avoid it for certain reasons. This then becomes a ‘problem’ for non-native English speakers to learn English, such as Indonesian students. In essence, reading comprehension is the most basic stage and skill in acquiring language and education (Grabe, 2009). However, in practice, EFL students still find it difficult when they have to work on questions related to English texts. This is caused by several factors, such as limited vocabulary (Yusuf, 2013), text recognition (Aradi, 2021), background knowledge (Al-Jarah & Ismail, 2012), low motivation (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000), and inappropriate reading strategies (Nurhayati, et al., 2023).

In education, the learning outcome of reading English texts, such as descriptive texts, report texts, narrative texts, and so forth, is that students are capable of identifying and comprehensively understand such texts. However, in reality, many studies have found that this reading learning outcome has not been completely achieved. As experienced by Lisiana et al. (2021) in one of the high schools in Padang, where there were three problems students faced in reading, such as lack of vocabulary, overlong texts, and ineffective reading strategies. Furthermore, this study also found a similar problem in one school in North Sumatra, MAS PAB 1 Sampali, where the students had no interest, did not know how to understand the text, how to identify it, and find answers to related questions. Most students there tended not to read the text on English questions. Thus, their English scores were low.

According to Shah et al. (2022), there are several factors that lead to the low reading skills of EFL students, including unfamiliarity with English texts, lack of vocabulary, low motivation and unaware of the purpose of reading, and not being given effective reading strategies. This causes students’ English scores, especially

in reading comprehension, to be low. Hence, the primary objective of this study was to offer a reading strategy as a means of elevating the students' reading comprehension. It is called a partner reading strategy.

The partner reading strategy involves two students with different levels of ability. For instance, a low-ability student is paired with a high-ability student instead of pairing two low-ability or two high-ability students. The learning task requires the students to read a material, comprehend it, identify any challenges, have a discussion about them, and find solutions. The aim is to assist students in developing their mutual reading comprehension (Sinaga et al., 2020).

In regards to background, this study employs the partner reading strategy to see whether it has an effect on students' reading comprehension. Therefore, "The Effect of Partner Reading Strategy on the Students' Reading Comprehension at MAS PAB 1 Sampali" is the title of this study.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

In this study, there were several reading comprehension problems that existed in MAS PAB 1 Sampali:

1. Some of the students were not good at reading in English.
2. Many students did not understand the text they read.
3. Many students did not use appropriate reading strategies.

1.3 Limitation of the Study

The limitations of this study were divided into many parts, specifically:

1. The English language ability tested was reading comprehension.
2. The strategy applied was the partner reading strategy.
3. The level of students observed was high school students.

1.4 Formulation of the Problem

The study focused solely on one research question: "Is there any significant effect of partner reading strategy on the students' reading comprehension at MAS PAB 1 Sampali?"

1.5 Objective of the Study

In relation to the research question previously, the objective of this study was to determine whether the partner reading strategy had a significant effect on the students' reading comprehension at MAS PAB 1 Sampali.

1.6 Significances of the Study

This study had the intention to offer useful knowledge for students, English teachers, future researchers, and others. As a result, this research provided help for:

1. Students to enhance their reading skills through partner reading strategy.
2. English teachers to apply a teaching reading strategy through the partner reading strategy as an option.
3. Future researchers to develop the partner reading strategy into a more impactful strategy.



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