

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Research Background

English is one of the most used languages in this world, which provides many advantages and opportunities and thus shows how influential English is. The importance of mastering English as a language skill means that someone should be able to use English properly in every sub-skill because it used for many purposes in many aspects, including education. Many countries have implemented English as a learning subject, specifically in formal education such as school, starting from the beginner to the higher levels. In Indonesia, English exists as a foreign language (EFL) and is generally implemented as a learning subject at all education levels, especially in secondary schools that follow a national-based curriculum such as the 2013 curriculum (K-13). Therefore, students must learn to acquire the four essential skills, one of which is reading. The school can be a part of the obligation for this, especially in developing students' reading skills that associated with the educational process Yunus and Machmury (2019, p. 14), who believe that reading can increase our knowledge, which sets reading as an asset for someone to invest in and creates a better future generation. Furthermore, compelling reading material is a significant factor in creating effective learning (Angelianawati & Simamora, 2015, p. 43). For those reasons, mastering English as a language skill specifically for educational purposes requires a successful English reading activity.

The simplest way to explain reading is as an indirect communication, while the word 'communication' refers to getting information from what the author's saying in the form of a text. In other words, successful communication will happen if the reader can understand (get the message) from the text. Sthal and García (2015) underlined that the fundamental objectives of reading are making sense of the text,

using text purposefully, and critically analyzing text, or the primary purpose of reading is comprehension, which means understanding (Widdowson in Yusnaeni et al., 2019), assumed that reading comprehension as the essential purpose of reading (Durkin in Basaraba et al., 2012). Furthermore, reading comprehension is a pivotal aspect of education that the students must equip as part of learning activities for every subject or course. According to Rayanto (2019, p. 2), students must comprehend a text's content. Gusnetti et al. (2018) stated that reading activity is essential for the learning process, especially reading and comprehending what helps them understand the learning material they studied. Through better reading comprehension, students can understand the learning material more deeply and improve their knowledge, positively impacting their learning achievement.

In fact, a crucial thing that needs to be considered is the poor reading comprehension level of EFL secondary students in Indonesia. For instance, based on the data reported by PISA for the last result in 2018 about students' literacy performance, Indonesia deteriorated compared to the previous test in 2015, with a score from 403 to 396, and Indonesia became a bottom-six out of 80 countries. This case indicated that the probability of reading English text material among Indonesian's students is in the low level. Following that, English First (EF) in 2021 reported data about the low English Proficiency Index (EPI) data in Indonesia that ranked Indonesia 80 of 122 countries and 14 of 24 countries in Asia. Consequently, to overcome this problem and be successful in developing reading comprehension, students need to be equipped with valuable components such as linguistic competence, the nature of the reading text, attitude toward reading, and reading habits (Widdowson in Yusnaeni et al., 2019). However, UNESCO reported the survey results in 2019 about Indonesian people's reading interest. The data showed that the reading interest in Indonesia was meager, only 0.001%. It means that out of 1000 people, only one is an avid reader. The low level of awareness of reading becomes another problem that affects students' reading comprehension. Further, Indonesia's National Library reported that the frequency of reading activities among Indonesian citizens in 2021 increased to 9 hours 52 minutes/per week, or 1 hour 36 minutes/per day (CNN Indonesia, 2021). However, UNESCO set the standard

minimum reading time as 4 – 6 hours, meaning Indonesia still lacks reading frequency (Tempo. co, 2015), and for those reasons, it can be concluded that Indonesia has a low level of literacy awareness that impacts the low level of reading habits, even more in reading English material. These problems become factors that cause a low reading comprehension level in secondary school students in Indonesia. It also impacted students' English proficiency, specifically the ability to comprehend the text material. The data showed that reading habits are one of the main factors influencing one's knowledge of reading comprehension. Therefore, referring to the problem above, the researcher was interested in investigating the correlation between students' reading habits and reading comprehension.

Some previous studies become the basis for the researcher to conduct this study. First, a previous study conducted by Iftanti (2012) indicated that most students needed to have a better habit of reading English material because they could not understand the content of the text in English and struggled with many unfamiliar words that obstruct reading comprehension. Furthermore, students with good reading habits also have good English proficiency. It is supported by Aptari (2019) also Andriani and Ariyanti (2022), who found a positive and significant correlation between reading habits and comprehension among students in junior high school. The findings proved that students with good reading habits also get high scores in their reading comprehension and vice versa.

## **B. Research Problem**

Referring to the explanation on the background, the researcher drew a question that focuses on this research, as follows; "Is there any positive and significant correlation between students' reading habits and their reading comprehension in the eighth grade of SMPN 80 Jakarta?"

### **C. Research Objective**

This research aimed to investigate whether a positive and significant correlation exists between students' reading habits and reading comprehension in the eighth grade of SMPN 80 Jakarta.

### **D. Research Scope and Limitation**

This research was conducted to find the correlation between students' English reading habits and reading comprehension as a fundamental skill in education for better English learning progress. The participant in this research was limited to the eighth-grade students at SMPN 80 Jakarta.

### **E. Research Significances**

This research provides essential information about the correlation between reading habits and reading comprehension. The researcher hopes this research will help some aspects of education. First, the researcher expects this research will help other researchers get new knowledge and enrich it, to do better research in the education field, specifically for teaching and learning cases. Second, the researcher expects this research will give important information about students' reading habits and comprehension, specifically at SMPN 80 Jakarta. The school can provide some programs to help develop students' reading habits and comprehension. Further, the researcher expects this research will help English teachers know more about their students' reading habits and reading comprehension levels, which can help the school by giving more attention and support to their students to improve their reading habits and comprehension.

Moreover, this research will increase teachers' awareness in giving reading material to avoid confusion for the students by introducing the material first. Last, the researcher expects this research will help the students realize the importance of

reading habits, motivate them to read thoughtfully, and improve their reading skills, which can help them understand English text more easily.

