

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents: (1) background of study, (2) research problems, (3) research objectives, and (4) significance of the study

1.1. Background

Reading is an important activity for students during the learning process. Students are required to comprehend a lot of reading material in order to achieve better results in the learning process. Snow (1998) stated that the most important skill to be mastered in English is reading, because the students must read through media such as books or magazines, to learn other skills. Therefore, having sufficient reading skills are needed to master other skills. Reading activities can help students to get information and knowledge from around the world. Students can read from various media such as magazines, newspapers, books and other reading sources. Reading is an activity that involves interpreting the written words (Pang, 2003). In reading activities, students are expected to understand what the author is trying to present in his writing. Furthermore, Pathiban (2018) stated that reading skill need to be enhanced in order to accomplish the requirement to go into the higher education. Therefore, reading is very crucial because being successful at reading makes students easier in order to be a successful learner. The more information the students get from written information, the more knowledge students get, therefore, being able to comprehend the content of reading is one way to become a successful learner. However, comprehending the content of the English text is

not easy to do especially for students. Students must connect the information in their reading with background knowledge, which is not easy if students have low background knowledge. Just like the statement from Kusdemir (2020), where reading comprehension is a skill that required relations between the individual's prior knowledge and the content of the text, and the results of the reading activity depend on the background knowledge each student has. It means a reader reflects the idea from the text with the things that they already know to comprehend the text, but it will be difficult for readers if they do not understand or do not know all the basic information about the topic being read.

Reading comprehension means how the students find the information from the text. Whenever students just read loudly but cannot understand the content of the text, it means they are failed. Davoudi and Yousefi (2015) stated that there were some EFL learners' reading difficulties such as deficits in vocabulary knowledge and background knowledge, problems with grammatical knowledge and also poor reading strategies which is in fact very important to reduce the difficulties. With these difficulties experienced by students, it will be very difficult for them to understand the reading because they do not have the special strategies or abilities that are necessary for them to understand the contents of the reading.

The goal of reading a text is to understand the content or message expressed by the author through the text. But, reading without preparation in the form of a strategy that makes reading activities more effective and efficient is difficult. In order to comprehend the text, there are few strategies need to be

mastered. Beatrice (2007) stated that reading strategies involve: skimming, scanning, determining main idea, making inference, and using prior knowledge. Comprehending the contents of reading in English will be very difficult to do without mastering those strategies because they will find it difficult to answer the reading question. If this keeps happening and students still do not develop their reading strategy, then their reading will fail and make the reading achievement low.

The preliminary study was conducted by interviewing the English teacher of the tenth grade at MAN 1 Muara Enim. The teacher confirmed that the students still had difficulties with reading comprehension, especially in the application of strategies in reading, such as difficulties in finding main ideas, making inferences, and locating references. Apart from that, the teacher also explained that students also had difficulties with a lack of vocabulary and a lack of background knowledge, which made their reading goals difficult to obtain. And this resulted in students not being able to get the message from the text and failing to answer the question related to reading. (Atrisna, Personal communication, September 11th, 2021).

There are some previous studies that have closeness to this study. First, the research by Aziz (2019) which he carried out at SMP Satap Betara. He found that students' difficulties in learning reading comprehension such as lack of vocabulary mastery, unable to use the strategy in reading comprehension, and lack of facilities that support students in comprehending the reading. The

other research by Hidayati (2018) which was carried out at SMAN 1 Darussalam Aceh besar which he found the difficulties that often experienced by students in reading comprehension, such as, determining main idea, locating reference, making inference, detail information, and the understanding vocabulary. After that, research by Melandita (2019) which was held at SMP Darul Falah Lampung. She found that students' difficulties in understanding the contents of reading texts such as lack of background and cultural knowledge, lack of reading strategies, and too long text.

Related to preliminary and previous studies, students in different schools still have some difficulties that make their comprehension fail. The difficulty was mostly in using reading strategies and a lack of base knowledge about the text, such as background knowledge, vocabulary knowledge. This research would be different from all of the other researchers because it examined the difficulties MAN 1 Muara Enim students had in comprehending reading text. The difficulties faced by the students might be different in one school to another school.

Therefore, the researcher interested to conduct a research study entitled “EFL Students’ Reading Comprehension Difficulties: A Case at MAN 1 Muara Enim.”

1.2. Research Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the research was formulated in the following question: What were the EFL students' reading comprehension difficulties found at the tenth grade students of MAN 1 Muara Enim?

1.3. Objective of the study

The objective of this research is to find out the EFL students' reading comprehension difficulties at the tenth grade students of MAN 1 Muara Enim.

1.4. Significance of the study

After leading this research, the results of this study are expected to be useful for advancing English teaching and learning.

1. English teachers can increase their creativity and make innovations in learning activities. Especially in reading comprehension and knowing the right steps to overcome students' difficulties in understanding English reading.
2. This research is expected to make students aware of information about difficulties that exist in reading comprehension, and after knowing these difficulties, they will know how to overcome those difficulties.
3. For further researchers hopefully this research can become a reference for a study that is able to solve problems in reading comprehension for EFL Learners.
4. For the researcher, hopefully after so many things the researcher had been through in the way to finish his research the researcher got a new

knowledge from the field that they did not get from the college learning process and might be useful when the researcher becomes a teacher in the future.