CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the existing literature and research pertinent to the topic of students' difficulties in reading comprehension. The purpose of this literature review is to provide a theoretical framework and clarify key concepts utilized in this study.

2.1 Reading

Reading is a fundamental skill that extends beyond the core English language abilities of listening, speaking, writing, and reading itself. Its importance lies in its multifaceted functions and the profound impact it has on overall cognitive and personal development. Reading facilitates the acquisition of knowledge, enabling individuals to explore diverse subjects and ideas, which is crucial for academic and professional growth. It also enhances critical thinking and analytical skills, as readers must interpret and evaluate complex information. Additionally, reading fosters empathy and cultural awareness by exposing individuals to different perspectives and experiences. Beyond these intellectual benefits, reading contributes to mental well-being, providing a source of relaxation and stress relief. In essence, the act of reading enriches both the mind and the soul, making it an indispensable part of lifelong learning and personal enrichment.

2.1.1 Concept of Reading

Reading is regarded as a crucial component of learning a new language. Reading is the process of understanding the whole linguistic meaning of a new language through the sign that is used to represent it (Castles et al., 2018). Reading, which begins at the start of school age and continues throughout a student's life, is a fundamental tool for learning (Laličić & Dubravac, 2021). Reading is an endeavour undertaken by students to learn, comprehend, translate, and interpret written material to acquire or convey meaning and information from the text. Thus,

it can be concluded that reading encompasses more than merely viewing words as visual symbols; it also requires understanding the meaning of each word to fully grasp the content of a text and extract information from it.

Reading is only incidentally visually stimulating because the reader contributes more information than what is printed on the page (Risnaldi et al., 2016). The implication of this phrase is that we must draw a conclusion about the information we gain from a product, such as a book we read (Ismail et al., 2017). The majority of information is presented in the form of text; therefore, it would be incorrect to assume that we can learn more by simply listening and looking. Also, it is easier especially for the students because they can study from experts' books and articles rather than having to meet them in person to learn from them.

The researcher concludes from the aforementioned statement that reading involves deriving meaning from what we have written and gaining information from what we have read. Reading also connects the writer and the reader; the writer explains what they know and what they want to say, and the reader receives the meaning and the information (Aprilia et al., 2021). Reading involves comprehending what the writer intends, not just reading it and then forgetting it.

2.1.2 The Importance of Reading

The skill of reading is becoming increasingly crucial in the realm of education. Students who read can obtain valuable information that is not covered by teachers in the classroom. Furthermore, it can be said that all learning materials will not be separated from reading skills (Hakim & Pravianti Tanuatmadja, 2022). Therefore, training is needed to ensure that students can read well. Reading is beneficial for language learning because it is necessary for a career, academic purposes, or just for enjoyment, according to Laličić & Dubravac, (2021). We need to utilize reading and comprehension in our daily lives; thus, they are crucial.

Hudson in Melandita (2019) explain that, "only by reading, people can acquire the speed and skill they will need for practical purposes when they leave school. In our literate society, it is so hard to imagine any skilled work that does not require the ability to read." In other words, reading is a crucial ability for language

learners to be mastered, especially for junior high school students, as it will be advantageous for them when they choose to pursue further studies.

2.2 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a crucial skill that underpins our ability to understand and engage with written texts. The following explanation will provide an overview of concepts, aspects, processes, purposes, and also strategies in reading comprehension.

2.2.1 Concept of Reading Comprehension

Reading is a process enabling individuals to understand and retain information from the text. It is also emphasized that reading is a process for understanding written material, which entails efficiently collecting the essential details from it. Reading activity covers a lot of things. It does more than only understand the meaning of specific words in a written piece. In other words, reading is the act of using logic to understand a text, characterized by four key elements: purpose, selection, anticipation, and comprehension.

Talking about comprehension, that is one of the characteristics of reading activity. According to Oktavia et al. (2023) comprehension involves making sense of what someone reads and making connections between the ideas in the text and what the reader already knows. According to Ardhian et al. (2020), comprehending can be thought of as connecting aspects of the world around us—including what we read—to the knowledge, intentions, and expectations that we already have. It is without a doubt the goal of reading and learning to read.

According to Vitasmoro (2016), comprehension is determining the intended meaning of a written or spoken communication. They also add that current theories of comprehension emphasize that it is an active process that draws on both background knowledge, information from the context, and the listener's as well as speaker's purposes or intentions (top-down processing) in addition to the information found in the message itself (bottom-up processing). Meaning is

acquired by the readers when deciphering words from their context and applying what is familiar to understand and learn what is unfamiliar.

In conclusion, reading comprehension is the process of connecting the reader's prior knowledge with the information in the text to determine the text's message. Reading comprehension is more about how students create and construct meaning from the text than just about knowing and remembering the meanings of every word in the text.

2.2.2 Aspects of Reading Comprehension

The students or learners should learn a few aspects of reading comprehension. The main idea, supporting information, references, inferences, and vocabulary are some of the aspects of understanding in reading, according to Septia et al. (2022). The following is a brief explanation of the viewpoints:

a) Main Idea

The main idea is essential information that provides further context of a paragraph or part of a text's main concept. Every paragraph in the reading has the main idea or primary topic. The main idea is the most crucial piece of information the author wants the readers to consider while reading the passage's thoughts.

b) Supporting Information

The reader can locate the essential idea by using information that supports it from the text. Supporting information is a piece of information that explains the major idea in the paragraph. Typically, supporting information describe the who, where, what, when, why, and how of the content materials.

c) Reference

Using the demonstrative pronoun in a passage of text is referred to as a reference in reading comprehension. The demonstrative pronoun can be used in the same way as the word "it," "he," "she," "her," etc. In the reading passage, references are used to avoid subject duplication.

d) Inference

The process of reaching a hypothesis, notion, judgment, or drawing conclusions that make reference to material that is never explicitly expressed in the

text is known as inference. Due to the fact that the information in the text is never explicitly expressed, this aspect of reading comprehension is the most challenging. The process of coming to a conclusion based on suggested information is called inference. In this regard, readers must make assumptions about what the text might say.

e) Vocabulary

Vocabulary and reading comprehension are intricately related. Both learning to read as well as reading to learn are aided by vocabulary. To learn from what they read, children must comprehend the meaning of the words they read.

Five aspects that makeup reading comprehension are the main idea; supporting information; a reference; an inference; and vocabulary (Septia et al., 2022). In this study, the researcher applied all aspects of reading to both provide a response to the research question and as a resource while creating the test and the specification table.

2.2.3 Processes of Reading Comprehension

Experts frequently emphasize the bottom-up and top-down processes when talking about reading and comprehension. Both of these are reading comprehension processes, and a recent study shows there is a third type of reading comprehension processing known as interactive reading (Bintang Nadea et al., 2021).

1) Bottom-up processing

In bottom-up processing, readers must first recognize a variety of linguistic signals (letters, morphemes, syllables, words, phrases, grammatical cues, discourse markers), after which they must apply some type of order to these signals using their linguistic data processing system. The language itself must obviously be understood in order to perform these data-driven functions. The reader chooses the signals that have some "meaning" from all the data they have sensed.

2) Top-down processing

Top-down reading is the process where readers use their own prior knowledge and experience to comprehend a text.

3) Interactive reading

A combination of top-down and bottom-up processing occurs through interactive reading. It is nearly always a key component of an effective teaching strategy because both processes are important.

2.2.4 Purposes of Reading Comprehension

Student carries out their activities, among which is obtaining information. The information is typically obtained by reading. Deals with Grabe and Stoller (2011) as cited in Alek & Sari (2016), the reading purposes are:

a) Reading for searching the information

Reading for searching information is a common reading skill. The student didn't need to think carefully about the content; they simply skimmed the surface in search of basic facts. When reading to search, the student often skims the material in pursuit of a certain fact or word.

b) Reading to gain knowledge

When a student has to learn a significant amount of information from a text, reading for knowledge often happens in an academic or professional setting. The student retains the primary concepts as well as the amount of supporting details, ideas, and constructed rhetorical frames that categorize the information in the text.

c) Reading for information integration, text writing, and text criticism

Making judgments regarding the relative value of supplementary, mutually reinforcing, or contradictory information from several sources is necessary when reading to assimilate the information. In order to decide what information to integrate and how to integrate it for the reader's objective, these skills call for a circular evaluation of the material that is being read.

d) General comprehension through reading

The primary reason for reading is to achieve a general comprehension of something. Reading to learn is easier to master than reading for comprehension in general. Therefore, reading for general comprehension to the most difficult requires highly rapid and automatic word processing, a general meaning representation of the primary concept. This is performed by a professional fluent reader.

According to the description given above, the researcher can draw the conclusion that reading is done to find simple information. Students learn from texts by reading them, integrating the information, writing and critiquing them, and reading for general comprehension.

2.2.5 Strategies of Reading Comprehension

There are numerous strategies for improving reading comprehension. In this section, these strategies are including activating and utilizing background knowledge, predicting, making inference, summarizing, and visualizing (Qizi, S., 2021). The following is a brief explanation regarding the points above:

a) Activating and Utilizing Background Knowledge

The method that the students utilize to improve their reading comprehension is to generate and ask questions. If the learners have the background knowledge of the text given, they will be better able to understand it. This knowledge encompasses individual experiences with language and their understanding of how written text functions, including word recognition, print concepts, word meanings, and text structure.

b) Predicting

Students started using prediction as a tool to increase their reading comprehension skills. Good readers use prediction to apply previous knowledge to fresh information from a text in order to gain meaning from what they read. Before beginning to read, students can anticipate the content of a text by drawing upon their existing knowledge of the author. The title of a text can triggers memories of similar works, allowing students to infer the substance of a new piece. Skilled readers have the ability to anticipate forthcoming events or the perspectives the author will introduce to support a topic as they engage with the text. Students make an ongoing effort to evaluate these predictions, changing any that are not supported by the reading. Students can use prediction strategies to guess what will happen next in the story. By making educated assumptions, readers can deduce meaning from the material using this strategy.

c) Making Inferences

Students start to employ inference-making as a strategy to increase their reading comprehension. Students evaluate or make inferences from information in a text, and writers don't always give readers all the details they need to know about a subject, location, person, or event. Instead, they give the information that they can use to read by drawing conclusions from the text that correspond to what they already know.

d) Summarizing

Students have begun using summarizing as a strategy to improve their reading comprehension skills. Summarizing is an important strategy that helps students quickly retain content. By employing this strategy, students can better understand text structure, identify important information, and see how different viewpoints connect. Summarizing explanatory text effectively involves outlining a scientific process, tracing the evolution of an art movement, or sequencing events that led to significant historical outcomes. For narrative texts, summarizing could include linking plot points or identifying factors that drive a character's actions. In essence, summarizing involves distilling key ideas from a long paragraph into a concise list.

e) Visualizing

Students begin to use visualization as a strategy to enhance their reading comprehension. They visualize steps in a process and stages in an event or create images that help them remember key names or abstract ideas. Visualizing a text helps students better understand the cognitive processes involved in reading. Demonstrating this skill shows their ability to interpret a text. Visualization is particularly important for narrative texts, as it aids in retaining the material better than those who do not visualize. By picturing the setting, characters, or how a plan unfolds, students can quickly grasp the narrative texts. This strategy is also effective for understanding expository texts. Consequently, students with strong visualization skills tend to have better comprehension than those who do not use this strategy.

2.3 Students Difficulties in Reading Comprehension

The difficulty is a circumstance in which students are unable to study as a result of interference. Students' difficulties are brought on by students who don't comprehend the subject matter. As a result, their academic performance suffered and the learning process was impeded. The experts' explanation of the difficulties is provided below:

a) According to Djamarah (2011) in Sinaga et al. (2023), a condition is described as difficulties when a student is unable to learn naturally as a result of threats obstacles, or distractions during the course of the study.

b) According to Westwood (2008), word-level difficulties pertain to challenges in decoding and identifying words, encompassing issues with understanding, utilizing phonetic knowledge and orthographic units within words, and applying analogies and contextual understanding within sentences or paragraphs.

Based on the explanations provided by the experts above, the researcher draws the conclusion that difficulty is a condition in which students suffer from challenges with learning because they find it complicated to comprehend words, sentences, or paragraphs when reading. Therefore, learning does not proceed effectively.

The difficulty comes when there is interference and students are unable to study effectively. Students can have difficulty understanding the ideas in reading comprehension. There are several issues with reading namely related to language itself, subject and genre, comprehension exercise and unfavourable expectations (Malinda et al., 2022)

a) Language

Because the text is still only available in English or a foreign language, students are having difficulties comprehending it. When students encounter unfamiliar phrases in the material they are reading, they struggle to comprehend them. The researcher came to the conclusion that the students' inadequate English vocabulary was the reason they had difficulty with reading. They are unable to comprehend the text they are reading as a result.

b) Subject and Genre

Less knowledgeable students won't be familiar with the genre or subject being covered. They might grow uninterested as a result. Students who lacked background knowledge will find it challenging to comprehend the reading's core theme in this situation.

c) Comprehension Exercises

One of the ways to improve receptive abilities is to complete comprehension exercises. By assigning exercises through reading materials, teachers attempt to motivate students to develop their receptive abilities. The researcher came to the conclusion that in order to facilitate the learning process for reading comprehension, students are responsible for understanding the comprehension task provided by the teacher, such as being instructed to comprehend each test item. However, not every student will comprehend. Finding the information in the text will be challenging for individuals who don't comprehend it.

d) Unfavourable Expectations

Students have low expectations when reading texts written in English. Students consider reading in a foreign language as being very tough. Due to this matter, students won't be motivated to learn English because they find it difficult.

2.4 Factor Cause Difficulties in Reading Comprehension

When students struggle to comprehend information, it presents a challenge for the teacher in the teaching and learning process. This is evident from the children's low-test scores. There are two factors of difficulties with learning that students encounter: internal factors including limited knowledge of vocabulary, lack of fluency, difficulty applying reading strategies, lack of familiarity with the reading content and issue with recalling information after reading (Butarbutar, 2021). Also, several external factors including aspect of social at home and school environment (Rohimah, 2021).

According to Butarbutar (2021) , the following factors can make it difficult for students to understand what they are reading:

a) A limited knowledge of vocabulary

For students, vocabulary knowledge is frequently a barrier. This is due to their restricted vocabulary, which forces them to consult a dictionary in order to understand what words imply. Since they may be able to read the words on the text correctly but not understand the content of the material they have read, students with limited vocabulary will find it difficult to learn in this situation.

b) Lack of fluency

Students who read too quickly or very slowly are frequently misunderstood. Slow reading tends to focus more of the reader's attention on the text's high-level ideas and concepts than on low-level letter and word processing. However, reading too quickly might result in inaccurate word recognition and the omission of essential information. The implication is that students must accurately read every word in the text and retain the specifics of the information the author is trying to get through.

c) Difficulty applying reading strategies

Students are unaware that using strategies for reading can improve their comprehension of the texts they read. They frequently don't employ reading strategies and struggle to comprehend the information being conveyed. The researcher came to the conclusion that this was due to their ignorance of reading strategies based on the aforementioned reasoning.

d) A lack of familiarity with the reading content

In this case, the researcher contends that students find it much simpler to understand what they are reading if they have some prior knowledge. Students will struggle to understand the text if they lack prior knowledge.

e) The issue with recalling information after reading

In order to successfully complete a reading comprehension assignment, students must retain the specifics of the information they have read from the text. The recall is influenced by several elements, including the text's clarity and relevancy, but it also relies on the student's attentiveness to the reading activity and

consciousness of the necessity to remember details. However, students really read less carefully than they should, which prevents them from fully understanding the text's informational clarity. This makes it difficult for students to grasp the particulars that the author has delivered in the text.

According to Rohimah (2021) , the reader environment is one of the external elements that affects students' reading comprehension.

a) Aspects of the home's environment

Environmental factors also have an impact on how well students read. The socioeconomic background and experiences of students' families are examples of environmental factors. The researcher concludes that every student requires parental attention to succeed in their academic goals. Students who learn without their families' support may feel inadequate and sluggish, which makes them care less about what they are learning.

b) Environmental aspects in schools

Factors originating from the educational setting, namely those internal to the school. On this aspect, reading difficulties in students may result from ineffective teaching methods or a dearth of resources like books and other aids. Students who find it difficult to comprehend what the teacher is saying since the learning material is not appropriate for their level. The aforementioned variables are used to quantify the elements that influence students' difficulties in reading comprehension.