

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher principally discusses background of the study, statement of problems, objectives of the study, significances of the study, scope and limitation of the study and operational definitions.

1.1 Background of the Study

The process of reading is about gaining knowledge and new information by understanding what is contained in a text. Reading for information, such as books, magazines, newspapers, letters, posters, advertisements, comics, the internet, and so on, aims to help a reader to gain a better understanding of the concepts and issues they come across. Reading is the ability to derive meaning from the printed form and interpret the information accurately (as stated by Anne, 2003, p.8). While reading can best be described as the ability of the reader to paraphrase information provided in the reading text, reading is not limited to this ability. Other possible causes of difficulties with understanding syntax, grammar, vocabulary, and reading strategies could be a problem understanding syntactic structures, sentence structure, vocabulary, and reading strategies. While the reading process is relatively short, a reader can arrive at an understanding of the language symbols and decipher the content of the text by reading.

To better understand the information from the text, one should first identify what background knowledge each reader has and what information is provided within the text. It is also called reading comprehension. Reading

proficiency aims to provide comprehension. Thus, the two tasks must be done simultaneously in order to fully comprehend the text's meaning. Reading comprehension is the ability to use text to perform tasks such as taking information from written text and showing understanding of that information (Brassel & Rasinski, 2009, p. 18). It is an understanding of how to attain the content of the passage text.

Comprehension is an active process that you must work on. Readers, like students, must critically analyze the text in order to come to a realistic assessment of the information. It is absolutely necessary for senior high school students to improve their ability in identifying the author's ideas in order to advance in their academic studies. In order for students to succeed in the English language, they must understand what they read, so reading comprehension is a critical skill for learners (Varita, 2017, p. 234). Reading is more than understanding the main idea, inferences, and details; it is also about developing students' ability to read quickly and accurately.

When reading instruction is focused on teaching the cognitive act of interpreting and constructing meaning, it has a transformative effect on students because it influences students' personality, their reading selection, and their personal and academic goals (Walpole & McKenna, 2007, p. 7). Good comprehension of what has been read requires knowledge of vocabulary expansion and vocabulary instruction. In order to be able to understand the material, one must take the time to think about it and interact with it, while simultaneously demonstrating an intent and being considerate. Teachers who

are better prepared to help students with reading comprehension strategies can help students improve their comprehension abilities (Bedee, 2010, p. 17).

Different methods to explore reading comprehension are possible, such as using relevant teaching resources, such as literature. Reading literature can inspire people. Reading and interpreting English literature offers an interesting contrast to reading literature in one's own language. Students can gain access to values of the people whose language they study when studying literature. It's possible that the students could easily come to comprehending reading ability in the learning process.

Reading competence of the English text is one of the skills that should be mastered by the students in the school. Referring to the Standard English Competency requirements for senior high schools, the students are expected to develop their ability to comprehend written functional text and simple short texts of essay at the 9th grade. Furthermore, they are expected to be able to comprehend the meaning of written functional text and simple short texts of essay related to the environs. While, the basic competence expects the students to be able to the respond the meaning of the written functional text and short essay with utterance, stress and intonation that is acceptable related to the environs.

By observing the conditions at the 9th grade of SMPN 14 Surabaya as the setting of this study which was done during pre-research during the pandemic Covid-19 era where the proses of learning conducted through online or virtual classroom, it showed most of the students can't comprehend the

information from reading texts due to the fact that lack of students' vocabulary, the lack of students' opportunity to express their opinion when in the teaching-learning activity, and the students can't share the main idea from the reading text. The problems above-mentioned make the students unreachable the standard of minimum completeness or *KKM* (*Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal*) which has been decided in education curriculum 2013 ($KKM \geq 80$ for English subject). Most of the students got the lower scores of *KKM*. So, if the problems continuously happen, the goals of education will never be achieved. Therefore, the English teacher is expected to find out the solution of the students' problem in understanding the content of text.

Additionally, the one-year crisis known as the Covid-19 pandemic is being used as a learning opportunity to prepare for the challenges of home-based online learning for the Indonesian government. An additional form of effort, as done by SMPN 14 Surabaya, helps ensure learning objectives are achieved, and the material is shared with students, in order to help avoid a pandemic caused by this corona virus. A wide range of applications such as WhatsApp groups, Google Classroom, Zoom, and so on are utilized in online learning to promote instructional outcomes. What is undoubtedly true is that, in practice, hurdles will be discovered that are specific to online learning, which in the pre-pandemic era, learning took place offline, namely face-to-face in the classroom (Zainuddin, 2020, p. 131). Because of this condition, many students have experimented with an unpredictable system, and online testing has taken the place of in-person testing. The online learning system or virtual learning

system integrates an internet connection with the teaching and learning process (Bentley, Selassie, & Shegunshi, 2012; in Hariyati, 2020, p. 2). With online learning, teachers and students do not need to attend the offline classrooms, which is a breakthrough or a new paradigm.

Many teaching and learning approaches are available for teaching and learning processes, especially when online learning is involved. A teacher must first identify the best instructional method and use the most effective teaching strategies or techniques when teaching reading comprehension. Based on the above clarification, the researcher intends to provide a specific strategy to help the students overcome their issues. According to the researcher, one way to deal with students' issues with understanding narrative text is to implement literature circles approaches.

“Literature circles are small classroom-based student reading and discussion groups. They combine the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Discussion is often guided by response to what students have read. Often discussions focus on characters, events, the author’s craft, and personal experiences. Literature circles provide students with a way to deeper understand what they have read through structured discussion and extended written response.” (Clower, 2006, p. 22)

The passage above is saying that literature circles provide the students with an opportunity to explore an idea through the text, to give the students new ways to understand the text, and to foster their critical thinking about the text. Another one of the cooperative learning techniques that is often referred to is inclusion. When students are of different abilities, schools use various learning activities to help their understanding of a subject (Kagan, 1994; in Varita, 2017, p. 235).

While it is well-known as a specific type of collaborative learning, known as "co-operative learning," collaborative learning can also take place in a variety of learning processes. By engaging in collaborative efforts, such as creating a project, discussing a topic, analyzing a short story, and so on, students might be encouraged to strengthen their structural abilities (Longo, p. 201). In other words, students are held personally responsible for their projects and their group activity is also scrutinized. Students will learn to apply their weaker and interpersonal skills in a group while also improving their overall development. Additionally, they may have characteristics that can help them overcome their weaknesses.

Relevant explanations describe how the researcher will use an online learning strategy involving reading circles to enhance students' reading comprehension, facilitate communication, and provide students with an active role in the learning process, as it was done during the pandemic Crisis of Covid-19. The researcher will implement literature circles to assess students' reading comprehension by conducting the research via online learning. Therefore, the researcher is going to conduct the research entitled: "*Improving the Reading Comprehension of the 9th Grade Students of SMPN 14 Surabaya Using Literature Circles Technique*".

1.2 Statements of the Problem

The researcher sets out to answer the research question by formulating the research problem:

- 1.2.1 To what extent will literature circles technique will improve the students' reading comprehension of the 9th grade at SMPN 14 Surabaya?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Related to the problems formulated, this research has two purposes:

- 1.3.1 To improve the students' reading comprehension of the 9th grade at SMPN 14 Surabaya by using literature circles technique.

1.4 Hypothesis

The problem and research objective lead to the formulation of the hypothesis as follows: the literature circles technique will improve the students' reading comprehension of the 9th grade at SMPN 14 Surabaya.

1.5 Significances of the Study

The researcher hopes the findings will result in noteworthy contributions which may include:

1.5.1 Teachers

Teachers should always be prepared to teach students who learn in different ways. In the event of a future pandemic, the literature circle approach should be given the opportunity to test and experiment with different learning strategies, particularly online learning, so as to gain experience. Teachers will better understand how to plan for student growth when they take part in their own literature circle groups.

1.5.2 Students

The findings of the study will expand the scope of the literature circle approach to get an improved understanding of reading comprehension. Furthermore, encouraging them to pursue their English language skills will motivate them to explore their reading comprehension skills.

1.5.3 Other Researchers

The literature circle strategy is a worthwhile instructional strategy, but additional research is recommended to confirm the results of this study. Through this research, other researchers will gain a better understanding of the literature circle strategy and will have the opportunity to utilize it in the context of either online or traditional learning processes. Students may develop better reading comprehension strategies if they continue to use literature circles.

1.6 Scopes and Limitations

In conducting the research, the researcher had scopes and some limitations. This research was conducted at SMPN 14 Surabaya. Then, the subjects of the research were the class 9-A for the second semester in the academic year 2020/2021. The researcher conducted the Classroom Action Research (CAR) as the research design by applying literature circles technique through online learning due to the fact the pandemic Covid-19 era in teaching

reading comprehension to the students. Lastly, level of comprehension was literal comprehension.

1.7 Operational Definitions

To make the research terms more clearly, the researcher provides some explanations about the terms that are used in this research:

- 1.7.1 Literature circle approach is an approach used to develop students' comprehension towards the content of reading text where the implementation is done by working together of every group decides to comprehend the content of the reading text.
- 1.7.2 Online learning is virtual classroom or virtual learning by using any utilization or use of the Internet and web technologies to apply in a learning environment where the teacher and the students are not in the same place.
- 1.7.3 Reading comprehension is a process of building the deeper meaning from the reading text which is gained from all the information withing the reading text by understanding the definition of every word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph done by the students.
- 1.7.4 Reading text is a text of reading that has aims to understand its meaning and to integrate with what reader already know toward the content of the text.