CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of five main sections, namely background of the research, problem of the research, objective of the research, the operational definition of the terms, the significance of the research and scope of the research.

1.1 Background of the Research

Reading is one of a fundamental skill that is crucial in the learning process and individual development, It enables the students to understand and analyze the texts. Reading comprehension is a critical skill that significantly influences students' academic performance and lifelong learning capability (Thi Thanh Dieu, 2015). The ability to comprehend text is not only essential for academic achievement but also lifelong learning and critical thinking skills necessary today (Mekuria et al., 2024). There are various factors that make it hard for students to develop their strong reading comprehension. Research show that the use of specific reading strategies has a significant positive impact on reading comprehension. When this strategy systematically taught and practiced, can improve students' ability to understanding text effectively (Sun et al., 2021).

Based on the result of PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), only 18% of 16-year-old students in Indonesia achieved at least Level 2 in reading literacy. This means that 82% of students are still below the basic level of reading literacy needed to understand simple texts. This alarming the urgent need the effective pedagogical strategies that can improve students' reading comprehension. The lack of effective reading strategies and proper

teaching support can slow down students' progress. Many high school students struggle with reading comprehension, especially during standardized test. This shows that there is a gap between their basic reading skill and their ability to understand and analyze the texts (Yunanda et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important to using teaching methods to improve reading comprehension.

Moreover, the difficulty of reading comprehension as a cognitive process presents additional challenges. To understand texts well, students not only need basic reading skills but also the ability to combine information, make inferences, and analyze texts critically (Dabiri & Kashefian-Naeeini, 2021). One major issue in improving reading comprehension is that many teachers use traditional teaching methods that do not actively involve students or help the students to understand the material better. Therefore, getting students engaged in their learning is essential to improving their understanding of what they read.

This study highlight the issue of students' low reading comprehension, which is reflected in their minimal active participation and their difficulty in understanding the text. Based on the preliminary test and also informal interview with the english teacher revealed that students are struggling with their reading comprehension. Data collected from SMK Muhammadiyah Jember especially from grade 10, show that 72.7% of students found that the students difficult to understand the context of the text and did not reach the criteria of success, while 27.3% reached the criteria of success but only recognize some vocabulary and read short sentences. The average reading score among these students is 57.6, indicating a significant gap between skill they have achieved at the criteria of success which is 75.

One promising approach to address this issue is the Know-Want-Learned strategy or also known as KWL strategy, which has become popular in schools. The KWL strategy helps students to activate their prior knowledge, set their learning goals, and reflect on what they have learned after reading. According to (Heriyawati et al., 2021) KWL strategy effectively bring back students' background knowledge and increases their interest in the reading material. (Krismalita Sekar Diasti et al., 2023) found that the implementation of the KWL strategy can motivate and help EFL students more independent in the learning process. The KWL strategy has been found to encourage critical thinking and self-regulation in students. It not only helps with current reading comprehension issues but also provides students with important skills for their academic success. The KWL strategy offers a great opportunity to improve students' reading comprehension in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts.

Based on the background, this study will look at how the Know-Want-Learned strategy can help students improve their reading comprehension in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) by using descriptive text. Many students struggle to understand texts and have low literacy skills. This research will explore if the KWL strategy can help students use what they already know, set learning goals, and think more deeply about what they read. The aim is to see if this method can boost reading skill and encourage critical thinking, leading to better teaching practices.

1.2 Problem of the Research

Based on the background research of the study above, the formulation of the research problem is as follows: How Know – Want – Learned Strategy can improve reading comprehension students at SMK Muhammadiyah Jember?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the problem of the research the objective of this research is to improve reading comprehension through Know – Want – Learned Strategy at SMK Muhammadiyah Jember.

1.4 The Operational Definition of the Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, it's necessary to give some explanation on several items that are be used in this research.

1. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is defined as the ability of students to understand, interpret, and analyze written texts effectively. It involves several key skills, interpreting, understanding context, making inferences, critical thinking and recall. (Dabiri & Kashefian-Naeeini, 2021) reading comprehension involves several level of understanding, from recognizing words and sentences to connecting ideas across entire texts. Good reading comprehension is essential for academic success, as it allow to students interact with complex materials and achieve deeper understanding of various text.

2. Know – Want – Learned Strategy.

Know – Want – Learned strategy is operationalized as a structured instructional approach that involves three phases:

(1) Know (What I know), where students activate their prior knowledge about a topic before reading.

(2) Want (What I want to know), where students express what they want to learn from the text.

(3) Learn (What I have learned) where students reflect on what they have learned after reading.

1.5 Significance of the research

This research want to give some benefits, such as following:

1. For the students: It is hoped this study will improve their reading comprehension skills.

2. For the teacher: It is expected that this study will provide valuable insights to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process.

3. For the school: It is hoped that this reading instruction technique will cultivate a greater appreciation for english among students.

1.6 Scope of the Research

The scope of this research to find out that the use of KWL strategy can improve reading comprehension students through descriptive text at SMK Muhammadiyah Jember.