

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

This chapter will cover the foundational aspects of the research, beginning with the background of the study, which highlights the critical role of reading comprehension in education and the challenges students face in mastering it. It introduces metacognitive strategies as a solution to enhance reading skills, emphasizing their potential to improve students' awareness and control over their learning processes. The chapter then outlines the research problem, focusing on the effect of metacognitive strategies on expository text comprehension among vocational high school students.

Next, it presents the objectives and operational definitions to clarify key terms like metacognitive strategies and reading comprehension scores. The significance of the research is detailed across theoretical, practical, and future research dimensions, underscoring its value for teachers, students, and scholars. Finally, the scope delimits the study to eleventh-grade students at SMKS Muhammadiyah Jember, using a quasi-experimental design to compare metacognitive strategies with conventional methods.

This chapter sets the stage for the thesis by framing the research gaps, methodology, and broader implications of investigating metacognitive strategies in vocational education.

Reading ability is one of the fundamental skills that is very important in education. Reading is not just a process of decoding text, but also involves a deep understanding of the information presented (Muhid et al., 2020). In the context of education, good reading comprehension significantly affects students' academic success. However, many students experience difficulties in understanding reading texts, which can negatively impact their academic performance. Research shows that a lack of effective strategies in reading can lead to low reading comprehension achievement (Muhid et al., 2020).

One approach that can be used to enhance reading comprehension is the application of metacognitive strategies. Metacognition refers to an individual's awareness and control over their own thinking processes. In the context of reading, metacognitive strategies include various techniques that help students plan, monitor, and evaluate their understanding of the texts they read. Research shows that the use of metacognitive strategies can significantly improve students' reading comprehension achievement (Pasaribu et al., 2021). By teaching students to be more aware of their thinking processes, it is hoped that they can overcome the difficulties they face when reading.

The presence of metacognitive strategies used to enhance reading skills has a positive effect on students. Metacognition provides solutions to the difficulties encountered in learning to read. In the context of learning, students understand how to learn, recognize their learning abilities and modalities, and identify the best learning strategies for effective studying. Metacognition serves as a form of self-reflection that allows individuals to optimally control their actions (Syahdewa & Nofianna, 2024).

Previous studies which showed that metacognitive strategies improve reading comprehension, by addressing several research gaps. Firstly, while Khoiri focused on senior high school students and Tavakoli on university EFL learners, neither studied vocational high school (SMK) students, prompting this thesis to target eleventh-graders at SMKS Muhammadiyah Jember. Secondly, both previous studies lacked structured reflection tools, this thesis introduces a reflection table with guided questions to enhance students' metacognitive awareness.

Additionally, Previous studies have examined metacognitive strategies in general, but this study narrows its focus to expository texts, The structure of expository texts (thesis, argument, conclusion) is well suited to metacognitive strategies, allowing for a more in-depth analysis of how these strategies help in organizing and interpreting factual information. By filling these gaps, the thesis aims to refine the application of metacognitive strategies in vocational education and improve reading comprehension outcomes.

Based on the explanation and previous research, the application of metacognitive strategies was chosen for this study because it can have a significant positive impact on students' reading abilities.

1.2 Problem of the Research

Based on the background of the research, the following problem can be identified: Is there any significant effect of applying metacognitive strategies on students' expository reading comprehension?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The purpose of this study is to analyse the significant effect of the application of metacognitive strategies on student reading comprehension.

1.4 Operational Definitions

To avoid misconception of the study, the writer needs to give some operational definition of the terms. The following are the term used in the study:

1.4.1 Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies are methods used to enhance students' awareness of their thinking and learning processes, which include planning, monitoring, and evaluating their understanding and learning progress.

1.4.2 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension refers to students' ability to extract and interpret information from expository texts, measured through reading comprehension tests conducted before and after the application of metacognitive strategies.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The results of this study are likely to be very valuable both theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically: This research can be utilized to gain insights and in the application of material research by implementing metacognitive strategies in reading comprehension.
2. Practically:

- a) For teachers: This research provides alternative strategies for teachers in teaching reading.
- b) For students: This research will help them improve their reading comprehension by using metacognitive strategies and also teach them about these strategies.
- c) For future researchers: The researcher hopes that the findings of this study can serve as a foundation for other researchers to conduct further research on the impact of metacognitive techniques on students' reading comprehension abilities. Future studies should also consider how students can have more time in employing the metacognitive strategy in the classroom, especially for reading comprehension, to strengthen their skills.

1.6. Scope of the Research

This study is based on (Anthony et al., 2020) framework on metacognitive instruction, which demonstrates how strategic awareness interventions can significantly enhance learning outcomes in educational settings. Applying this contemporary perspective, the research investigates;

1. Research Subjects:

This research involved a sample of 32 eleventh-grade students, consisting of classes XI-A and XI-B, at SMKS Muhammadiyah Jember for the 2025/2026 academic year

2. Research Method:

This study uses an experimental design with Quasi experiment; one as the experimental group taught using metacognitive strategies and one as the control group taught with the conventional method direct feedback.

3. Research Variables:

- a) Independent Variable: The application of metacognitive strategies.
- b) Dependent Variable: Students' reading comprehension.

