CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

English is an international language that is important to learn by many people around the world. Additionally, English consists of four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four English skills are essential to be learned, especially reading, as it allows individuals to explore knowledge and information from various sources, enhancing the reader's critical thinking abilities.[1] To achieve better results in learning activities, students need to allocate dedicated time for reading. Through the activity of reading, students have the opportunity to broaden their knowledge. Reading can be taught as a method to extract information from the text and form an understanding of the material. This suggests that reading can serve as a gateway for students to access information, knowledge, and insights in the educational process.[2]

Reading in English not only brings new insights and opportunities but also opens the door to the development of broader communication skills. Through understanding English via reading,

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[1] John S & Dana R. Ferris Hedgcock, *Teaching Readers of English Students, Texts, and Contexts*, Second (New York: Routledge, 2009). p,213

[2] Grabe and others, *Teaching and Researching: Reading*, Second Edi (New York: Routledge, 2013). P.3

students can acquire profound knowledge and carry out daily tasks more efficiently.[3] Furthermore, strong reading skills provide significant advantages, especially in the academic realm. Students with good reading abilities tend to excel in comprehending study materials, grasping complex concepts, and achieving higher academic accomplishments. This reflects that reading is not just a tool for obtaining information but also a fundamental foundation for academic success.

In the activity of reading, comprehension becomes an inseparable key element. Without comprehension, the process of reading merely becomes a recognition of letters and words without truly understanding their meaning. Comprehension helps us decipher each sentence, capture the main message, and establish connections among the information present in the text. With good comprehension, we can explore the hidden world of knowledge within reading materials and absorb information more effectively.[4] Therefore, comprehension is an essential skill that needs to be developed and

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[3] Rohani Ganie, . Deliana, and Rahmadsyah Rangkuti, 'Reading Comprehension Problems on English Texts Faced By High School Students in Medan', *KnE Social Sciences*, 2019 (2019), 684–94 <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v3i19.4896>.

[4] Jane Oakhill, *Understanding and Teaching Reading Comprehension. A Handbook*, *Educational Psychology in Practice*, First Edit (New York: Routledge, 2015), XXXI <https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2015.1052233>. p.13

strengthened in the reading process. Comprehension of a written text will not progress very far if the reader cannot read the words in it.

Efforts to form reading habits must know the purpose and technique of reading. The goal is a clear direction for a reader, while the technique is the effort that must be made to achieve that goal. A good reader must be able to use reading techniques according to the purpose of reading. If someone aims to find out general information from his reading, then he will use skimming technique. If you want to find the meaning of a certain word, and so on will use scanning reading techniques so that he will appear as an effective reader.[5] Skimming and scanning reading (200 kpm), this type of reading is usually used to get to know the material to be read, look for answers or certain questions, get the structure and organization of the reading and determine the general idea of the reading.

However, in reality, students' reading skills are still low. This can be proven by the fact that students have difficulty understanding reading texts due to limited reading comprehension. Similar problems also pose challenges for the eight-grade students at MTs Al- Muawanah. The eight-grade students have limitations in mastering

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[5] Asih Riyanti, *Keterampilan Membaca*, ed. by Uki, 1st edn (Yogyakarta: K-Media, 2021) <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=ohqeEAAAQBAJ&lpg=PP1&hl=id&pg=PR2#v=one page&q&f=false>.p, 153

reading techniques, such as scanning and skimming. Additionally, their reading speed has not yet reached the expected standard. As a result, they encounter difficulties in identifying the main ideas and drawing conclusions from the texts they read. Furthermore, they also have limitations in vocabulary mastery, making it difficult for them to understand the meanings of words in the texts they read. Vocabulary is the most important thing for someone who wants to learn any language. Acquiring and fluency in that language will be impossible without good vocabulary mastery.[6] Deep vocabulary knowledge is essential for building mental models of texts' contents. This is so because when words are strung together, specific meanings are emphasized more than others.[7]

Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) is an educational institution

with the same status as Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP), equivalent to Junior High School. MTs Al-Mu'awanah is a standard academic unit under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, providing general and vocational education with an Islamic religious emphasis. In addition to studying spiritual knowledge, students in Madrasah Tsanawiyah also learn general knowledge,

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[6] Naf'an & Rachmat Tarihoran, *Reading 1_Basic Reading Skills*, 1st edn (Serang: Loquen Press, 2010).

[7] Oakhill, XXXI. p,13

including English. However, the students experience difficulties learning English, including understanding English texts or questions. Most students lack vocabulary, making finding the meaning of the words and the sentences challenging. They also faced difficulties in understanding the content of the texts.

Based on the explanation above, researchers are interested in discussing more deeply the difficulties faced by students in reading skills. This investigation seeks to find the difficulties students face in understanding English reading texts and solutions to overcome these problems. The importance of this research comes from the recognition that reading is fundamental both in everyday life and in the process of learning English. Therefore, the researcher intends to conduct research entitled "Exploring the English Reading Skills Problems Faced by Students at MTs Al-Mu'awanah."

B. Identification of Problems

Based on the explanation of the background study above, the identification of problems is below:

1. Lack of mastery of vocabulary and not understanding strategies in reading.
2. The students face difficulty in identifying the main idea of the text.

3. The students have limitations in mastering reading techniques, such as scanning and skimming.

C. Scope and Limitations of the Research

Based on problem identification, numerous issues relate to students' reading skills problems. This includes challenges in identifying the main ideas of texts, difficulties concluding texts, and struggles to infer the meanings of specific words from context. Therefore, the researcher aims to focus the Study solely on students' problems in reading skills and the strategies to overcome these problems. The scope of this research is the researcher will only use eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Mu'awanah.

D. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the problem background above, the problem can be identified as follow:

1. What are the problems faced by the students of MTs Al-Mu'awanah in reading skills?
2. What strategies are used to overcome reading skills problems faced by students of MTs Al-Mu'awanah?

E. The Objective of the Research

Based on the problem mentioned above, the objectives that want to be achieved by the researcher in this study are:

1. To determine the problems faced by the students of MTs Al-Mu'awanah in reading skills.
2. To investigate strategies to overcome reading skills problems faced by students of MTs Al-Mu'awanah.

F. Significances of the Research

1. Theoretically

    The researcher hopes that the results of this research can provide helpful information and increase knowledge about reading skills problems. This research can also be a reference for readers who want to research reading skills problems.

2. Practically

    1) For the students

        The students can gain a better understanding of reading skills. They can apply reading skills to reduce their difficulties understanding English reading texts.

    2) For the English teachers

        This research is expected to provide valuable information about appropriate methods to enhance teaching and learning, particularly in reading skills.

3) For the further research

It can be a reference for conducting further research on the same subject in various locations and topics within different contexts.

G. Organization of the Writing

1. Chapter I Introduction. This chapter the writer describes the background of the research, identification of the problem, scope and limitations of the research, formulation of the problem, objectives of the research, and significances of the research.
2. Chapter II Literature Review. This chapter contains concept of reading skills and the previous research.
3. Chapter III Research Method. This chapter consists of research method, research setting, subject of research, data collection, and data analysis.
4. Chapter IV Finding and Discussion. This chapter presents research findings and discussion.
5. Chapter V Closing. This chapter presents conclusion and suggestions