

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of the research background that explains why this research is important to be studied relating to the topics in research fields. This chapter also elaborates several theories by the experts to understand the study of this research. Finally, this research provides useful data and information regarding the topic that is researched.

### A. Research Background

Reading holds a fundamental and indispensable position in academic settings, playing a vital role in both general learning and language acquisition. Specifically, in language learning contexts, reading serves as one of the essential input skills, where learners engage with written language to comprehend and interpret various texts. The significance of reading stems from its ability to provide students with a vast array of information and opportunities to acquire new knowledge.

In the realm of language learning, students are often required to explore numerous books, articles, and other resources to expand their language proficiency. As a result, reading assumes a pivotal role as a primary means for students to access valuable information and deepen their understanding of various subjects. By honing their reading skills, students can effectively extract essential information from diverse texts, thereby enhancing their academic performance and overall language competency.

At its core, reading is regarded as an interactive cognitive process, wherein the reader actively engages with the text and the perspectives of the author. This cognitive interaction involves decoding written symbols, understanding grammatical structures, and comprehending the intended meanings conveyed through the written language. As readers immerse themselves in the text, they create a mental connection between the ideas presented by the author and their own prior knowledge, leading to the assimilation of new insights and the enrichment of their cognitive framework.

Moreover, reading extends beyond the mere extraction of information; it fosters critical thinking, analytical skills, and the development of a broader worldview. Through reading, students encounter diverse perspectives, cultures, and ideologies, enabling them to expand their horizons and develop a more comprehensive understanding of the world around them. By delving into various texts, readers are exposed to different writing styles, rhetorical devices,

and literary techniques, which not only enhance their language proficiency but also cultivate their appreciation for the art of written expression.

In summary, reading constitutes a fundamental skill in academic contexts, particularly in language learning, where it serves as a primary input skill for acquiring knowledge and information. Its interactive nature allows students to actively engage with the text and the perspectives of the author, fostering critical thinking and expanding their cognitive horizons. As students develop their reading abilities, they not only excel academically but also embark on a journey of intellectual growth and cultural enrichment. Hence, the cultivation of effective reading skills is of utmost importance, as it empowers learners to navigate the vast sea of knowledge and become proficient, well-informed individuals in both their academic and personal lives. (Zhussupova Z., Onyusheva I., Baizylidayeva U, 2016)

The present study a comprehensive exploration of the effectiveness of teaching literary circles in developing students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. The researchers sought to identify whether the implementation of literary circles would lead to significantly higher reading comprehension outcomes compared to the more traditional lecture method, with a specific focus on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in the junior high school setting.

To achieve their research objectives, the study meticulously analyzed and compared the processes involved in both teaching approaches. On one hand, the researchers observed the use of teaching literary circles, a student-centered strategy that fosters interactive discussions and collaborative learning. On the other hand, they examined the lecture method, a teacher-centered approach that typically involves the dissemination of information from the instructor to the students in a more passive learning environment.

The research was thoughtfully conducted within the context of class IX A at SMP 1 Pangandaran, providing a specific setting to investigate the impact of the Literary Circles strategy on students' discussion skills and reading comprehension. This particular class was chosen as the focus group to gauge the efficacy of the strategy and to explore the potential benefits of adopting a student-led and discussion-oriented teaching approach.

Throughout the research process, the researchers observed how the Literary Circles strategy stimulated lively and engaging discussions among the students. By organizing

themselves into small groups, the students actively participated in analyzing and interpreting narrative texts collaboratively. The dynamic nature of these literary circles created an environment that encouraged critical thinking, problem-solving, and the development of effective communication skills.

The researchers noted that the Literary Circles strategy not only improved students' reading comprehension but also fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility for their learning. As students took on different roles within the literary circles, such as discussion facilitators, summarizers, or connectors, they were actively engaged in the learning process and held accountable for contributing meaningfully to the group discussions.

On the other hand, the observation of the lecture method revealed that students' participation was relatively limited. In this more traditional setting, the teacher primarily acted as the information provider, and students often played a more passive role in the learning process. As a result, the lecture method may not have been as effective in fostering deeper reading comprehension and interactive discussions as the Literary Circles strategy.

The findings of this study carry important implications for English language educators and practitioners. By demonstrating the benefits of the Literary Circles strategy in improving discussion skills and reading comprehension, the research advocates for the integration of student-centered and collaborative approaches in language learning classrooms. The active engagement and critical thinking stimulated by the Literary Circles strategy can lead to more meaningful learning experiences for EFL learners, ultimately enhancing their language proficiency and academic achievements.

In conclusion, the presents compelling evidence of the effectiveness of teaching literary circles in developing students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. Through a thoughtful comparison with the lecture method, the research highlights the value of student-centered approaches, particularly for EFL learners in junior high school. The dynamic and interactive nature of the Literary Circles strategy fosters deeper understanding, collaborative learning, and improved discussion skills among students. As educators continue to explore innovative and effective teaching methodologies, the findings of this study provide valuable insights and encouragement for the adoption of student-centered strategies, paving the way for enriched learning experiences in language classrooms..

The identified problems in English teaching, particularly in reading comprehension for class IX students, shed light on critical challenges that need to be addressed to improve the learning experience and outcomes. Through interviews with English teachers and observation of students, the authors gained valuable insights into the difficulties students face in the reading process, which have implications for teaching methodologies and student engagement.

One of the primary challenges highlighted by the English teachers is students' struggle with identifying information and main ideas in narrative texts. This hurdle indicates a need to strengthen students' skills in extracting relevant information from the text and recognizing the central themes or messages conveyed by the author. By addressing this issue, teachers can help students develop critical reading skills that are essential for understanding complex texts and analyzing content effectively.

Another concern raised during the interviews is the feeling of boredom among students when dealing with lengthy reading passages. Extended reading sessions can be overwhelming for students, leading to decreased focus and reduced comprehension. This issue calls for incorporating more interactive and varied reading activities in the classroom to keep students engaged and interested. Utilizing techniques such as literature circles, discussions, and small-group activities can break the monotony and create a more dynamic learning environment.

The presence of foreign words in the text also emerges as a significant obstacle for students during the reading process. When encountering unfamiliar vocabulary, students may feel overwhelmed and unsure about how to proceed. Addressing this issue requires strategies to enhance students' vocabulary acquisition and help them develop effective word inference skills. Incorporating vocabulary-building exercises and encouraging students to use context clues to decipher unknown words can empower them to tackle such challenges independently.

Moreover, students' struggle with answering questions related to narrative texts reflects a need to strengthen their reading comprehension strategies. The teacher's role in guiding students through the process of understanding and analyzing narrative texts becomes crucial. By introducing effective reading comprehension techniques, such as skimming, scanning, and summarizing, teachers can equip students with the tools needed to approach questions systematically and provide well-structured responses.

The finding that the lecture method is predominantly used by teachers highlights the significance of exploring alternative teaching approaches to enhance student engagement and participation. While the lecture method has its merits, incorporating more interactive and student-centered methodologies, such as the Literary Circle Strategy discussed earlier, can foster a more inclusive learning environment. Implementing diverse teaching techniques enables students to actively engage with the material, express their thoughts, and collaborate with peers, leading to a deeper understanding of the text and improved reading comprehension.

In conclusion, the identified problems in English teaching, specifically related to reading comprehension for class IX students, present valuable insights for educational improvement. By addressing issues such as information identification, main idea recognition, student boredom, foreign word comprehension, and question-answering difficulties, educators can refine their teaching methodologies to better cater to students' needs. Emphasizing interactive and student-centered approaches, while fostering vocabulary development and critical reading skills, can significantly enhance the reading experience for students and contribute to their academic success. Through ongoing efforts to improve English teaching practices, educators can empower students with the necessary tools and skills to become proficient readers and lifelong learners in the ever-evolving global landscape.

Based on the factors that have been mentioned, it is necessary to have an effective strategy to improve students' understanding of the contents. The strategy that can be used by teachers in teaching reading comprehension especially in teaching narrative reading is through Literature Circles Strategy. Literature Circles Strategy can help students to comprehend the literary texts. Literary Circles Strategy is the reading strategy that encourages students to work in the group and play a certain role in a group and discuss the reading material they are reading.

According to (Brown, 2004), Literary Circles can play a key role in helping students improve their literacy skills and become proficient readers. Additionally, (Rogers, W., & Leochko, D., 2006) stated that the Literature Circle is a group of people who meets on a regular basis to discuss stories and book. Every student in a group will have a different role. A research conducted by (Daniels, 2002) showed that Literature Circles was effective teaching strategy that could improve students' reading comprehension skill in junior high school. This research will be conducted in Smp 1 Pangandaran.

The concept of literature circles, now widely used in educational settings, traces its roots back to a serendipitous moment in 1982 when Karen Smith, an innovative elementary school teacher from Phoenix, Arizona, stumbled upon an extraordinary pedagogical approach.

At that time, a fellow teacher handed Karen a box filled with an assortment of odd-and-end novels. Initially, Karen absentmindedly placed the box on a shelf, paying little attention to its contents.

Little did she know that this seemingly ordinary box of novels would later transform her classroom and pave the way for a groundbreaking teaching method. As fate would have it, a group of her fifth-grade students expressed curiosity about the novels, sparking a spontaneous interest in reading. These young minds organized themselves into loose groups and began delving into the books with enthusiasm and fervor.

To Karen's amazement, she observed her students engaging deeply with the texts, passionately discussing plotlines, analyzing characters, and exploring the intricate nuances of the stories. The level of their involvement and the complexity of their discussions astounded her, especially because they had embarked on this journey independently, with no external guidance or formal instruction from their teacher.

This unforeseen turn of events led Karen Smith to recognize the immense potential of this organic and student-led approach to reading and literary analysis. Inspired by her students' enthusiasm and empowered by their natural inclination to collaborate and share ideas, Karen decided to further develop this method into what we now know as literature circles.

Literature circles, also known as book clubs or reading groups, are small, student-centered discussion groups where learners engage in thoughtful conversations about literature. In these circles, participants take on various roles, such as discussion facilitators, summarizers, connectors, and questioners, among others. Each role fosters different skills and encourages students to assume active and responsible roles in their learning process.

Since Karen Smith's fortuitous discovery, literature circles have gained widespread recognition and implementation in educational settings worldwide. The approach has proven to be highly effective in promoting reading comprehension, critical thinking, and communication skills among students of all ages. By providing a platform for collaborative learning and the exchange of diverse perspectives, literature circles not only enhance students' understanding of literary works but also nurture a sense of community and mutual respect within the classroom.

In conclusion, Karen Smith's inadvertent encounter with a box of novels in 1982 led to the birth of literature circles—an innovative teaching method that empowers students to explore the world of literature collaboratively and independently. From humble beginnings, literature circles have evolved into a dynamic and effective approach to foster a love for reading, critical thinking, and thoughtful discourse among students. Through this student-led pedagogical approach, young learners have discovered the joy of engaging with books, and educators have unlocked new dimensions in teaching and learning, leaving a lasting impact on education for generations to come (Daniels H. , 1994).

In addition, using teaching literary circles very effectiveness to improve students' understanding of the narrative text. This strategy can be used by teachers in teaching reading comprehension especially in teaching reading about in the narrative text. Literary Circle Strategy can help students to comprehend the literary texts. Literary Circle Strategy is the reading strategy that encourages students to work in a group and play a certain role in a group and discuss the reading material they are reading. Literacy circle give students the opportunity to shed the shackles of grading schemes, bell-curves and the like, and learn to enjoy reading on a level that researcher personally never experienced until researcher started reading for pleasure. Based on the observation of SMP Negeri 1 Pangandaran, the researcher found out that reading comprehension of students is still low. According their teacher, it is happen because the student has poor motivation in learning English. Although, the teacher has technique of learning process in the classroom.

The previous study related to this research has been done by

The first , (Rifandi, 2014)The Effect Of Using Literature Circle Strategy On Reading Comprehension In Analytical Exposition Text Of The Student's. The DettyVarita say "Improving Discussion Skills Using Literature Circles".The objectives of the research help students develop comprehension skills that are essential when reading a text.

This research is different from the previous research. This research focuses on using literary circle indeveloping student's reading narrative text. Meanwhile, the previous research focuses analytical exposition text. The researcher hope by using literary circle indeveloping student's reading narrative text. The research knows Reading comprehension ability before using literary circles strategy in Narrative Text. Reading comprehension ability after using

literary circles strategy in Narrative Text and the significance level between before and after using literary circles strategy to students' reading comprehension ability in Narrative Text

Finally, based on the background above, the writer would like to carry out a researcher the title "The Use of Literacy Circle to Improve Reading Comprehension at the Second Grade of SMPNegeri 1 Pinrang".

**B. Research Questions**

Based on the explanation, the problems are formulated into the following research questions:

1. What is the students' reading comprehension ability before using literary circles strategy in Narrative Text?
2. What is the students' reading comprehension ability after using literary circles strategy in Narrative Text?
3. What is the significance level between before and after using literary circles strategy to students' reading comprehension ability in Narrative Text?

**C. Research Purpose**

The research purposes are as follows:

1. To find the students' reading comprehension ability before using literary circles strategy in Narrative Text.
2. To find the students' reading comprehension ability after using literary circles strategy in Narrative Text.
3. To find out the significance level between before and after using literary circles strategy to students' reading comprehension ability in Narrative Text

**D. The Significances of the Study**

The research on the significant effects of the Literary Circle Strategy for developing students' reading comprehension abilities in narrative texts holds various practical and theoretical significances that can greatly contribute to EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learning activities.

Practically, this research offers valuable insights and guidance for students seeking to improve their reading comprehension skills through effective discussions. By implementing the Literary Circle Strategy, students are provided with a structured framework to engage in collaborative discussions, analyze problems, and critically interpret narrative texts. This



approach not only enhances their understanding of the content but also develops their abilities to think critically and express their thoughts coherently. Consequently, students are equipped with essential skills that can benefit their overall language learning journey.

Furthermore, this research provides significant theoretical contributions by expanding the knowledge base regarding effective teaching strategies in EFL contexts. Educators and teachers can utilize the findings of this research as a foundation for implementing the Literary Circle Strategy in their own classrooms. The strategy serves as a valuable addition to the existing repertoire of teaching methods, providing a new and engaging approach to enhance reading comprehension skills among students. By incorporating the Literary Circle Strategy, teachers can create dynamic and interactive learning environments that foster critical thinking, meaningful discussions, and deeper understanding of narrative texts.

Moreover, this research can serve as a guide for EFL teaching and learning activities. Educators can utilize the research findings to design curriculum and instructional materials that integrate the Literary Circle Strategy effectively. The insights gained from this research can help teachers structure their lessons, select appropriate texts, and facilitate discussions that promote active student participation and comprehension development. As a result, teachers can create a more engaging and effective learning experience for their students.

Additionally, this research has the potential to inspire and encourage further studies in the field of EFL education. Other researchers can build upon this research by conducting similar investigations in different educational contexts or by exploring variations and adaptations of the Literary Circle Strategy. The findings of this study can serve as a foundation for future research, facilitating the continuous improvement and advancement of English language teaching methodologies.

In conclusion, this research provides practical benefits by assisting students in improving their reading comprehension skills through effective discussions and problem analysis. Furthermore, it contributes to the theoretical understanding of teaching strategies, serving as a guide for EFL educators and inspiring further research in the field. By embracing the findings of this research, teachers can create more engaging and effective English language

learning environments, ultimately enhancing students' reading comprehension abilities and fostering a deeper appreciation for narrative texts.



## E. Rationale

According to (Daniels, 2002), If students other than the group members are asked to participate as the audience in the reading activity, the order of seating is arranged as a semi-circle.

As is the case in all walks of life, in education the diversification and change of the tools, methods, and techniques used are inevitable as well. New methods should be searched and tried to improve reading comprehension, which students need most to cope with school courses and increase their reading desire and interest in reading. “In basic education, even small reading groups, which are not based on competition and which do not have the aim of having students grasp what they have read, develop comprehension skills that students need for many years to cope with school courses” (Guthrie, J. T. et al, 2004)

A literary circle is an activity in which members meet to discuss and respond to a book that they are all reading (Daniels, 2002). According to (Cameron, S., M. Murray, 2012), literature circles are mostly by students, while the teacher remains to observe perform the student's and become to basic control function. Roles are usually assigned to members of the literary circle to make it possible for the group to function productively and to help members remain focused on the chosen book. And also according to (Rogers, W.,& Leochko, D., 2006), Literary Circle is a group of people who meets on a regular basis to discuss stories and books. Literary Circle is a forum for the students to articulate their thoughts, opinions, and questions about common material they have read. Literary Circle is a strategy to guide students to a deeper understanding of what they read through structured discussion of the text or book and allow students to practice and develop the skills and strategies of good readers.

## F. Hypothesis

The Research assumes that there is different significance between the results of the teaching reading before using literary circles strategy and after using literary circles strategy. The research has two variables; literary circles strategy as “X” and reading comprehension as “Y”.

Null Hypothesis: There is no different significant on students’ reading comprehension before and after using the literary circle’s strategy. ( $H_0$ )

Alternative Hypothesis: There is different significant on students’ reading comprehension before and after using literary circle’s strategy. ( $H_a$ )

In accordance with the basic assumption, the writer will be formulated hypothesis as follows;

$H_a$ : There is a significant improvement in students’ reading comprehension before using literary circles strategy.

$H_0$ : There is no significant improvement in students’ reading comprehension after using literary circles strategy.

## G. Previous Research

There are a number of studies that discuss the this research;

Before conducting the research, four, previous studies about Literary Circles meaning strategy in reading comprehension have been conducted.

First In 2014, a research entitled "Improving Reading Comprehension through Literary Circles" by (McElvain, 2010), discussed literary circle in general reading and the participants of this research was done by individual written test that had the result of improving the reading comprehension ability of third grade (year 12) Islamic high school students from MAN Cot Gue, Aceh Besar. The objectives of the research were to find out the extent to which literary circle technique can improve the students’ reading comprehension and also find out the students’ attitudes toward the use of literary circle technique in reading narrative text. The sampling technique to take sample was the purposive technique where the sample consisted of 10th grade of a senior high school student. The research used pre-experimental design with one group pretest and posttest design. Furthermore, using literary circle technique was effective in improving students’ reading comprehension. In addition, the students have low ability in

reading comprehension before treatment and they reach a significant improvement when they have already given treatment using Literary circle technique.

Afterward, according to (Varita, 2017) say "Improving Discussion Skills Using Literature Circles". The objectives of the research help students develop comprehension skills that are essential when reading a text.

The participant was submitted to cluster sampling technique which consisted of 10th grade of senior high school. In addition, this research used Quasi-Experimental design as the research method. This design consists of Pre-test, treatment, and Post-test. Treatment of this research was eight meetings. The research finding indicated that the use of the literary circle technique improved the students' ability in Reading Comprehension for senior high school students. Moreover, the research finding indicated that the use of the Literary Circle Technique improved the students' ability in Reading Comprehension for senior high school students. (Sari, 2013) had research which was titled "Increased Discussion Skills Using The Literary Circle Strategy In Class VII E Students Of State 15TH SMP YOGYAKARTA"

The research investigated strategy to ease students in answering the related questions in reading text. One group received the texts with techniques Question Answer Relationship (QAR). Afterward, the participants were tested on their knowledge of twelve technical words that appeared in the texts. The responses were examined in terms of the completeness of word meaning and the presence of errors. The results showed that the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) technique more good compared to the instructed students, the instructed participants provided word meanings that were less complete and less precise. Word meanings from both groups contained errors involving the omission of correct meaning components and inclusion of incorrect meaning components. The differences between the two groups are discussed with respect to vocabulary acquisition and subject learning.

Moreover, RahmadRifandi, (2014) "The Effect Of Using Literature Circle Strategy On Reading Comprehension In Analytical Exposition Text Of The Student's "

The participants were the first-semester university students who were taken by non-random sampling technique. Pre-experimental design with pre-test and post-test design group was implemented by this research. The treatment used Brown's theory which applied to infer the word meaning. Furthermore, the finding was students began to improve their reading skill after giving the material and applying the technique. There were only a few students who wrong in reading some words in a reading text. Four types of researches have analyzed Literary Circle

strategy, and the result of research can improve students' reading comprehension. Based on the researchers, there are some similarities that they analyzed. The researches above use non-random sampling to take a sample. The researches discussed word meaning to improve students' vocabulary and understanding a text through word meaning. In contrast, the researcher of this research focuses on the Literary Circle strategy to improve students' reading comprehension with its detail. By Literary Circle strategy, students are ordered to consider the topic, main idea and some information in a text. It is a deep strategy to face of students' daily life. Literary circle technique meaning analyzes the unknown word meaning by its context and knowing a paragraph meaning, so the students can search topic, main idea, and details in the Narrative text. The contribution of this study to the field of research is to find out the extent to which literary circle techniques can improve students' reading comprehension and also know students' attitudes towards the use of literary circle techniques in reading narrative texts.

