

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents some general components of the research, including its background, purposes, significance, research questions, conceptual framework, research hypothesis, and related previous studies.

A. Background of the Research

Reading as one of the four language skills plays an important role. It is central to both academic as well as social life (Manarin et al., 2015). In an academic setting, reading is a fundamental skill that allows individuals to gain knowledge, understand complex ideas, and develop critical thinking skills. It is also essential for effective communication, as it enables individuals to understand and respond to written information. In a social context, reading skills are equally important. They help individuals understand their culture, society, and the world around them. Reading also allows people to connect with others through shared experiences and ideas, fostering empathy and understanding.

Reading activates cognitive language processes triggered by visual information found in written symbols (Verhoeven & Perfetti, 2021). Scholars formulate theories to explain the intricate interplay between word recognition and comprehension in the reading process. Gough & Tunmer (1986) posits that reading comprehension is the product of two main components there are word recognition and language comprehension. Therefore, proficient reading occurs when an individual can accurately recognize words and understand the language used in a text. Nunan (2003) proposes that readers must integrate a wealth of information from the reading text with prior knowledge that they are already familiar with to create meaning. In this case, it means understanding is the goal of reading. Grabe & Stoller (2013) stated that reading comprehension is the ability to read text, process it, and understand meaning. Thus, the students must have the skills in reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension has different levels. Burns et al., (1984) claim that critical reading is one level of reading comprehension. Therefore, critical reading

skills play an important role in developing a deep and critical comprehension of the text read. Kadir et al., (2014) define critical reading skills enable students to evaluate, synthesize, and analyze what they read. Students who receive critical reading instruction from their teachers will be able to analyze texts critically and recognize cause-and-effect or comparisons connected in the text. Therefore, by employing critical reading skills, students will be able to comprehend the text that is read. Furthermore, Sutherland & Incera (2021), argue that critical reading is an essential skill for students in recent, students must have more competitive, competent, and critical skills. Reading and thinking are excellent ways to gain knowledge. It refers to students in recently must have critical reading skills.

Reading comprehension and critical reading skills differ significantly. Reading comprehension focuses on understanding the literal meaning of text, identifying main ideas, supporting details, and involves processing basic information to understand straightforward content (Grabe & Stoller, 2013; Nunan, 2003). In contrast, critical reading requires deeper engagement through analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information (Roomy, 2022; Scanlon & Anderson, 2010). Critical reading is a higher-order thinking skill, very important for understanding complex texts, making it more challenging but rewarding (Sutherland & Incera, 2021).

Critical reading skills are often difficult for students because they cover comprehensive, active, reflective, and analytic skills (Roomy, 2022). Thus, critical reading is more than just looking at words and pronouncing sounds; it also entails critical thinking about what is written. Critical reading is also a fundamental thinking skill that entails discovering, dissecting, and evaluating the author's meaning using a standard set, as well as incorporating the meaning into previously known ideas (Scanlon & Anderson, 2010). It means critical reading is complicated to comprehend. It makes reading difficult for students and takes a long time.

The same phenomenon happens to students of junior high school in Indonesia. They are still confused in determining the main idea of the text, making references and summaries, and finding synonyms and vocabulary when reading. It is also supported by Jayanti (2016) in her research admits that a lot of Indonesian

secondary school students still have difficulty gaining information in an English reading text. One of the other obstacles is that students feel bored when reading and do not achieve any reading results. Kruk (2021) also shows in his research findings, that students choose not to read and feel bored when reading English texts, many students are sleepy and do not pay attention when the teacher explains the material, especially when asked to read and think independently. Therefore, students have not achieved their critical reading skills which causes a lack of interest in reading

To help students acquire critical reading skills in understanding a text, there are several learning strategies in teaching that can be used by a teacher. One of them is the Think-Pair-Share strategy. According to Dwigustini & Widiya (2020), the Think-Pair-Share strategy is part of discussion-type cooperative learning. It means think-pair-share encourages active participation and collaboration among students, as well as fostering a dynamic exchange of ideas and improving their critical thinking skills through structured peer interaction. Mundelsee & Jurkowski (2021), also added that the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy not only helps students achieve academic success, but also helps them improve their critical reading skills by preventing peer acceptance, support, self-esteem, and interest. Thus, a cooperative approach in reading and thinking is that understanding what is understood and not understood in a given text is the first step towards effective reading comprehension.

The present study strives to apply TPS to foster critical reading skills among students of Junior High school in Indonesia. The same research has been conducted in Indonesia and other countries. The first research was conducted by Mahfouz (2019) the purpose of the research was to find out how well secondary school students' EFL critical reading skills were developing when using the SCAMPER strategy. The research from Hussaini & Mohammed (2023) investigates the impact of teaching reading comprehension to senior secondary school pupils in Gombe state, Nigeria, using the think-pair-share (TPS) strategy. The last research is from Utami et al., (2020) the purpose of the research was to The goal of this study is to describe students' critical reading skills using

multimodal text and to explain how critical reading affects upper-class students using multimodal text. The present study is different from the previous studies; it focuses on encouraging students' critical reading skills of descriptive texts at the junior high school level using the think-pair-share strategy.

B. Research Questions

The following research questions are developed based on the above research problems:

1. What are the EFL students' critical reading skills before using the Think-Pair-Share strategy?
2. What are the EFL students' critical reading skills after using the Think-Pair-Share strategy?
3. Is there any significant difference in their critical reading skills before and after using the Think-Pair-Share strategy?

C. Research Purposes

Based on the research questions above, the following purposes are expected to be obtained by this research:

1. To figure out EFL students' critical reading skills before using the Think-Pair-Share strategy.
2. To figure out EFL students' critical reading skills after using the Think-Pair-Share strategy.
3. To identify any possible difference in their critical reading skills before and after using the Think-Pair-Share strategy.

D. Research Significances

The research should provide useful practical and theoretical information. Practically, the research has significance for ELT researchers and EFL teachers.

1. For ELT researchers, the findings of this research can enhance their knowledge-related experience in education and research on English language teaching, especially concerning the use of the think-pair-share strategy.
2. For EFL teachers, the application of this research allows teachers to improve English teaching-learning strategies.

Theoretically, this research is expected to make an important contribution to the world of education, particularly in the improvement of critical reading skills using the think-pair-share strategy, and to support or verify previous research.

E. Research Scope

The goal of this research is to determine how effective the think-pair-share strategy is in influencing junior high school students' critical reading skills in descriptive texts. The subjects of this research were eighth-grade students because the think-pair-share strategy is good for honing students' knowledge into an understanding. The research site was carried out at one of the junior high schools in Bandung.

F. Conceptual Framework

Fostering students' reading skills is an important aspect of education. Studies show that good reading comprehension is related to students' ability to effectively access, analyze, and comprehend texts. Wolley (2011) states that reading skill involves deriving meaning from text, aiming for a comprehensive understanding of the content instead of extracting meaning from individual words or sentences. Therefore, because of the activities in reading is to analyze a meaning to obtain the message, so the reader must have a critical reading skill. Hanum et al., (2020) mentioned that reading the text using critical reading skill can be applied in everyday life. Critical reading skill not only help the students to know how to read

the text, but it will help them to be more successful in understanding the text because they will absorb information there. Furthermore, students use their thinking to process the text or the information it sends. Critical reading skill is also a way to practice their critical thinking.

Based on the above explanation, students' critical reading skills need to be improved because by reading critically, they will find the deep truth about what is mentioned in a reading text. Roomy (2022) explained that critical reading requires students to think more deeply and actively to understand a text, by reading deeply and between the lines rather than just reading the lines. In the study of Edman (2008), he emphasized that although educators see the need for teaching critical reading skills and see it as an important educational goal, they still do not precisely define what critical reading is. However, they stated that students should think and read critically whenever they are in school to exercise their minds. During reading activity, the readers must evaluate the writers' point of view on the text. Kurland (2000) proposes that to effectively understand the information from the texts, it is carried out by examining the implied primary idea, defining the purposes, separating the facts and opinions, identifying the writers' tone, drawing conclusions, and drawing inferences. Students need to develop critical reading skills because this skill influence the critical thinking that are necessary in recently and help them to become critical citizens (Par, 2018). With these statements, it can be concluded that critical readers must rely on the knowledge of active reading and deepening the text. That is, active and deep reading is a requirement for someone to be a critical reader.

One of the critical reading strategies are trying is Think-Pair-Share strategy. Think-pair-share is a collaborative learning strategy proposed by Frank Lyman of the University of Maryland in 1981. It was identified that the TPS strategy uses three stages in teaching and learning. Arends (2009) mentioned Think-Pair-Share teaches students how to identify it in the classroom in three easy stages. Students first think a question that the teacher poses to them in personal. Second, the students converse with one another, and finally, the students in pairs can share their responses with the other pairs as well as the full group. Because Think-Pair-

Share strategy provides numerous benefits for students, it is more beneficial for us to help the students develop their critical reading skills.

Therefore, it is clear that integrating cooperative learning strategies into reading instruction can improve students' comprehension skills. By combining the analytical approach of critical reading with the collaborative nature of TPS, students not only engage deeply with the text but also learn to articulate their thoughts and perspectives effectively through discussions with their peers. Thus, incorporating strategies such as TPS into reading instruction is a holistic approach to promoting students' critical reading skills.

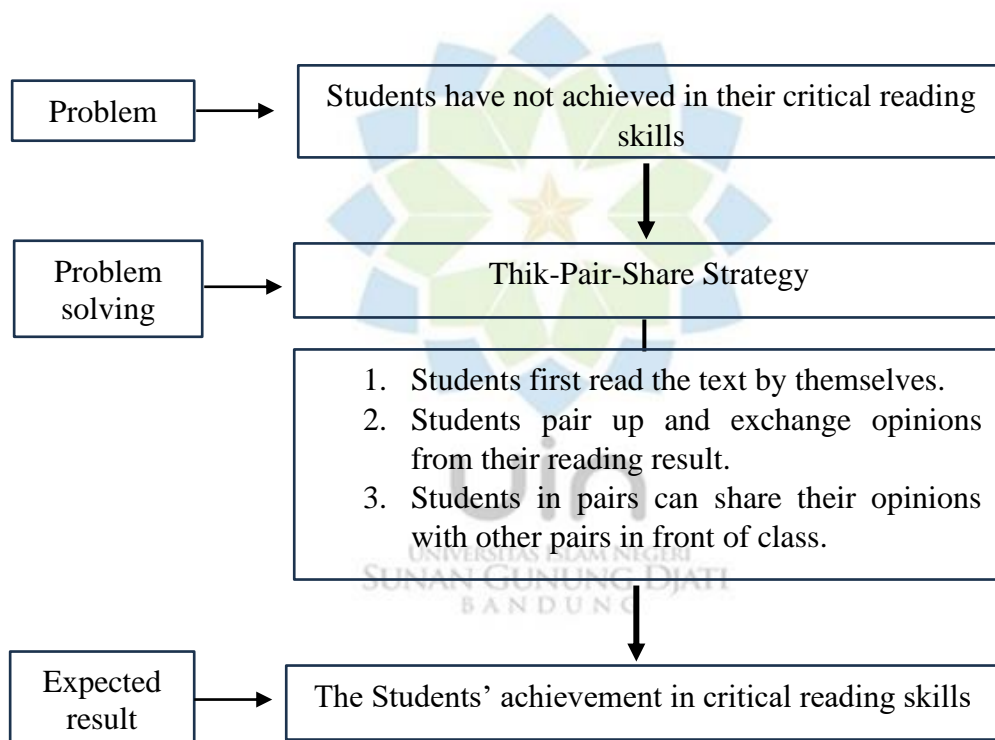


Figure 1. 1 Theoretical Framework

G. Hypothesis

In quantitative research, a hypothesis is an assumption made by a researcher that predicts the result of an investigation into the relationship between variables (Creswell, 2012). There are two types of variables: independent (X) and dependent (Y). The independent variable (X) is the use Think-Pair-Share Strategy.

The dependent variable (Y) is critical reading skills. There are two types of hypotheses in this research:

1. Null hypothesis: There are no significant differences in students' critical reading skills if the think-pair-share strategy (H₀) is rejected.
2. Alternative hypothesis: There are significant differences in students' critical reading skills if the think-pair-share strategy (H_a) is accepted.

H. Previous Studies

The researcher found several studies that similar to the topic of this research paper. The first study was conducted by Mahfouz (2019), The purpose of the study was to find out how well the SCAMPER technique works to help secondary school students improve their EFL critical reading skills. The quasi-experimental study's population consisted of first-year secondary school students, and it used a pretest and posttest one-group design. The researcher's cluster random selection includes 22 students from Al-Azhar Secondary Institute in Sedfa, Assuit Governorate, Mesir. The study group's mean scores on the post-critical reading test outperformed those on the post-test. As a result, the SCAMPER method proved beneficial in helping EFL secondary school students improve their critical reading skills. However, teaching English critical reading should be a core component of the EFL secondary school curriculum.

The second study was conducted by Ruslen et al., (2021), purpose of this study better understand how the Think-Pair-Share Strategy may affect eighth-grade junior high school students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts, this study investigated possible effects. Participants were 64 students at SMP Negeri 9 Jember, Indonesia. Using a quasi-experimental research design, only one component was used: a posttest. The control group received question-and-answer sessions, while the experimental group received instruction in the TPS strategy. According to the posttest results, the experimental group outperformed the control group with a mean score of $84.25 > 74.25$.

The third study was carried out by Hussaini & Mohammed (2023), the purpose of the study was to find out if the Think-Pair-Share approach aids in

students' improvement of reading comprehension. The quasi-experimental study, which used a pretest and posttest control group design, included second-year senior secondary school students as its population. The researcher employed cluster random sampling, with a sample size of 91 students at senior secondary school in Gombe, Nigeria. The data analysis showed that the students' posttest (84.44) average score was higher than their pretest (63.11).

The last study was researched by Utami et al., (2020), the purpose of this study was to define students' critical reading abilities using multimodal material and to explain how critical reading affects upper-class students using multimodal text. The study sites were SD Muhammadiyah 10 Tipes and SDN Serengan 1 in Surakarta, Jawa Tengah. With a focus on qualitative research, data were collected utilizing four different methods: passive direct observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. This ensured that the triangulation concept was used. Upper-class students' critical reading skills using multimodal texts performed well, with percentage scores of 24.73% and 55.78%, respectively.

Based on the previous studies above, it can be seen that this study fills the gap by focusing on the use of the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy in improving EFL students' critical reading skills at the junior high school level. Previous studies did not examine the use of TPS specifically in the context of critical reading skills. This suggests that this study offers a new contribution to the development of an effective method to improve EFL students' critical reading skills at the junior high school level through a more structured approach using the TPS strategy. Thus, this study offers a new contribution to the literature by introducing this innovative approach to improving critical reading skills of descriptive text at the junior high school level.