

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

A vital component of human existence is language. Through language, individuals can express ideas and emotions, and build social and cultural relationships. In an educational context, language plays a crucial role in the learning process and the development of scientific knowledge. English, in particular, has become one of the most important languages to learn, especially in the era of globalization. As Crystal (2003) in her book, *English as a Global Language*, mastery of English enables individuals not only to communicate across countries but also to build a global identity.

When learning a foreign language, especially English, The four primary abilities that pupils must acquire are speaking, listening, reading, and writing. These four interconnected abilities are essential for developing successful communication. Among them, reading is a crucial skill that supports vocabulary development, comprehension, and critical thinking skills. Reading comprehension is not just limited to recognizing words, but also includes the ability to understand meaning, identify main ideas, evaluate text structure, and interpret implied information.

At the high school level, particularly in 10th grade, Students encounter a variety of texts as outlined in the Independent Curriculum and the deep learning curriculum, such as narrative, descriptive, procedural, expository, recount, and report texts. These texts are used to enhance students' ability to acquire knowledge through reading. Among these text types, narrative texts are among the most challenging because they require students to understand the plot, characters, conflicts, and moral values conveyed. Narrative texts also contain implicit meanings that require in-depth comprehension, not just literal comprehension.

Numerous studies have revealed that many pupils still struggle to comprehend narrative texts. Sundari et al., (2023), found that a large number of students had problems identifying main ideas and drawing conclusions. Similarly, Khoirunnisa et al., (2019), reported that students struggled to understand plot development and moral values in narrative texts. These results show that in order to fully understand narrative texts, pupils require more efficient reading techniques.

Students are expected to comprehend narrative texts effectively. However, previous studies have shown that many students still experience difficulties in identifying main ideas, making inferences, understanding plot development, and drawing conclusions from narrative texts. Similar problems were also found on 10th students at SMAN 2 Tanjung pinang based on preliminary observations and interviews with English teachers. Students often lose focus during reading activities and have difficulty understanding the overall meaning of a text. However, in the reading skills of class X.5 at SMAN 2 Tanjung pinang, this was quite good, but in reading comprehension in a text it might be a bit difficult to understand because the students' attention was easily distracted therefore, an appropriate reading strategy is needed to help students engage more deeply with narrative texts. One strategy that may address this problem is the Close Reading technique, which encourages students to read texts carefully and repeatedly to construct meaning from textual evidence.

To address these challenges, an appropriate reading strategy is needed. One technique that can be used is Close Reading technique. Close Reading is a reading approach that requires students to read a text carefully and repeatedly in order to understand both explicit and implicit meanings. According to Fisher et al., (2014), Close Reading encourages students to focus on important details, vocabulary, sentence structure, and the relationships between ideas in a text. Through this process, students are guided to analyze the text and use textual evidence to support their understanding.

In English learning, Close Reading has been proven to be effective in improving students' reading comprehension. Chen (2018) stated that Close Reading helps students develop a better understanding of vocabulary, sentence meaning, and overall text content. In addition, Fauzia et al.,(2023), found that Close Reading is effective in helping students understand narrative elements such as plot, characters, and themes. These studies suggest that Close Reading is an appropriate technique for teaching narrative texts.

The Close Reading technique is expected to help students identify main ideas, understand vocabulary in context, recognize references, make inferences, and find specific information in narrative texts. These skills may contribute to better reading comprehension. Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine whether students' reading comprehension of narrative texts was significantly impacted by the Close Reading approach. It was anticipated that the results of this study will help improve English reading education, especially for 10th grade pupils in Indonesian senior high schools.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the research background above, the problems identified in this research are as follows:

1. Many students have difficulty in understanding narrative texts in depth, especially in understanding plots, characters, and implicit messages.
2. The reading instruction strategies used by teachers tend to be monotonous and do not actively involve students in the learning process.
3. Students show low interest and participation in reading activities due to the absence of an approach that stimulates their critical and analytical thinking skills.
4. There is a need to implement effective reading strategies, such as the close reading technique, which has been proven to have positive effects in several previous studies.

1.3 Limitation of Problem

This study confines its scope to examining whether the Close Reading Technique influences the reading comprehension of narrative texts

among students in Class X.5 at SMAN 2 Tanjungpinang during the 2026 academic year

1.4 Research Question

Based on the research background outlined above, the research question for this study is formulated as follows:

Does the Close Reading Technique have a significant effect on the reading comprehension of narrative texts among 10th grade students?

1.5 Research Objective

The objective of this study is formulated as follows:

To examine whether the Close Reading Technique has a significant effect on the reading comprehension of narrative texts among tenth-grade students of Class X.5 at SMAN 2 Tanjungpinang.

1.6 The Significances of the Research

The findings of this study are expected to offer meaningful contributions and benefits to the process of English language learning. These anticipated contributions include:

1) Theoretical significance:

The findings of this study are anticipated to enrich existing theoretical frameworks in English language teaching, particularly within the area of reading comprehension. This study offers empirical evidence regarding the application of the Close Reading Technique in enhancing students' comprehension of narrative texts.

2) Practical Significance

1. For Teachers:

This research is expected to offer English teachers with practical guidance on how to apply the Close Reading Technique to enhance students' comprehension of narrative texts and cultivate their critical reading abilities.

2. For Students:

The findings of this study are expected to support students in improving their comprehension of narrative texts through the

application of the Close Reading Technique, helping them grasp both explicit and implicit meanings within the text.

3. For Future Researchers:

This research is expected to serve as a reference point for future studies investigating similar topics or for those who wish to explore the effects of Close Reading Techniques on other text genres or language skills.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. Close Reading

Close reading technique is a focused and careful way of reading to understand the text in depth. Readers pay attention to word choice, sentence structure, language style, theme, as well as small details in the text. The goal is to find more meaning, not just to understand the content on the surface.

2. Reading Comprehension

Reading Comprehension is students' ability to understand and interpret the texts they read. This ability includes identifying the main idea, recognizing important details, understanding relationships between paragraphs, and drawing conclusions from information that is not stated explicitly. Through this skill, students can connect the content of the text with their prior knowledge and grasp the message the author intends to convey.

3. Narrative Text

Narrative text refers to a type of text that presents legends or folktales from the Riau Islands, depicting a sequence of events involving characters, settings, conflicts, and resolutions, with the purpose of entertaining readers and conveying moral values, and in the learning context at SMAN 2 Tanjung pinang, it is used to help students understand story structure and local cultural values.