

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Reading was one of the fundamental skill in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Through reading, students gained access to information, broadened their global perspectives, and developed critical thinking skills (Puspitasari, 2020). In the current digital era, reading comprehension was not only an academic requirement but also an essential competency for adapting to a knowledge-based society (OECD, 2022). Thus, mastery of reading comprehension contributed significantly to students' success in both academic achievement and daily life communication.

However, reading comprehension remained a major challenge for many EFL learners. Studies revealed that effective and interactive learning strategies could enhance students' reading performance. Among these, the Mind Mapping Technique was proven to help learners organize complex information visually and improve memory retention (Rachnok Lahab et al., 2022; Xu, 2023). By visualizing ideas in interconnected patterns, students were able to better understand the relationships between concepts, which supported higher levels of comprehension.

Preliminary observation at SMPN 7 Tanjungpinang revealed that many students still struggled to comprehend report texts. They often faced difficulties in identifying main ideas, supporting details, and text structures. This aligned with the findings of Ramadhan et al. (2023), who reported that junior high school EFL

learners commonly experienced problems in understanding implicit meanings and textual relationships in expository or report texts. Consequently, students tended to focus on word-by-word translation without grasping the overall meaning, which turned reading into a mechanical rather than meaningful activity.

One contributing factor to this problem was the lack of authentic and contextual learning materials. Sekar (2024) noted that many English reading materials were generic or imaginative, offering little relevance to students' real lives. For instance, texts about exotic animals such as "Komodo Dragons" or "Proboscis Monkeys," while informative, might have felt distant for students living in coastal regions like Tanjungpinang. As a maritime city, Tanjungpinang provided abundant authentic contexts such as marine ecosystems, fishing, and tourism that could be integrated into reading materials to enhance motivation and relevance. Contextualized maritime content not only reflected students' local environment but also supported meaningful learning experiences (Sekar, 2024).

Several previous studies confirmed the positive impact of mind mapping on students' reading comprehension (Rachnok Lahab et al., 2022; Xu, 2023). Nevertheless, most of them focused on general or narrative texts rather than report texts embedded in maritime contexts. For instance, Bandara and Prahalathan (2023) studied advanced-level students, while Ramadhan et al. (2023) focused on high school students using non-contextual materials. This revealed a research gap concerning the application of mind mapping techniques to contextualized report texts for junior high school students in coastal regions.

Addressing this gap, the present study investigated the effect of using the mind mapping technique on students' reading comprehension of maritime-context report texts at SMPN 7 Tanjungpinang. The integration of mind mapping with local maritime materials was expected to help students visualize the structure of report texts such as general classification and description while strengthening their connection to local content. Therefore, this research aimed to contribute to the development of contextual and effective reading instruction strategies for EFL learners in island-based environments.

1.2 Identification of Problems

Based on the background above, several problems could be identified:

1. Students showed low performance in identifying the structure and components of report texts.
2. Students' reading comprehension outcomes remained below expectations.
3. The reading materials used lacked authenticity and contextual relevance.
4. Current teaching strategies did not meet students' learning needs and interests.

1.3 Limitation of Problem

This study was limited to investigating the effect of using the Mind Mapping Technique on students' reading comprehension of maritime-context report texts.

The research focused on ninth-grade students of SMPN 7 Tanjungpinang during the 2025/2026 academic year.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the identification and limitation of the problem, the research question was formulated as follows: “Was there a significant effect of using the Mind Mapping Technique on students’ reading comprehension of maritime-context report texts at SMPN 7 Tanjungpinang?”

1.5 Objective of Study

This study aimed to determine whether there was a significant effect of using the Mind Mapping Technique on students’ reading comprehension of maritime-context report texts at SMPN 7 Tanjungpinang.

1.6 Significances of Study

1. Theoretically

Theoretically, this study contributed to the field of English language learning by combining visual-based learning (mind mapping) with context-based instruction (maritime themes). The findings are expected to enrich existing theories of EFL reading comprehension.

2. Practically

a. For Teachers

The study provided insights into the use of mind mapping as an alternative strategy to enhance reading comprehension and encouraged the integration of local maritime contexts in teaching materials.

b. For Students

It helped students develop visual learning habits, improve reading comprehension, and build stronger connections between English texts and their daily environment.

c. For Other Researchers

The study may serve as a reference for similar research on mind mapping, contextual learning, or EFL reading comprehension across different settings or skill areas.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. **Reading**

★ Reading was defined as a cognitive process involving decoding written symbols to construct meaning, requiring both linguistic and interpretive skills (Ardakani, 2022).

2. **Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension was defined as the ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate written texts by identifying main ideas, details, and textual relationships (Grabe & Stoller, 2020).

3. **Mind Mapping**

Mind mapping was defined as a visual learning technique that used colors, keywords, and diagrams to represent relationships between ideas, improving understanding and memory retention (Buzan, 2018).

4. Report Text

Report text was defined as a factual genre of writing that presented classified and descriptive information about natural or social phenomena objectively (Sukmawati, 2020).

5. Maritime Context

Maritime context was defined as learning content related to marine environments, coastal life, and maritime culture, providing authentic experiences for students in island or coastal regions (Assiddiq, 2019).

