

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a brief explanation of some theories that support the study. The theories are related to reading comprehension and the issue in the reading comprehension test of English proficiency tests (e.g. TOEFL).

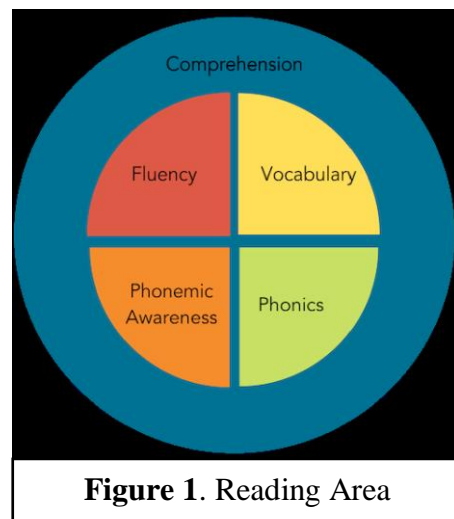
#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

##### 2.1.1 Reading Comprehension

A broad definition of reading has been presented in numerous forms of literature. Reading is the act of exploring a written work. Grabe and Stoller (2001) assert that reading tries to uncover straightforward information, skim, learn from textbooks, integrate knowledge, create and evaluate texts, and find easy information. Students can learn information by developing their reading abilities (Fjelstad, 1994). The process of cognition is collected into meaning during the creation of knowledge (Snow, 2002).

Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are the five key components of reading. Understanding the many components of reading and how they interact is crucial. Phonemic awareness refers to the capacity to recognize, consider, and interact with the individual sounds in words. It is the recognition that words are made up of spoken language sounds.

Phonemic awareness is entirely auditory, meaning that it solely concerns the



**Figure 1.** Reading Area

sounds that letters produce on their own or when they are combined to form words. The distinct sounds in spoken words are called phonemes. Despite only having 26 letters, English has about 44 phonemes. These are the discrete, distinctive sounds that humans combine to create spoken words.

Phonics is the explicit teaching of the relationship between written letters, letter combinations, and spoken sounds. In phonics, a written sign (grapheme) is combined with the sounds you hear (phonemes). Another component of learning about phonics is realizing the connection between spoken language sounds and the letter combinations that represent those sounds in written language. Decoding, sometimes referred to as "sounding out words," falls under this category.

Reading literature with proper speed, accuracy, and expressiveness is referred to as fluency. Additionally, reading fluency is important for reading comprehension because it can indicate an understanding of the text when speaking (Samuels, 2006), read texts quickly and accurately (Vilger, 2008), express the meaning of the text (Allington, 2006), and act as a general indicator of all other reading-related factors, particularly reading comprehension (Hasbrouck & Tidal, 2006).

Understanding word meanings and pronunciations is known as vocabulary. Regardless of the skill or linguistic point being studied in an English language class, vocabulary penetrates all that language learners and language teachers do (Taylor, 1990). As a result, vocabulary is essential for increasing a student's language competency. Vocabulary study and teaching are essential aspects of acquiring an FL since it is a component of all linguistic abilities (Al-Rahmi, 2018). Vocabulary is hence the foundational tool used to develop a student's competency as a component of enhancing their linguistic abilities, particularly in reading. Reading also emphasizes cognitive skills

including understanding text, hearing letter sounds, understanding information, and connecting new information to previous knowledge and interlocutors (Basaran, 2013). Word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and verbal reasoning are all necessary for effective understanding. Essentially, it is the outcome of merging all of the prior skills. The end outcome of this procedure is reading comprehension. Reading comprehension leads to word decoding and understanding of language (Gough & Tunmer, 1986).

The capacity to read words, work memory, make inferences, monitor comprehension, vocabulary, and prior knowledge are just a few linguistic and cognitive processes that must operate together to understand what is being read (Perfetti, Landi, & Oakhill, 2005). Unfortunately, it regularly occurs that students are left to their own devices during reading assignments, which usually involve answering a number of questions on a certain work. This strategy may widen the gap between the skills of proficient readers and those who struggle with reading if it isn't coupled with the right kind of scaffolding for each particular learner (Wibell-Kahr & Ek, 2020). The ability to understand words is connected to having a strong vocabulary, as Smith (2004) notes that having a strong vocabulary gives one a permanent foundation of information for figuring out the likely pronunciation and meaning of new terms. Readers will have minimal trouble understanding and pronouncing a new term if they are familiar with both the meaning and the pronunciation. In other words, reading comprehension is the process of making connections between the reader's past knowledge and the specifics of the text in order to comprehend the text's content. Reading comprehension is more about how the students interpret and build the text's meaning than it is about knowing and remembering what each word in the text means.

The bottom-up and top-down processes are frequently mentioned in this situation by experts. Both of these are reading comprehension processes, and

a new study suggests that there is a third type of reading comprehension processing known as interactive reading.

**a) Bottom-up processing**

Bottom-up processing requires the reader to first detect the variety of linguistic signals (letters, morphemes, syllables, words, phrases, grammatical cues, discourse markers, etc.) and then apply some sort of sequence to these signals using their linguistic data processing processes. The language itself must be understood to perform these data-driven functions. The reader chooses signals that make sense from among all the facts they have observed in order to derive meaning.

**b) Top-down processing**

Top-down, is a process in which the readers draw their intelligence and experience to understand a text.

**c) Interactive reading**

Top-down and bottom-up processing are both used in interactive reading. It is almost always a primary ingredient in successful teaching methodology because both processes are important.

In reading comprehension, some problems may occur because the strategy is not suitable for students which causes learning progress doesn't engage. This issue arises because students still have trouble deciphering texts' meanings or synthesizing words, phrases, or sentences into the precise meanings desired by the author's context, have fewer reading sources, struggle with reading comprehension, and still place a strong emphasis on the teacher in their learning (Khusniyah, Rasyid, and Lustyantje, 2017).

### **2.1.2 Reading Strategies**

A lot of students struggled to comprehend texts in various studies done by researchers (Ali, 2021), and their poor vocabulary skills limit their grasp of reading-related concepts (Fitriani, 2015). According to Chawwang (2008), the most significant issues with reading comprehension are locating difficult words and themes, the passage's core concept, and a lack of vocabulary. To prevent the issues, a variety of techniques like summarizing, formulating questions, skimming, scanning, etc., have been used (Phillip, 2003). According to Tierney (1982), developing readers must have some level of reading proficiency before getting formal instruction in reading comprehension strategies.

Students should be taught how to properly employ reading methods in order to deal with a range of text kinds. Metacognitive reading techniques (MRS), according to O'Malley and Chamot (2005), were used to improve learners' awareness and control. Additionally, it showed that mental and socio-affective information are processed in learning techniques. Students are required to evaluate and analyze the author's intentions and goals based on the words and phrases in the text. Eskey (2005) noted that linguistic proficiency made second-language learners less capable than first-language learners. For this reason, MRS divided up strategies into three key sub-groups: global strategies, problem-solving strategies, and support strategies.

Global strategies involve pre-reading activities such as planning what to read and setting intentions for the reading (Pammu, Amir & Maasum, 2014). It often involves how reflecting on reading on how it works and why are we reading it, these strategies include (Ryan, 2015):

- 1) Developing a purpose to keep in mind while reading;

- 2) Thinking about what you know to help you understand the reading;
- 3) Connecting the text with your reading purpose while reading;
- 4) Using tables, figures, and pictures to increase understanding;
- 5) Paying close attention to bolder or italicized items.

Problem-solving strategies are called upon during actual reading and involve checking comprehension, adjusting reading speed, and engaging in close reading when needed (Pammu, Amir & Maasum, 2014). These strategies include (Ryan, 2015):

- 1) Reading slowly and adjusting your reading speed to deal with difficult material;
- 2) Getting yourself back on track by re-reading when you get off the track;
- 3) Stopping occasionally to think about what you have read;
- 4) Picturing or visualizing the information to increase retention.

And lastly, support strategies deal with the use of outside materials to assist reading comprehension, like summarizing information, using dictionaries, and highlighting text. (Pammu, Amir & Maasum, 2014). These strategies include (Ryan, 2015):

- 1) Taking notes while reading to understand the text and make larger connections;
- 2) Summarizing what you have read to reflect on important information and key points;
- 3) Discussing what you have read with others to solidify connections and understanding;

4) Using reference materials to identify terms or ideas that you do not initially understand;

5) Asking yourself questions you would like have answered through your reading.

By using a combination of these three strategies, you can improve your understanding and retention, to become an active reader.

### **2.1.3 Test of Reading Comprehension**

There are several methods available to assess learners' English competence. Some of them provide internationally standardized English assessments such as the TOEFL, IELTS, and others. The aim of the reading comprehension section of the exam was to determine how well a student could read quickly and comprehend written content. The exam had a time limit, so you had to read the section or sentence fast and provide a correct response. There are typically 5 different sorts of questions in the reading comprehension part. The first set of questions focused on the primary concepts (subject), the second set on the specifics given in the reading text, the third set on the information that was left out, the fourth set on the details that were inferred in the text, and the fifth set on the vocabulary used in reading texts. There are four possible answers to each multiple-choice question in the reading section. How to answer a reading comprehension question by picking the right answer from a group of four possibilities.

On the reading comprehension test, you will encounter a piece of material about a topic that may be new to you. Understanding of academic written English is tested in the reading part. It includes texts and discussion questions for each one (Gear & Gear, 2002). The reading material frequently

focuses on topics like technology, economics, politics, economics, and culture (Fitria, 2022). Skimming the text before reading the possible questions and answers is the simplest way to handle reading comprehension issues. Students must swiftly read or scan the material before responding to the question. The types of questions are usually factual questions, primary idea questions, inference questions, questions about the author's tone, questions about drawing conclusions, questions about exceptions, and questions about the source (Bhavsar, 2020). The questions themselves explain:

- 1) In factual questions, these types often ask to find the fact-based answer which we need to find the keyword or phrase in that question, locate the sentence in the passage in which this keyword or phrase occurs;
- 2) For primary idea questions, the passage will usually be found in the first two sentences of the passage, and also in the first sentences of each paragraph;
- 3) In inference questions you will be asked to draw from a piece of information contained in the passage, by identifying the keyword or phrase in the question;
- 4) For the tone of the author's questions, the questions ask you to gauge the author's perspective on the person thing, or quality discussed in the passage. Scanning the choice options that differ from the ones that are being asked to eliminate the answer, it's also referred to test of your knowledge of vocabulary;
- 5) Draw conclusion questions refer to the reason the author from the passage by evaluating the answer choices and determining which is the right idea;
- 6) In exception questions, three of four choices will be given according to the author's intention and one of them will state an argument that doesn't follow with the passage;



7) Lastly, in source questions you will be asked a question that is likely about the idea of inference and can be addressed effectively based on the substance of the passage.

#### **2.1.4 English Proficiency Test**

An English proficiency test is a valid way to assess someone's English competence in a nation where learning English as a second language is necessary. Not only is an English proficiency exam administered while looking to pursue study abroad, but it is also typically required at schools in order to complete college. The Test of English Language Proficiency (TELP) and TOEFL were comparable tests. The three components of TELP are reading comprehension, writing structure and expression, and listening comprehension. The goal is to learn how students perceive their grasp of the languages, how it was acquired, and how it relates to graduation requirements.

Thirteen abilities make up the five components of TOEFL reading comprehension, according to Phillips (2003). First, inquiries on the passage's themes. This component consists of two abilities: accurately identifying the arrangement of ideas and responding to major theme questions. Second, direct responses to queries. The three abilities that make up this component are finding pronoun referents, identifying unstated details, and correctly answering questions involving statements of fact. Third, questions that were indirectly addressed. Two talents make up this aspect: answering implicit and transitional inquiries. The fourth category is vocabulary questions, which require four skills: determining word meanings from structural cues, identifying word components, and deriving meaning from context for both challenging and straightforward terms. Lastly, reviewing questions. This aspect consists of the ability to search for specific information, the tone, purpose, or course.

## **2.2 Study of the Relevant Research**

There have been several previous studies on the difficulties in taking the TOEFL reading test. Some researchers claim that the value of the results in reading comprehension tests might be seen differently. Nezami (2012) assumed that reading comprehension issues are largely caused by a lack of techniques, such as the capacity for scanning and skimming. They discovered, along with Samad et al. (2017), who studied common issues with the TOEFL reading comprehension section, that the main causes of these issues were responding to implied questions, responding to stated detail questions, giving meaning to both difficult and simple words by using context, responding to main ideas, and deducing the meanings from word parts.

Mahmud (2014) performed a semi-structured interview and a classroom observation at one of the universities in Makassar. Due to several opposing factors, including disparities in student's age and socioeconomic standing as well as a lack of fundamental skills, practice, and enthusiasm, the outcome was as a consequence. The research by Maizarah (2019) indicates that identifying particular detailed questions, recognizing pronoun references, responding to the transition question, using context to explain difficult vocabulary, and properly answering key concept questions are the most difficult TOEFL reading abilities. In order to prepare for English proficiency exams, it was essential to provide considerable emphasis to the learning and teaching procedures.

From some of the earlier research mentioned above, it can be concluded that students studying English as a foreign language continue to struggle with English proficiency exam questions. Numerous challenges that the students encountered when trying to respond to the questions are evidence of this. It leaves open the idea that there are still a lot of issues that make kids feel like they have trouble answering questions, particularly ones involving reading comprehension.