

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introduction to the study including the background of the research, the research questions, the purpose of the research, the scope of the research, the significance of the research, the terms clarification, and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Research

Reading has always been regarded as an essential part of English skills. In the area of a foreign language learning situation, reading is commonly highlighted as it offers benefits for learners in the improvement of their vocabulary, other skills such as writing and speaking, and also discovery of new ideas, facts, and experiences (Jeffries & Mikulecky, 2007; Richards & Renandya, 2002). Reading skill does not always mean being able to read sentences in a passage. Most of the time, reading is about how learners understand the passage they read and extract meaning simultaneously and effectively, which this particular capability could be referred to as reading comprehension skills (Dewi et al., 2020; Meniado, 2016).

Even though reading comprehension skills come as important, enjoying the act of reading plays an essential role in constructing it. Yet, enjoying reading does not always come as easy, especially when the reading is in a foreign language. As English is a foreign language in Indonesia and is placed as an optional subject in the new Indonesian curriculum named *Kurikulum Merdeka*, many young EFL learners still have difficulty in constructing meanings of English texts they read and are less motivated to read it at home (Arniati et al., 2019). This was previously proven by the result of learners' interests in reading recorded in 2018 PISA (Program for International Student Assessment), where Indonesia ranked 72 out of 77 countries (Schleicher, 2019).

Despite the lack of enjoyment in reading for young EFL learners in Indonesia, specifically in primary level, English teachers adopt various different strategies to teach

reading with enjoyment. Among many familiar teaching programmes, reading for pleasure (RfP) is one teaching program that can be utilized to teach reading to young EFL learners. Some of the previous studies (Collins, 2020; Garces-Bacsal et al., 2018; Maharsi et al, 2019; Retali et al., 2018) have revealed how RfP offered many benefits in teaching reading to learners. Yet, the studies tended to focus on the teachers' perspectives and some focused on highlighting the benefits offered when being implemented to both younger and older learners. The clear picture of what one experiences or the in-depth process of the implementation of RfP considering an individual's language learning situation was hidden. Hence, this study is proposed to fill the gap by investigating the implementation of RfP to a young EFL learner, revealing the suitable principles in teaching reading.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background of the research briefly discussed in the previous section, the focus of this study is formulated in the following research question: How can the teaching program support a young EFL learner to enjoy reading?

1.3 Aim of the Research

Based on the research questions formulated before, the present study aims to generate suitable principles in implementing a teaching program that can teach reading to a young EFL learner with enjoyment. The findings of the research are expected to give contribution in the field of reading for pleasure in real-life context, specifically when being implemented to a young EFL learner.

1.4 Scope of the Research

The scope of this research refers to how RfP can be implemented to teach reading to a young EFL learner by revealing suitable principles that are based on Willshaw's 15 rooted in reading principles (2013). The present study used only one young learner to observe a more in-depth understanding and to avoid individual differences, such as the English language prior knowledge and environmental background. Moreover, the RfP practicality when being implemented to many

young learners, the learner's characteristics as well as the participant's English language proficiency are also taken into consideration.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The results and discussion presented in this study are hoped to contribute significant knowledge and insights to the English Language Teaching (ELT) community as follows:

1. Theoretical Significance

On the theoretical side, the significance of this study is expected to contribute new and further knowledge in regards to the teaching of reading to a young EFL learner and how RfP shapes the learner's enjoyment in reading.

2. Practical Significance

The practical significance of this study aims to reveal the suitable principles of RfP in teaching reading to a young EFL learner in Indonesia. The result of the study may also inspire teachers to adopt or modify the strategy and apply them in teaching-learning activities.

3. Professional Significance

The result of this study may also be useful as the stepping stone in developing further investigation or new reading strategies in future research.

1.6 Clarification of Related Terms

In order to avoid any unnecessary misunderstanding, the terms utilized in the study are clarified as follows:

- 1) **A young EFL learner** is a young learner that uses English as a foreign language, which means English is taught and used not as their main language. Young learners themselves can be defined as learners before the age of puberty, usually ranging between the age of 6 to 12 years (Cahyati & Madya, 2018; O'Grady, 1989), who learn a second or a foreign language in the first or seven years of formal schooling (McKay, 2006). The young learner addressed in this study is a learner whose age is seven years old and who is currently learning English as a foreign language (EFL).

2) **Reading for pleasure (RfP)** is a practice that highlights benefits for learners' literacy skills and their reading engagement. Arguably, reading engagement in young learners is related to the learners' attitudes towards reading and their frequency of engagement throughout the act of reading (Collins, 2022; Merga, 2018).

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This research paper is divided into five parts. Each part presents different detailed information regarding the present study. Chapters in this research paper are organized as follows:

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This research begins with chapter one that provides an introduction to the study including the background of the research, the research questions, the purpose of the research, the scope of the research, the significance of the research, the terms clarification, and the organization of the paper.

CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

This part presents the theoretical foundation of this study. Theories that are covered in this study are young learners and their language development, teaching reading to young EFL learners, reading for pleasure, as well as previous studies related to the present study.

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section serves the methodology used in this study covering the research design and the research site and participant. This chapter also defines how the data is collected related to its instruments and procedures as well as how it is analysed.

CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the findings of the research from the data that was collected and analysed. The data are presented in tables, figures, and descriptions. After presenting the findings, it is further elaborated in the discussion section.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

This part of the research serves the conclusion from all the results discussed in the previous section. Moreover, this chapter provides suggestions and hints for the development of the next study regarding the implementation of RfP to young EFL learners in teaching reading.

1.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has presented the core explanation of the research. In the following chapter, the theoretical background will be further presented as the foundation in addressing the issue that is investigated.