

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, formulating the research question, purpose of the study, formulating the hypothesis, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, and the definition of key terms.

A. Background Study

Reading literacy is a very important skill in modern education, especially in the digital era, where information is widely accessed through written texts. However, various studies show that many people around the world still lack basic reading skills.¹ Reading literacy is not only the ability to read written words but also the ability to understand, interpret, evaluate, and reflect on information from texts effectively. According to Snow, reading literacy is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.

Furthermore, Klingner et al. explain that reading literacy involves several cognitive processes such as vocabulary knowledge, comprehension strategies, prior knowledge, and critical thinking skills. This means that students with good reading literacy are expected to

¹ Robert J. Tierney et al., eds., *International Encyclopedia of Education*, Fourth edition (Elsevier, 2023).

understand both explicit and implicit meanings in texts and evaluate information critically. In Indonesia, this issue is also reflected in the results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA 2019)², which show that Indonesian students' reading literacy scores are still below the OECD average. This indicates that many students still struggle to understand and process written information effectively.

Several studies show that students' reading habits are still relatively low and have not yet become a routine activity. Another research found that students are more interested in reading through digital media like Wattpad compared to reading conventional books.³ Additional research shows that students' reading habits are still at a moderate level and are influenced by their interests and learning environment.⁴ Reading habit itself refers to students' regular and consistent engagement in reading activities over time.

According to Day and Bamford, reading habits can be developed through frequent and enjoyable reading activities that expose students to various vocabulary, grammatical structures, and ideas. Furthermore, Guthrie states that reading habits are closely related to students'

² OECD, *PISA 2018 Assessment and Analytical Framework*, PISA (OECD Publishing, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1787/b25efab8-en>.

³ Fiiryal Azzahra et al., "Exploring Wattpad Application Usage Patterns Among Students in Reading Narrative Texts at SMPN 28 Bekasi," *Sintaksis : Publikasi Para Ahli Bahasa Dan Sastra Inggris* 2, no. 6 (2024): 81–96, <https://doi.org/10.61132/sintaksis.v2i6.1158>.

⁴ Hendra Darmawan et al., "Reading Habits Among Language and Literature Students in Yogyakarta," *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature* 12, no. 8 (2024): 7–18, <https://doi.org/10.20431/2347-3134.1208002>.

motivation and engagement in reading activities.⁵ Students who read voluntarily and consistently tend to develop stronger comprehension skills and better academic achievement. In addition, Krashen explains that regular reading activities provide comprehensible input that supports language acquisition naturally. Therefore, students who frequently read English novels are expected to improve their vocabulary mastery, comprehension ability, and understanding of narrative texts.

Ideally, high school students are expected to have good reading literacy skills, particularly in understanding narrative texts. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the importance of critical thinking skills, drawing inferences, and text analysis. The habit of reading regularly, especially reading English novels, is believed to enhance students' vocabulary, text comprehension, and critical thinking abilities. These skills are crucial for supporting academic success as well as facing global challenges.

However, there is a gap between the ideal conditions and the reality on the ground. International data show that the reading literacy skills of Indonesian students are still relatively low.⁶ In addition, observational results show that only a portion of students regularly read English novels, while others focus more on academic tasks or digital entertainment. This

⁵ Richard R. Day et al., "Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom," *REL C Journal* 29, no. 2 (1998): 187–91, <https://doi.org/10.1177/003368829802900211>.

⁶ OECD, *PISA 2018 Assessment and Analytical Framework*.

results in students' ability to understand complex narrative texts still being limited.

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between reading habits and text comprehension skills. Research shows that extensive reading can improve students' reading comprehension skills.⁷ Other findings also indicate that students' understanding of narrative texts increases after they become accustomed to reading regularly.⁸ This suggests that reading activities contribute to the enhancement of comprehension skills.

Additionally, correlational research shows a relationship between reading habits and reading ability. Several studies have found a significant positive relationship between reading habits and students' reading comprehension skills.⁹ These findings are further supported by other research indicating that students with high reading habits tend to have

⁷ Dadan Hidayat and Titi Dewi Rohati, "The Effect of Extensive Reading on Students Reading Comprehension," *Wanastra: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra* 12, no. 1 (2020): 58–64, <https://doi.org/10.31294/w.v12i1.7519>.

⁸ Yeni Afriyeni, "Improving Students' Reading in Narrative Text by Using Extensive Reading at the Tenth Grade Students of Madrasah Aliyah Al-Fajar in Pekanbaru," *Lectura : Jurnal Pendidikan* 9, no. 1 (2018): 65–75, <https://doi.org/10.31849/lectura.v9i1.924>.

⁹ Aqshol Cahya Dinullah et al., "Examining the Relationship Between English Reading Habits and Reading Comprehension Among Vocational School Students," *Edukasiana: Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan* 5, no. 1 (2026): 30–43, <https://doi.org/10.56916/ejip.v5i1.2482>.

better comprehension abilities.¹⁰ Other studies also show that reading habits influence comprehension across various types of texts.¹¹

Other research indicates that reading habits not only impact reading ability but also other language skills. Students who frequently read English novels tend to have better translation skills.¹² Additionally, the use of digital platforms can increase students' interest in reading.¹³ Other research also shows that reading habits contribute to literacy skills and writing abilities.¹⁴ Although various studies show positive results, there are still some research gaps. Most studies focus on the extensive reading method, rather than on students' natural reading habits, such as independently reading English novels.

Furthermore, research specifically examining “The Correlation Between Students' Habit of Reading English Novels and Their Reading Literacy in Understanding Narrative Texts at SMK PGRI Wlingi” is important because it emphasizes a specific causal relationship, focuses on the main variables, and affirms local relevance in high schools. This title

¹⁰ Abdul Ayiz and Yuko Taniguchi, “Correlation between Students’ Reading Habits and Their Reading Comprehension Skills,” *Journal of Research in English Language Teaching and Linguistics* 1, no. 1 (2025): 36–51, <https://doi.org/10.65431/jrell.v1i1.5>.

¹¹ Anggi Apriani et al., “The Correlation Between Students’ Reading Habit and Their Reading Comprehension in Analytical Exposition Texts of Eleventh Grade at SMA PGRI Pekanbaru,” *International Journal of Education and Literature* 4, no. 3 (2025): 417–21, <https://doi.org/10.55606/ijel.v4i3.317>.

¹² Rika Rismayanti and Nur Syamsiah, “STUDENTS’ HABITS IN READING ENGLISH NOVELS AND THEIR ABILITY TO TRANSLATE ENGLISH-INDONESIAN: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY,” 2024, n.d.

¹³ Fiiryal Azzahra et al., “Exploring Wattpad Application Usage Patterns Among Students in Reading Narrative Texts at SMPN 28 Bekasi.”

¹⁴ Fadli Zam Zami et al., *Reading Habits and Their Influence on Student English Writing Skill in Indonesia: A Systematic Review*, 13, no. 2 (2025).

affirms that this research is not only descriptive but also correlational, thereby contributing to an empirical understanding of literacy, which is crucial for English language education in Indonesia.

B. Research Question

Based on the background stated above, we formulated three research questions:

1. Is there a positive or negative correlation between students' habits of reading English novels and their reading literacy levels in understanding narrative texts at SMK PGRI Wlingi?

C. Research Objective

Regarding the formulations of the research question above, the researcher determines the objectives of the study as follows:

1. To identify whether there is a positive or negative correlation between students' habits in reading English novels and their reading literacy levels in understanding narrative texts at SMK PGRI Wlingi.

D. Research Hypothesis

1. Null Hypothesis (H_0):

“There is no positive or correlation between students' habits of reading English novels and their reading literacy levels in understanding narrative texts at SMK PGRI Wlingi.”

2. Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):

“There is a positive correlation between students’ habits of reading English novels and their reading literacy levels in understanding narrative texts at SMK PGRI Wlingi.”

E. Significance of the Research

The study of this research is expected to be useful and relevant both theoretically and practically to know the correlation between students’ English novel reading habits and their English-to-Indonesian translation ability. The study is also expected to provide people with useful information and relevant recommendations, which are:

1. For the English teachers,

The findings can guide educators in developing more effective teaching strategies by emphasizing the role of novel-reading habits in enhancing narrative comprehension skills. Teachers may incorporate reading assignments or extracurricular activities that promote regular exposure to English novels, potentially leading to improved student performance in reading literacy assessments and overall language proficiency in classroom settings.

2. For the students,

Students can benefit from understanding how cultivating a habit of reading English novels directly contributes to better literacy in narrative texts, such as stories and novels. This awareness may motivate them to read more frequently, fostering not only academic

success but also personal enjoyment, cultural exposure, and long-term language skills that aid in real-world communication and critical thinking.

3. For future researchers,

This research serves as a foundational reference for designing longitudinal studies, interventions, or comparative analyses across different schools or regions. Future investigators may build on these results to explore causal factors, such as the impact of digital vs. print novels, or to develop evidence-based programs aimed at boosting reading literacy through targeted habit formation.

F. Scope and Limitation of the Research

This study has several limitations that should be noted, as they may influence the research findings and data interpretation. First, the sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling; however, random sampling would have been preferable to ensure equal opportunities for the entire population, thereby making the research findings more representative. However, due to field constraints, the researcher selected the sample based on recommendations from the supervising teacher, class availability, and alignment with the research needs.

Second, the research subjects were limited to 10th-grade students at SMK PGRI Wlingi. This is because most 11th and 12th-grade students were engaged in Field Work Practice (PKL), making it difficult to include them as research respondents. Additionally, 10th-grade students were

chosen because they are at the grade level currently studying or about to study narrative text material, making them the most suitable for the research objectives. These limitations mean the research findings cannot yet be generalized to all vocational high school students or other grade levels.

Third, this study was conducted at only one school, so the results may be influenced by the learning environment, student characteristics, and the school's policies. Therefore, the results may not be the same if applied to other schools with different conditions.

Fourth, data collection was conducted using paper-based instruments (paper-based tests) in the form of questionnaires and written tests. This method requires a considerable amount of time for scoring and manually entering data into SPSS, which increases the likelihood of human error during data processing.

Fifth, data on reading habits were obtained through questionnaires filled out by the students themselves. This allows for response bias, such as students answering inconsistently with their actual conditions or answering based on what they perceive as the "correct" response.

Sixth, the reading literacy test in this study focused only on narrative texts; therefore, it does not provide a comprehensive picture of students' reading abilities with other text types, such as descriptive, recount, procedural, or expository texts.

Finally, this study employed a correlational design, which aims only

to identify the relationship between two variables. Consequently, this study cannot provide an in-depth explanation of the cause-and-effect relationship between reading habits and students' reading literacy.

G. Definition of Key Term

To avoid misunderstanding, ambiguity, and confusion regarding the concepts in this topic, the researcher needs to provide explanations and definitions of the key terms used in this study. Those are:

1. Students' Habits of Reading English Novels

Reading habits of reading English novels refer to the regular, automatic, and repetitive reading behavior of students of novels (long works of fiction) written in English, especially outside of compulsory school assignments. Indicators often include frequency, amount of time, and type of novels read.

2. Reading Literacy.

Reading literacy is an individual's ability to understand, use, evaluate, reflect on, and engage with texts to achieve their goals, develop their knowledge and potential, and participate in society. In this study, the focus is on students' reading literacy levels as measured by their understanding of narrative texts.

3. Understanding Narrative Texts

The ability of students to interpret and understand the content of texts that recount events or experiences in chronological order (such as stories, fairy tales, or fictional narratives). The aspects of

comprehension that are tested typically include the ability to grasp the main ideas, specific details, plot, characters, setting, and moral message of the narrative text.

4. The Correlation Between Students' Habits of Reading English Novels and Their Reading Literacy in Understanding Narrative Text.

Reading literacy is an essential skill that enables students to understand and interpret written texts effectively. According to OECD (2018), it involves the ability to use, evaluate, and reflect on written materials.¹⁵ One factor that can influence reading literacy is students' habit of reading, particularly reading English novels.

Reading novels exposes students to various vocabulary, grammatical structures, and narrative elements that help develop comprehension skills. Reading interesting and meaningful texts provides comprehensible input that supports language acquisition.¹⁶ Through reading English novels, students become familiar with story structures such as setting, plot, and characters commonly found in narrative texts.¹⁷ This familiarity helps them understand similar texts used in learning activities.

Moreover, students who read regularly tend to have better reading comprehension and motivation¹⁸. Their frequent engagement

¹⁵ OECD, *PISA 2018 Assessment and Analytical Framework*.

¹⁶ Stephen D. Krashen, *Second Language Acquisition*, n.d.

¹⁷ Neil J. Anderson, *SCROLLING, CLICKING, AND READING ENGLISH: ONLINE READING STRATEGIES IN A SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE*, Vol.3. (November 2003): 33.

¹⁸ Christina Clark and Kate Rumbold, *Reading for Pleasure: A Research Overview*, n.d.

with English novels enhances their ability to identify main ideas, infer meanings, and understand moral values in narrative passages. Therefore, it can be concluded that students' habits of reading English novels have a positive correlation with their reading literacy in understanding narrative texts, as both involve comprehension, interpretation, and reflection on written stories