CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English is a universal language in worldwide education, including Indonesia, where children and adults learn English as a foreign language for various purposes (Herawati & Istinganah 2022, 20). Four skills in mastering English are reading, writing, listening and speaking. These elements need to work together so that learning English will be easier for students to understand and be beneficial in their current and future lives.

Reading has a major role in both teaching and learning, so students must be proficient readers from an early age. According to Lalicic and Dubravac (2021, 23), it is vitally necessary for language learners to be proficient readers. Reading proficiency is a prerequisite for success in elementary and high school as well as on higher academic levels of education. It is commonly accepted that skilled readers make for good learners. For this reason, reading comprehension ability must be emphasized to students as this skill is important to access useful information and broaden knowledge to become smarter and stronger in facing various challenges in life.

According to Lenz (2024, 1), the goal of reading is to comprehend a text. At least two people are involved in reading comprehension: the writer and the reader. The comprehension process involves interpreting the writer's words and using prior knowledge to form a basic understanding of the writer's intended meaning.

A reader's understanding is shaped by their knowledge of the topic, understanding of language structures, familiarity with different text types and genres, awareness of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, reasoning ability, motivation, and level of engagement. Students who have difficulty with word recognition and decoding often face challenges in reading comprehension. Those who struggle with understanding texts seldom have the opportunity to work with more complex materials, which limits their chances to develop the language skills and reading strategies needed to become proficient readers. As a result, they may develop a dislike for reading and lose motivation to learn (Lenz 2024, 1).

Motivation typically refers to what individuals want, what they choose to do, and what they commit to achieving. It determines the direction and intensity of behavior, including the goals people choose to pursue and the amount of effort or enthusiasm they invest in reaching them (Keller 2010, 3-4). Regarding motivation, students do things for their reasons. However, an educator or authority figure has the power to impact the motivation of others. Teachers can either inspire students to learn or diminish their motivation. This influence is unlikely to be neutral (Keller 2010, 1).

Low motivation has long been one of the most challenging barriers to student learning. Since motivation shapes a student's approach to learning, it influences their tendency either to persist or give up, as well as the depth of their reflection on their progress. Motivated students engage with learning playfully, which encourages them to explore concepts from fresh perspectives. As a result, they are better able to apply what they've learned in new contexts, as they often consider the root ideas or structures behind the content (Chuter 2020, 1).

Motivation in reading is defined as an individual's personal goals, values, and beliefs about the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading (Gunobgunob-Mirasol 2019, 65). Motivation is positively linked to reading engagement, which is strengthened by the strong connection between motivation and prolonged reading over the course of students' learning (Ro 2016, 32). This engagement contributes to students' success, particularly in language learning, as motivation is a crucial affective factor in reading proficiency (Ro 2013, 215). When students face no difficulties in reading, they are more likely to excel in learning any subject.

Motivation plays a pivotal role in students' reading proficiency, academic performance, and cognitive development (Wigfield & Guthrie 2000, 405). Studies show that students who are motivated to read tend to read more, understand better, and perform better academically than those who lack motivation to read (Klauda & Guthrie 2014, 239).

Recent research has explored the link between reading motivation and academic performance. For example, a study by Pekrun, Elliot, and Maier found that reading motivation is a key predictor of reading achievement in primary school children (Pekrun et al. 2009, 115). Similarly, research by Klauda and Guthrie (2014, 239) shows that reading motivation is a positive predictor of reading comprehension in adolescents. Additionally, a study by Scheifele et al. (2012, 427) found that reading motivation enhances students' text comprehension and knowledge acquisition.

The evidence highlights the importance of reading motivation. Motivated readers read more, comprehend better, and achieve greater academic success

compared to those who are not motivated to read. Therefore, it is vital to foster reading motivation in schools, encouraging students to read for enjoyment and personal interest. This approach can help students develop a love for reading, leading to improved reading skills and academic success.

Based on the researcher's observation in her class consisting of 17 students at XYZ school, the students faced several challenges in learning English, particularly in reading. Many students struggled to read with comprehension because they lacked familiarity with effective reading strategies. Their reading was often limited to textbooks solely to perform well on exams, and they showed little interest in reading English texts beyond their school materials. The results of the pre-survey on reading comprehension conducted on 8 May 2024, can be seen below.

Table 1.1 Reading Comprehension Pre-Survey Results

Indicator	Score	Category
x1: Understanding the meanings of words and sentences	43.53	Poor
x2: Identifying main ideas and supporting details	70.59	Fairly good
x3: Sequencing events or ideas	51.76	Poor
x4: Following instructions and understanding explicit information	49.41	Poor
Reading comprehension average score	53.82	Poor

Table 1.1 shows that reading comprehension varies among the indicators. The ability to identify main ideas and supporting details is fairly good (70.59). However, the abilities to understand the meanings of words and sentences (43.53), sequence events or ideas (51.76), and follow instructions and understand explicit information (49.41) indicate poor levels. Overall, the reading comprehension level is categorized as poor (53.82).

Table 1.2 Motivation Pre-Survey Results

Indicator	Score	Category
x1: Attention	69.1	Fairly good
x2: Relevance	67.6	Fairly good
x3: Confidence	66.2	Fairly good
x4: Satisfaction	58.8	Fair
Motivation average score	65.44	Fair

Table 1.2 indicates that the students' motivation tends to be fairly good, with the majority of respondents showing attention during lessons (69.1), understanding the relevance of learning to daily life (67.6), and having confidence in their ability to succeed (66.2). However, the level of satisfaction with the learning experience (58.8) is still fair with room for improvement. Overall, the motivation level is categorized as fair (65.44).

Table 1.3. Score Classification

Score	Category
96-100	Excellent
86-95	Very good
76-85	Good
66-75	Fairly good
56-65	Fair
36-55	Poor
0-35	Very poor

The classification of student scores is based on Table 1.3 (Depdikbud in Hasnaniati 2014, 44). There are seven categories: very poor (0-35), poor (36-55), fair (56-65), fairly good (66-75), good (76-85), very good (86-95), and excellent (96-100).

As many students in the researcher's class show low reading comprehension skills and motivation, the problem may root from the way they read as if a text consists of discrete elements. As a result, the students do not engage actively with the passages they read, nor do they connect key terms within the text to construct meaning, which hinders their progress toward achieving reading comprehension. In other words, the students have a perception that the goal of reading a text is merely to answer questions provided by the teacher or the book. Another reason is that the technique used by the researcher is not interesting; thus, resulting in a lack of motivation and inactive mental state to comprehend the text.

As the students lose motivation and find reading comprehension too challenging, the researcher must provide explicit instruction in comprehension strategies. Simply giving students opportunities to read or requiring them to do so will not help them learn the necessary techniques for becoming proficient readers. These strategies must be taught directly from the moment they can read basic words, using a range of methods to ensure effective learning (Lenz 2024, 1).

In response to the problems above, the researcher must apply an effective strategy to make reading more enjoyable to promote students' reading comprehension skills and motivation. Many strategies may be applied and one of them is paragraph shrinking strategy, which is established as a part of Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS). Experts have provided various definitions of paragraph shrinking. According to McNamara (2007, 185), the paragraph shrinking strategy aims to enhance reading comprehension by focusing on

summarizing and identifying main ideas. Similarly, Karen R. Harris and Steve Graham (2015, 93) describe paragraph shrinking as a simple method for identifying the main idea in a paragraph or short text segment. As a result, it is an effective strategy for teaching students to read and comprehend a text.

Research by Aziz et al. (2022, 209) involving 224 seventh-grade students shows a significant difference in the post-test results for students taught using the paragraph shrinking strategy (93.33) compared to those taught without it (85.33). Similarly, research by Vanesia et al. (2023, 68) involving 30 ninth-grade students from MTS Koto Tinggi demonstrates that the paragraph shrinking strategy significantly enhances students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. The findings strongly suggest that educators adopt this strategy to support students in understanding texts more effectively.

Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), one of which is paragraph shrinking, are claimed to promote students' motivation. With motivation as a dependent variable, it becomes an outcome of PALS, which also serves as a strategy for enhancing motivation among diverse young people as the activities include reciprocal peer tutoring and cooperative learning (Ginsburg-Block et al. 2008, 634-639).

Studies indicate that most students can gain both socially and academically from PALS, including paragraph shrinking. Peer collaboration is particularly advantageous for English language learners, as they often find their peers more approachable and easier to understand than teachers. This, in turn, enhances their motivation to read and learn. Paragraph shrinking also supports students by clearly outlining the process of summarizing. It provides a simple, step-by-step

method for identifying the main idea. Once students can pinpoint the main idea, they are better able to comprehend the material, thereby improving their overall reading comprehension (Lyon 2021, 1).

The forementioned background above has inspired the researcher to carry out classroom action research entitled "Applying Paragraph Shrinking to Improve Grade II Students' Reading Comprehension and Motivation in Learning English at XYZ School Jakarta".

1.2 Identification of the Problems

Based on the pre-survey, the following problems have been identified:

1) The students do not understand the meanings of words and sentences.

2) The students cannot sequence events or ideas.

3) The students cannot follow instructions and understand explicit information.

4) The students' overall reading comprehension is poor.

5) Their satisfaction from the learning experiences is fair.

6) Their overall motivation is fair.

Other problems that the researcher has identified in her class:

1) The students face difficulty in understanding the context of sentences.

2) The students are unable to answer questions about the text they read.

3) The researcher uses traditional teaching techniques.

4) The researcher does not teach the students reading strategies to comprehend texts.

5) The seating arrangement does not support collaborative learning.

6) Reading texts are not appropriate for the students' age, level, and context.

7) Reading instructions and procedures are not clear.

1.3 Scope and Limitation

The research focuses on low reading comprehension ability and motivation. Therefore, the researcher conducts classroom action research by applying paragraph shrinking strategy to improve grade II students' reading comprehension and motivation in learning English at XYZ School Jakarta.

1.4 Formulation of the Problems

The research questions are formulated as follows:

1) How is the application of paragraph shrinking strategy to improve reading comprehension and motivation in learning English for second-grade students at XYZ School?

2) How is the improvement of reading comprehension ability with the application of paragraph shrinking strategy in learning English for second-grade students at XYZ School?

3) How is the improvement of motivation with the application of paragraph shrinking strategy in learning English for second-grade students at XYZ School?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

Based on the formulation of the problems, this study aims:

1) To analyze the application of paragraph shrinking strategy to improve reading comprehension and motivation in learning English for second-grade students at XYZ School.

2) To analyze the improvement of reading comprehension ability with the application of paragraph shrinking strategy in learning English for second-grade students at XYZ School.

3) To analyze the improvement of motivation with the application of paragraph shrinking strategy in learning English for second-grade students at XYZ School.

1.6 Benefits of the Study

This research is conducted to contribute insights to many people in the field of education, not only to benefit the researcher.

1.6.1 Theoretical Benefit

Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of the educational field and provide insights into reading comprehension ability and learning motivation in various fields, especially in learning English at school. Besides, the research also functions as a reference for future research with similar variables, as well as a reading material providing useful knowledge and information to benefit readers in general.

1.6.2 Practical Benefit

Practically, this research is expected to inform teachers and educational practitioners about the application of paragraph shrinking strategy to improve students' reading comprehension ability and motivation. For teachers, it can serve as material for evaluating and reflecting on the planning and assessment of

learning processes, preparing various activities with engaging methods to motivate students. For schools, it can provide input and additional reference for improving the quality of classroom learning.

1.7 Thesis Overview

In structuring this classroom action research, to ensure it remains focused on the main issue and doesn't stray into other problems, the author has created a systematic writing structure consisting of five chapters. Chapter I includes the Introduction, Chapter II covers the Review of Related Literature, Chapter III outlines the Research Methods, Chapter IV presents the Results and Discussion, and Chapter V provides the Conclusions, Implications, and Suggestions.

Chapter I Introduction discusses the background of the importance of reading comprehension and motivation in learning, especially in English reading classes. In this chapter, it also explains the formulation of the problems, the research objectives, and the benefits of this research.

Chapter II, namely the Review of Related Literature, contains theories that are relevant and support the formulation of the problems. In this chapter, the researcher also discusses the child development stage of second grade students to understand them better in terms of reading comprehension and motivation. The definitions and indicators of each variable are used as the basis for measurement or assessment in this research. Additionally, this chapter also includes several previous studies relevant to the current research.

Chapter III Research Methods outlines the design of the classroom action research conducted in three cycles, the research location, time, subjects, setting, procedures, data collection, data analysis, and success criteria of the research.

Chapter IV Results and Discussion outlines the research findings and discussions for each cycle. The implementation of the first cycle, second cycle, and third cycle is presented along with the planning, implementations, observations, and reflections. Each step of the classroom action research is described, followed by the presentation of data processing results and analysis of the data obtained through observations and tests. After the third cycle, the researcher conducts comprehensive data analysis to examine the improvement that occurred throughout the cycles and assess the effectiveness of the paragraph shrinking strategy in enhancing reading comprehension and motivation.

Chapter V Conclusions, Implications, and Suggestions presents conclusions that address the research questions, discusses the study's implications, and offers suggestions for future research on related topics.