

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Reading is important skill in learning English besides listening, speaking, and writing. Through reading, people know what is happening in the world, add knowledge, and get information. It is a process of constructing meaning. Reading is essential in daily life to get information from every reading passage. It is a fundamental skill that students need to acquire. Reading is a type of language skill in which people will obtain new information, knowledge, and experience that have never been known before. Everything that is obtained through reading enables them to improve their thinking power, sharpen their breadth, and broaden their horizons. Therefore, reading has many benefits for students, from awakening imagination to improving academic abilities. They can learn a lot from various book genres, which they can apply to other areas of interest, expanding their knowledge.

According to Johnson (2008), reading is a constantly developing skill. Like other skills, the students get better at reading by practicing. Conversely, if they do not practice, they will not get better, and their skills may deteriorate because reading practice helps them become better readers. Reading integrates visual and nonvisual information. The visual information on the page and the nonvisual information in the head create meaning during reading. In that way, what is in the head is just as important as what is on the page in creating meaning (reading).

Reading comprehension is an active process that is important to the students' understanding of a text and getting the meaning of the text. Therefore, learning to read is a life-long process. Understanding and remembering information can improve the students' reading comprehension. It is not a simple process, but it

is a complex activity in the teaching-learning process. Basically, readers make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text, and other strategies to help them understand written text. Reading is not simply translated word for word, but it needs to know the meaning of the text and context.

Students often have difficulty understanding reading, especially in general contexts. Many students are unfamiliar with the words in the text, which can cause confusion and misunderstandings. Another factor that contributes to reading comprehension difficulties is inadequate background knowledge. They may not have prior knowledge of the topic being discussed, making it difficult for them to understand and interpret the text. Difficulty in identifying main ideas and summarizing information also affects their reading abilities. This is caused by their inability to organize and integrate information from various sources and to understand the relationship between various ideas. These challenges can significantly impact their academic performance and English ability. Therefore, teachers must support students in developing strong reading comprehension.

Nowadays, in improving reading comprehension, the teacher uses many strategies to teach students each skill and level of reading. Reading skills are more focused on their comprehension. That is why, reading is also called reading comprehension. If a teacher needs to improve the students' reading skills, there are several factors that the teacher needs to consider. These include considering their needs and the kind of information they want about reading comprehension. Therefore, reading is a vital skill that can be challenging to teach. The students need to understand the meaning of reading to help them understand the texts.

Based on an interview with one of the teachers at SMP Kertha Budaya Mas, some students still had many problems in learning to read, particularly the eight-

grade students. The researcher interviewed the English teacher. The teacher said that the students could not understand a text. It was influenced by four factors. First, students had difficulty getting general information from the texts. Second, they needed to improve their ability to find specific information in the texts. Third, they were also low in understanding the textual meaning or the words meaning in the texts. Fourth, it seemed hard to find the textual references of the words in the texts.

Based on the problem above, it was necessary to apply the method or strategies to solve students' reading problems in English so they could read and understand the meaning of every reading passage. KWL Combined with Picture was chosen to solve this problem and improve their achievement in reading comprehension. Through KWL Combined with Picture, they develop independent skills in comprehending, composing, and learning the text. This strategy gives them a structure that guides them through the lesson and applies their background knowledge to the new material. KWL Combined with Picture can be used to observe and assess their progress in comprehending the text, and they are targeting the important content. The strategy also allows them to gain knowledge and share their ideas with others. KWL Combined with Picture is easy to understand because it can help them comprehend the text. Besides, they can show their background knowledge, predict information they expect to find in reading texts and take notes related to the information they gain.

Using KWL Combined with Picture can get the student's attention when they explain the material in front of the class. Moreover, it allows them to gain knowledge and share their ideas with the other students. Besides, pictures are suitable supporting media in teaching and learning to read descriptive text. Harmer (2007) states that pictures are extremely useful for a variety of communication

activities, such as descriptive text. Students are also hoping not to feel bored in the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, this technique has simple steps that are easy to manage and do not cost much. KWL Combined with Picture is the perfect combination that can be used to improve students' reading skills.

Based on the background above, reading comprehension is an important skill that gives many advantages to the students. In addition, by comprehending a reading text well, students get better at reading by practicing, and students can get information clearly as well as avoiding misunderstanding. To teach reading comprehension, one of the effective strategies that is appropriate to improve their reading comprehension is KWL Combined with Picture. Therefore, the researcher is absolutely motivated to do scientific research entitled "Improving Reading Comprehension of the Eighth-grade Students of SMP Kertha Budaya Mas in the Academic Year 2023/2024 through KWL Combined with Picture."

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Teaching reading comprehension in the classroom is considered important and must be considered by English teachers. Referring to the background, students still had difficulty understanding the meaning of English words to find specific and general information. After they read the text, most of them find it difficult and confusing to analyze the schematic structure of the texts. To overcome the problems, KWL Combined with Picture is a great strategy to improve their reading comprehension. It can help them analyze the schema structure. Therefore, the research question can be formulated as follows: can reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Kertha Budaya Mas in the academic year 2023/2024 be improved through KWL Combined with Picture?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

This research was conducted to answer and solve the research question stated previously. Based on the research problem, the research plan aims to find an increase in reading comprehension through KWL Combined with Picture. The main objective of this study was to determine whether reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Kertha Budaya Mas in the academic year 2023/2024 could be improved through the application of KWL Combined with Picture.

### **1.4 Limitation of the study**

The term 'reading' has a broad and wide scope of coverage, so the limitation of the study was necessary. There are many issues or content that can be adopted as the subject matter to be observed by researchers. This study focused on improving the students' reading comprehension using KWL Combined with Picture. The limitation of the present study was based on the complexity and broadness of the problem discussed. The present study was limited to improving reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Kertha Budaya Mas in the academic year 2023/2024 through KWL Combined with Picture. The school used the *Merdeka* curriculum for the eighth-grade students. In the present study, reading comprehension was focused on finding general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual references in descriptive texts. Therefore, this study focused on using KWL Combined with Picture, which is used to improve reading comprehension.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The research study results are expected to indicate significant theoretical and practical information on the importance of using KWL Combined with Picture

in teaching reading. In addition to getting the target of this research, the research has both theoretical and practical significance as follows.

Theoretically, the research study is aimed to strengthen the theories of reading, and KWL Combined with Picture. The research findings using KWL Combined with Pictures are expected to support and contribute to the theory of developing reading comprehension. Some information and theories provided in this study can be taken to enrich the existing references. Furthermore, it proves that a particular theory used in the research study is effective. In addition, it also strengthens the empirical reviews. Besides, the research is expected to be an empirical review for the next research.

Practically, the significance of the research study is that it is expected to give feedback to the teachers, students, and other researchers. By applying this strategy, teachers could solve the students' problems in reading comprehension, especially in finding general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual references. This study may increase teachers' knowledge related to effective strategies for reading in the classroom. For the students, it can be useful for them to improve their reading, particularly in identifying general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual references. It is expected to improve their confidence in reading because they know how to comprehend the text quickly. For other researchers, this study can be a reference for the next research. It can also increase and develop their knowledge about various strategies in the future.

### **1.6 Definition of Key Term**

There are several key terms used by researchers in this study. It is essential to explain these key terms to give the readers an understanding of the topic being

discussed. Thus. It will help the readers know about the topic. In addition, the researcher needs to provide operational definitions, so they are not ambiguous. The research should define some key operational terms used in the research. Two key terms are defined operationally to avoid misunderstanding on the part of the readers. In addition, it also provides clear information to make the understanding of the research clear. The key terms are explained as follows:

1. Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is defined as the ability of the eighth-grade students of SMP Kertha Budaya Mas in the academic year 2023/2024 to find general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference.

2. KWL Combined with Picture

KWL Combined with Picture was operationally defined as a strategy used by the teacher to improve the students' reading comprehension in which the students are actively engaged in three-columns. In the K column, the teacher provides students with the opportunity to brainstorm and list the ideas and details that they already know about the topic. In the W column, they predict what they want to know. In the L column, they write down what they have learned from the texts.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

Theoretical review is related to the theories used in this study. It is used to support and build this study to be firmer and more based on the facts. To avoid misunderstanding, practical understanding must be conducted with the basis of theory, and it is also concerned with the concepts and theories that can be used as the standard. This scientific research can allow readers to understand the foundation of the research problem. There are some important points written by the researcher in this chapter, including relevant theoretical reviews from related literature to support the present study. The present study is conducted based on the following theoretical review: reading comprehension, KWL Combined with Picture, and assessment of reading comprehension.

##### **2.1.1 Reading Comprehension**

Many experts have described the meaning of reading from their point of view. According to Dorn & Soffos (2005:6), reading is a complex process involving a network of cognitive actions that work together to construct meaning. The meaning will be constructed if there is a process of comprehension. Comprehension is the ability of the mind to make links about the text when reading. If the mind cannot formulate the link about the meaning of reading text, it means the comprehension process does not happen; therefore, reading is an activity that requires a high level of concentration. Another definition comes from Moreillon (2007:10), who states that reading is making meaning from print and visual information. But reading is not simple; it is a complex activity.



Pollard (2008:44) states that reading is a receptive skill that involves students interacting with visual input of language. Therefore, reading is an active process where readers interact with a text, predict what will come next, and bring knowledge of the subject and language to the text. When students can read, it will make them process and understand the texts; thus, they will comprehend what the writers mean in the texts. By learning to read, they can learn more about language components like structure and vocabulary to develop their knowledge and understanding of meaning.

### **2.1.2 KWL Combined with Picture**

Know Want Learn (KWL) strategy helps the readers to comprehend what they will read and understand what they have read. It is one of the most effective strategies for engaging and motivating learners. This strategy is wonderful at the beginning of any unit of work, meeting, or discussion. It elevates thinking and discussion and opens up avenues for possible investigation and hypothesis formation. KWL Combined with Picture activity can be used to introduce a new literacy technique or strategy to simulate prior knowledge and students' engagement (Willis, 2008:39).

In the present research, the researcher needs a teaching strategy to make the teaching-learning process run well. Some strategies are good for improving students' reading comprehension when teaching reading comprehension. In addition, it is taught to make the students succeed in understanding the material, especially in descriptive text. Using an appropriate strategy is necessary to achieve a better result in the student's reading comprehension. Hence, in the present research, KWL is the appropriate teaching strategy to improve students' reading

comprehension, especially in descriptive texts. It is expected that their reading comprehension could be improved.

KWL is a teaching strategy with simple steps in teaching reading. This strategy can make the students understand the text and become better readers. It is an immediate way to make a new topic or concept relevant to learners based on prior knowledge. Arends & Kilcher (2010) state that KWL engages students in accessing prior knowledge and learning questions and goals before an instructional segment and then reflecting on what has been learned following instructions. Therefore, it can help students and teachers uncover misconceptions and concepts about prior learning. KWL is an interesting activity for the students in the reading process. Before and after reading, they can share their knowledge about the topic they already know. They can get new information after reading the text. In the present study, the strategy consists of getting students to ask three questions in the beginning and record notes as they begin to study or read about a topic.

1. What do I know?
2. What do I want to know?
3. What have I learned?

The questions above can be drawn into KWL Thinking Sheet KWL, Thinking Sheet based on Ogle in Arends & Kilcher (2010) can be seen as follows:

Table 2.1  
KWL Chart Explanation

What I Know (K)	What I Want to Know (W)	What I Learned (L)

KWL is one of the strategies in interactive previewing text (Klingner et al. 2007). It provides a structure for recalling what learners know about the topic and

what they want to know, and finally, lists what has been learned and is yet to be learned. They learned to brainstorm everything they knew about the topic. The relevant information is recorded in the K column of the KWL scheme. The learners then generate lists of questions about what they want to know about the topic. These questions are listed in the W column. After reading, learners answer these questions about what they have learned from the text in the L column.

In addition, three steps in using KWL Combined with Picture in teaching reading comprehension would encourage students' understanding of the descriptive texts. Ogle in Arends & Kilcher (2010) state that KWL can be used with individual students, pairs, and small groups. It can help students and teachers uncover misconceptions and connect to prior learning. The students can learn reading in the class individually or with their friends by KWL Combined with Picture which makes the teachers teach reading with their own style. The teacher can make a small group, partners, or as an individual activity. In the present study, the steps of KWL Combined with Picture are adapted from Ogle in Klingner et al. (2007) as follows:

1. Teachers give each student the reading material and the KWL chart.
2. Before reading, teachers teach students to preview the passage by looking at such features as headings and subheadings, pictures and captions, and words in bold or highlighted print.
3. Teachers ask them to use the chart to record "What they already know" about this topic in the first column or K column of the chart and "What I want to learn" in the second column or W column.
4. During reading, teachers ask them to write in the third column or L column, "What I know"—what they learned in the text related to what they already knew or wanted to learn.

5. After reading, teachers ask them to revisit the chart as a wrap-up to reading. They are led in a discussion in which they review what they already know, how it is addressed in the reading, what they have learned, and what they still need to confirm or learn more about.

### **2.1.3 Assessment of Reading Comprehension**

In teaching and learning, the teacher must assess the learning process to know the students' ability, especially in reading comprehension. Assessment is a broad term covering any conscious efforts by the teachers or students to draw some conclusions based on performance. Assessment of reading comprehension is fraught with challenges because it can be difficult to determine how much they know and what they think. Assessing is important because it can diagnose their present level of knowledge and skill, monitor progress toward learning goals to help the instructional program, and provide data to judge the fine level of their learning.

Klingner et al. (2007) believe that assessment is related to the process of the learning activity of the students. Assessment can be conducted by giving the students a series of tests to allow them to respond to the material they read. On the other hand, McNamara (2007) states that assessing reading comprehension is critical to designing and implementing programs that teach reading strategies. For example, assessing students' reading comprehension before an intervention allows potential weaknesses of an individual reader to be diagnosed.

According to Black & William in McKay (2006), classroom or teacher assessment refers to the assessment carried out by teachers in the classroom. It might be formative when the teachers collect information about students' strengths and weaknesses to provide feedback to students and make further decisions about

teaching or might be summative when the teacher collects information at the end of a period, generally to report to other about their progress in teaching and learning process. The feedback also impacts their ability to know their knowledge. Thus, giving feedback at the end of the assessment is very important so they know about their mistakes when answering the questions.

Edge (2002) defines assessing and evaluating students' understanding and ability is an ongoing process. N'Namdi (2005) states that assessment is a tool that measures a learner's knowledge and ability. It shows the areas in the reading program where learners have weaknesses and strengths. Caldwell (2008) states that there is a tendency to think of assessment as something that happens after instruction, apart from instruction such as asking students to answer questions after reading a textbook chapter or a story.

Assessment is one of the processes used to measure student achievement. According to Brown (2004), assessment is an ongoing process encompassing a much wider domain. Whenever students respond to a question, make offers a comment, or try out a new word or structure, the teacher subconsciously assesses the students' assessment. Reading assessment determines what skills are being learned and what skills need strengthening. The multiple-choice test measures a broad range of knowledge across the content area. He also states that short answer tasks are an alternative to the most popular reading assessment. Besides making short-answer tasks is much easier to construct and validate, and this assessment is also effective to avoid copying answers among them. The test covers determining the main idea, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference.

According to Alderson (2000), a short answer task is a semi-objective alternative to multiple choice. One method that can be used in assessing reading

comprehension is a short-answer task designed to measure eminence understanding of the explicit content or the implied situation of descriptive text. Therefore, the researcher gives them a short-answer task to know whether or not they understand the learning materials. Moreover, the scoring procedure that the researcher used was a simple scoring rubric for short-answer tasks. In addition, the scoring rubric aspects for the short answer task are writing a correct and grammatical answer.

In the present study, the researcher adopted the theory about assessment of reading comprehension from Brown (2004) who states that tests, which are a subset of assessment; they are certainly not the only form of assessment a teacher can make. Furthermore, in the present study, the researcher expected reading comprehension to increase after the research. Every cycle was completed with a pre-test and post-tests. Therefore, the researcher used the short-answer task to know whether or not their reading comprehension improved. They needed to test the students to score them. The scores are given based on the answer key and scoring rubric that they must follow the correct and grammatical answers.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

An empirical review is a way to get information and theories about the previous researchers relevant to the present study. In addition, knowledge of empirical review evidence can help the researcher avoid unintentional replication of previous studies' results and place the researcher in a better position for their study results. The purpose is to support the present study by considering the result and whether the present study would be as successful as the relevant studies in the empirical review. The researcher chose two similar types of research. This point was also focused on discussing the previous two researchers.

A Research was conducted by Wiryana (2021) entitled “Improving Reading Comprehension of the Eighth Grade Students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati Denpasar in Academic Year 2020/2021 Through K-W-L”. The researcher conducted KWL to help the eighth-grade students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati Denpasar improve and develop their reading comprehension. The result of this study showed that the KWL strategy could effectively improve and increase the low ability in reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati Denpasar. The scores of cycles I and cycle II were much higher than the mean score of the pre-test; the mean scores in cycle I and cycle II showed the improvement of the students’ reading comprehension through KWL.

Another research was conducted by Setam (2022) entitled “Improving Reading Comprehension of the Tenth-grade Students of SMA (SLUA) through KWL Strategy Combined with Picture in Academic Year 2021/2022”. The objective was to describe concisely what the research was trying to achieve. A particular investigation was expected to provide a scientific solution to the research problem. Moreover, the objective should align with the background and the research problem formulated for the study. Based on the statements of the problems above, the research intended to find out the implementation of using KWL strategy to improve their reading comprehension for the tenth-grade students of SMA (SLUA) in the academic year 2021/2022. The results of using KWL strategy in this study could be seen from the progressing mean scores of the pre-test and post-tests.

The researcher above gained the same results, showing that after conducting two cycles, there were constant improvements after the researcher applied KWL, and the students responded positively. However, neither of the researchers explained the correct theory or the steps for implementation of the technique. As a

result, the students were confused during the strategy implementation. In the present study, the researcher adapted a theory from Klingner et al. (2007). The researcher explained clearly the theory and completed it with the procedural steps. It made the teachers more confident when implementing the teaching strategy to the students, and it would be easier for them to understand the theory when doing the activity during the learning process.

