

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides the research that deals with the research background, identification of the phenomena, the focus of study, research questions, aims of the research, significance of the research, theoretical foundation, previous research, frame of thought, and research method.

### **1.1 Background of The Phenomena**

Indonesia is often considered to be in a country of reading emergency. Therefore, the ability to read in English is crucial for our daily lives and plays a vital role in the learning process. Unfortunately, many students struggle with finding the main idea, learning new words, identifying the purpose of a text, and understanding the details within (Anaktototy & Lesnussa, 2022, p. 245). This statement has been validated by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organization for Economic and Development's (OECD) which is updated every three years. The latest update (OECD, 2023) in 2022 revealed that Indonesian students ranked 132<sup>nd</sup> out of 145<sup>th</sup> countries in literacy, categorizing students with low literacy level. This suggests that their reading skills are below the expected level, with a score of only 383, compared to Singapore's top rank score of 561.

Not only from a worldly perspective, but also from a religious one, all religions undoubtedly strive for growth benefiting their believers. Thus, reading is highly encouraged by the Islamic religion, this significance is emphasized in the holy Al-Qur'an, specifically in Surah Al-A'laq 1-5, where Allah SWT encourages the pursuit of knowledge through reading.

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ۝ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۝ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ۝ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۝  
عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ۝

*Meaning: “Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created. He has created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has been taught by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not”.*

The verse means that the habit of reading is rooted in the Al-Qur’an, as outlined in its revelations. This skill is crucial for literacy, which is essential for life. With reading, people can acquire more knowledge and share it with others. The pursuit of knowledge knows no bounds and allows humans to seek it out in various ways. Students can become more active and creative in developing their knowledge by reading. Reading provides a wealth of information across various fields, offering students a chance to learn and grow. In the presence of students, interest and preferences in reading plays a direct role in the speed and success of acquiring new information from the text. Mastering reading is crucial for language learners because it facilitates communication between readers and writers. In reading, students should extract knowledge from texts by understanding main and supporting ideas, specific details, word meanings, phrases, and the overall function of the text (Mustikasari, 2021, p. 278).

Kusumarasyati (2023, p. 783) emphasizes that to understand what one reads, it is important to actively interpret the text by linking new concepts with existing knowledge, rather than merely gathering information from the text. Reading involves several cognitive steps in the brain to understand the meaning of a text (Rila Apriltya et al., 2016). Moreover, Lian (2021, p. 247) stated that reading goes beyond simply understanding words and grammar, it has a transformative effect on individuals. It expands access to community knowledge and influences one’s perception of power. In essence, reading is not just about understanding sentences, it involves an emotional connection with the content and shapes the way readers think about problems and view the world.

At the junior high school level, students need to be able to comprehend a variety of text genres. Since almost all of the questions on school exams and daily English tests are derived from texts. Unfortunately, many schools around the world face challenges that the students who have a few failures of the same kind each day. To tackle this phenomenon, teachers need to make sure students find reading enjoyable. When students are interested, they are more likely to stay engaged and not lose interest in the process.

Furthermore, the students will actively read if they are interested in reading content because it can make them perceive reading as a habit for them (Pambudiyatno et al 2021, p. 59). Students need to read to continue to grow academically and professionally. It affects the intellectual and emotional growth of individuals (Al-Jarf, 2023, p. 32). This is also referred to by B. Lian (2020, p. 145) everyone should be good at reading because most information, like in newspapers, magazines, and journals, is presented in written form. As readers, students are expected not only to recognize individual words within a text but also to comprehend the text's overall meaning. In essence, reading involves the visual decoding of alphabet symbols present in written text, with the primary objective of extracting specific information (Que & Wakim, 2020, p. 23). When the students show high interest in reading, it is expected that they will reach a deeper understanding so that they can analyze English text as well. Because why? Someone deeply interested in reading will naturally seek out reading materials without even realizing it (Ginny et al., 2022, p. 4). He further mentions that, initiating the development of one's reading interest is beneficial, and it is never too late to start. This endeavor is bound to offer advantages, expanding knowledge and insights for everyone involved in reading English text.

Research result from Zur et al (2022, p. 153) found students believe that reading English texts regularly makes them better learners. The questionnaire shows 87% of students agree. Other factors contributing to this are that 85% of students enjoy reading English texts, feel happy receiving English books as gifts, and find reading English books interesting. The questionnaire indicates students, interest in reading is influenced by their effort, motivation, and assumptions.

Motivation is the main factor, as revealed in interviews, where students read English texts with specific goals to improve their English skills.

Hence, to become really good at reading and understand what the reading content is, students need both the interest and the preference. The will to read, or later will be mentioned as motivation, will engage and attract in their reading (Udsaratchakarn, 2020, p. 3). The existence of motivation in reading makes students want to spend their time reading (Baba & Rostam Affendi, 2020, p. 102). Through high motivation, students have an opportunity for high achievement in English reading comprehension, it can be reflected by achieving a good score. High motivation means they have an inner push to engage in learning and the ability to overcome challenges (Aprilia et al., 2020, p. 8). Meanwhile, students who lack the motivation in reading try to avoid reading activity. According to Dukpa and Dhendup (2021, p. 7) there are some factors that affect reading motivation of students, such as; gender, age, type of parent's work, level of parents' educational background, and socioeconomic background of parents.

English in Indonesia has been taught as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia since English is not utilized as an official language, and most traditional classes in Indonesia employ English as the medium of instruction. Consequently, Indonesian students often struggle with English reading comprehension. The majority of the students in Cirebon city have to learn four languages such as Indonesian, Cirebonese, Sundanese, and Javanese.

Regarding the factors that contribute to reading competence are not limited to motivation and interest alone, as reading preference also plays a significant role in a student's reading comprehension abilities. Milal et al (2021, p. 143-144) unraveled the relationship between individuals' preferences for reading for information or enjoyment and their proficiency in both types of reading. By analyzing what individuals choose to read in their leisure time, it is possible to infer their reading abilities, which could have implications for their academic performance. Furthermore, the research aims to determine whether those who read for enjoyment possess superior reading skills overall, providing insights into the significance of leisure reading for academic success.

In addition, to look deeper at the process in this research. The researcher gathers several similar research results on how to explore students' reading interest in English texts. There are several clusters in this area. For example, focusing on psychological development in adolescence (Diekema, 2020, Honghao et al., 2021), literacy environments (Sun et al., 2023), factors affecting students' reading interest (Kurniawan & Sulistiyono, 2020; Mustadi & Amri, 2020; Pitoyo, 2020, Renninger & Hidi, 2015), reading experience (Corstorphine & Kremmel, 2018, Loh & Sun, 2019, Swarniti, 2021), reading fluency (Taguchi et al., 2023).

Based on several previous clusters, it can be stated that there are various problems driving the need for this research. These problems include, among others, the initial findings related to the low reading interest of junior high school students. The previous research did not inform about the factors shaping the reading interest of Junior high school students. The following problem is the lack of detailed information about the various readings consumed by Junior high school students. With these various problems, research related to the reading interest of Junior high school students needs to be conducted promptly to address these phenomena. How do interests develop in reading? What types of readings are consumed by students in the Junior high school students? Why do students like certain texts? As a result, in line with the progress of the era and scientific advancements. This research aims to gain a real world understanding of the motivation and interest of students in reading.

The origins of reading interests have remained mysterious to personality psychology, probably because many past research (Le, 2023) has focused on the factors influencing students' low interest in reading without detailed information based on social phenomena. While the research identifies relevant internal and external factors contributing to students' low interest in reading English texts. Additionally, talking about reading motivation Le (2023, p. 133) stated that the students also proposed forming groups to present chapters of books or articles of their choice for extra credit as a way to motivate them to read more. It means students are more interested in reading when offered reading material by their own choice.

Result discussion from Habibian et al (2015) in simple terms, the importance of psychological factors in reading can be seen in two main ways. Firstly, research has shown that students' feelings, thoughts, and motivation significantly affect how well they understand what they read. Having a positive attitude, believing in their abilities, and staying motivated not only make students less anxious about reading but also help them successfully finish their reading tasks, even if they face challenges. For example, feeling nervous about reading in a foreign language can impact how well someone understands the text. So, taking into account these psychological aspects while teaching can really help students. Secondly, while many studies have looked at how psychological factors affect reading, not many have focused on individuals' specific reading behaviors and what causes these psychological factors. Teachers should be aware of these factors and include them in their teaching methods for academic reading. Most studies have looked at groups of learners, conducted tests, and studied how these psychological factors influence the reading process rather than understanding the factors themselves.

The past research did not show significant changes. Aprilia et al (2020) also did not identify the characteristics of texts that students find interesting. Additionally, the study did not determine the attributes of texts that captivate students' interest. Furthermore, it failed to specify the preferred types of texts among students. The study also lacked emphasis on the intricacy of factors that impact literacy acquisition. By incorporating variables such as vocabulary ability, socio-economic background, learning styles, and students' attitudes, the need for relevant topics in English texts becomes more apparent. To select appropriate literary texts for language classes, the teacher should consider students' needs, motivations, interests, cultural backgrounds, and language levels (Khatib, 2012, p. 20). A crucial factor is determining if a work can engage students by stimulating their interest and eliciting positive reactions. Meaningful and enjoyable literary texts can have lasting effects on learners' linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge (Rabb Khan & Alasmari, 2018, p. 171). It is essential to choose English text that are relevant to students' real-life experiences, emotions, or dreams (Ganiyatovna, 2023, p. 177).

There are several gaps in the literature by addressing multiple topics, but it should be noted that the researcher sacrificed in-depth analyses of student interest and reading preference to focus on breadth and conceptually tie these two concepts together. As a first step, this research will be followed by additional empirical, conceptual, and theoretical work. Students reading important, meaning that they have different reasons for choosing to read. This research also aims to set the stage for future work by addressing these topics. It is crucial for teachers to have adequate knowledge of students' development to optimally contribute. Overall, in order to determine the what types of text students are interested in reading English text, it is important to exploring students' interests based on EFL context. By doing so, teaching can select teaching materials that are aligned with the teaching-learning process based on students reading preferences. With the passage of time, the research will be carried out by the researcher to exploring interest and reading preference among students of Junior Highschool in Cirebon.

By conducting this research, the researcher wants to learn more about what junior high school students in Cirebon are interested in reading. This information can help the educators choose the right teaching materials for them. The researcher also hope that the study will be useful in figuring out what students need and finding better ways to teach reading comprehension. Ultimately, the researcher wants the results to encourage schools and libraries to provide enough reference books in English text.

This research addresses a problem where many students have low reading comprehension due to their low interest in reading. It is important to understand what motivates students to read various types of texts, as this reflects their diverse reading activities. Therefore, this qualitative study aims to understand what is meant by the term interest for EFL learners to read English texts, as well as other types of texts, so they have a different preference in reading English text.



## **1.2 Identification of The Phenomena**

Indonesia faces a critical literacy challenge, evidenced by the low ranking in the PISA literacy assessment, where Indonesian students scored, far below the global average countries like Singapore. Many students feel that English is not essential in their daily lives, to a low level of understanding when reading. Some students find English lessons challenging and hard, resulting in low reading comprehension. Many students have a limited vocabulary when studying English. Although the students may have these limitations, it does not mean that students do not have interest and preference in reading. To better understand what types of texts students are interested in. And what factors contribute to students when it comes to their reading preferences.

## **1.3 Delimitation and Focus of The Research**

The delimitations of this study focus on the scope of exploring EFL learners' interest and preference in reading English texts. The study specifically targets junior high school students who face challenges in literacy, particularly in reading English, as a foreign language. It emphasizes understanding the types of texts students are interested in and the factors contributing their reading preferences, without extending to other language skills such as speaking, writing, or listening. Therefore, it is vital for researchers to investigate the factors that can stimulate students' preference in reading English texts and what can encourage them to be more interest in reading such texts.



#### **1.4 Research Question**

Based on the formulation and focus of the study, there are two key problems that can be formulated in this study. To guide this study in understanding the reading interests and preferences of 8th grade junior high school students, the following research questions are formulated:

1. What types of texts generate interest in 8<sup>th</sup> grade junior high school students when it comes to reading?
2. What factors contribute to 8<sup>th</sup> grade junior high school students' preferences for specific texts?

#### **1.5 Aims of The Research**

In relation to the formulation of the problem, the aim of this research is to address three key questions:

1. To investigate the types of texts that generate interest in 8th grade junior high school students when it comes to reading.
2. To analyze the factors that contribute to 8th grade junior high school students' preferences for specific texts.

#### **1.6 Significance of The Research**

The result of this study offers two significant pieces of research consisting of theoretically and practically, which can give some positive contribution to the English learning context and may be beneficial for the researcher, students, and the other researcher.

### **1.6.1 Theoretical Significance**

Theoretically, its potential to provide valuable insights into how students learning English as a foreign language become interested in reading. By investigating the factors that influence this interest, the study may offer new ideas and models that can help us better understand how people learn languages and what teaching methods work best. This research could lead to practical strategies and approaches that make learning English more enjoyable and effective for students. Overall, the study's theoretical significance extends give English text reference in language education practices for both teachers and learners.

### **1.6.2 Practically Significance**

The result of this study will be suggested to be able to widen the students' interest and preference in English reading text.

a. For students

The researcher hopes that students can build their interest to reach successful academics, especially in English reading text.

b. For teachers

It is hoped that this research can provide inspiration or ideas to teachers to build the students interest and willingness the students to read English text.

c. Other Researcher

This research is expected to be referenced in arranging the thesis to the next researcher and can be used to increase their knowledge and learning process.

## **1.7 Theoretical Foundation**

This section contains the theoretical foundation of the study. The researcher presents the general theory of student interest, student preference, reading, and English text. The theoretical basis presents the reader with the underlying area based on research problems.

### **1.7.1 Definition of Exploring**

Exploring can be a challenging concept to define, but we can visualize the act of exploration. Although there is no prominent study that focuses on the meaning of “exploring” itself, we can gather certain implicit understandings about the word. Exploring refer to the through broader understanding of various object by paying close attention and understanding more broadly an object to get unexpected results in accordance with its small scope (Nurjanah & Muttaqin, 2023, p. 12). Just as Beth Kery and Myers (2017, p. 25) stated exploration is a basic human strategy for gaining new understanding about a space of idea.

In addition, Willis (2017, p. 29) exploring is the act of venturing into unknown realms, marked by a need for specific attitudes such as willingness, courage, and a readiness to take risks. It additionally demands the determination to persist in our explorations, even when faced with dead ends or barriers that impede our progress. He further stated that, exploration is an active process - we have to do something in order to find or discover something even if we don't know exactly what it is we are looking for (Willis, 2017, p. 29). In this stage, the emphasis shifts from summarizing existing knowledge to a focus on form, implying a deeper understanding and analysis of the subject matter. And also, exploration is a basic human strategy for gaining new understanding about a space of idea.

It can be concluded that exploration is a part of exploring activities in editorial efforts encompass a collaborative process involving searching, finding, filtering, interpreting, connecting, combining, synthesizing, and contextualizing knowledge. The goal is to develop a coherent and compelling narrative suitable for the inquiry, allowing researcher to recreate new meanings and enhance their understandings through this collective effort.

### 1.7.2 Definition of EFL

English is a foreign language in many countries, such as Spain, Brazil, and Japan, where the primary language for communication and instruction is Spanish, Portuguese, or Japanese, respectively (Broughton et al., 2002, p. 6). He further stated that English is still widely taught in schools, but it is not essential for daily life or social and professional advancement. In these situations, learners of English often have an instrumental motivation for learning the language (Broughton et al., 2002, p. 7). This is also similar Mesgarshahr and Abdollahzadeh (2014, p. 55) EFL stands for English as a foreign language. This term refers to situations where individuals are learning English in a setting where it is not the primary language spoken in that particular region or country. For example, someone in Japan learning English would be in an EFL context because Japanese is the primary language spoken in Japan, not English.

In Indonesia, English is also considered a foreign language and is taught in schools as a means of communication. It has been the first foreign language taught in secondary schools for over 70 years (Zein et al., 2020, p. 1).

According to Harmer (2001, p. 132) EFL learners are those who learn English as a foreign language. He argues that using only English in classrooms encourages students to communicate more, believing that language learning can naturally happen as a result.

EFL stands for English as a Foreign Language, which refers to the study of English by non-native speakers in countries where English is not the primary language (Si, 2019, p. 33). EFL learners may have a variety of reasons for learning English, such as for educational or career opportunities, travel, or simply for personal interest. Referred to Si (2019, P. 34) EFL learners may face unique challenges in learning English, such as differences in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary between their native language and English.

Based on the theory above, this research defines English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is the study of English by non-native speakers in countries where English isn't the primary language, like Spain, Brazil, Japan, and Indonesia. Taught

in schools for communication, education, career opportunities, or personal interest, EFL learners may face challenges due to differences between their native language and English.

### **1.7.3 Definition of Learners**

It is important to note that there are several opinions that define learners. According to Biesta (2010, p. 541) learners are human characterized by a sense of lacking or incompleteness, rather than by the specific content they need to learn. They are individuals who are in the process of acquiring skills or knowledge.

Kapur (2015, p. 121) describe learner is an individual acquiring knowledge or skills in various stages of education, training, or personal development. Learners are typically individuals who are actively engaged in acquiring new knowledge or skills, demonstrating a willingness to expand their understanding or capabilities (Boud and Solomon, 2003, p. 8)

Furthermore, Goldenberg (2006, p. 12) stated that learners are actively participating in educational processes that involve reading, writing, listening, and speaking, which can influence contextual knowledge development. McCombs (2001, p. 186) point out that learners are unique individuals influenced by their genetics, experiences, backgrounds, talents, and needs.

From the several definitions above, it can be conclude that learner are multi-faceted individuals involved in acquiring knowledge or skills, characterized by a desire to expand their understanding. They actively participate in educational processes and may be at different stages of education, training, or personal development. Factors such as genetics, experiences, backgrounds, talents, and needs shape their unique learning journey. Therefore, learners can be understood as individuals who actively seek to enhance their capabilities and understanding through various educational experiences.

### 1.7.3.1 The Theory of Language Learning

Learning a second language is complicated. While many people have experience of language learning, their practical knowledge is not enough to explain the process in depth, let alone how the brain works in storing and processing language. That's why language learning is important. According to Mitchell et al (2019) scientifically, language learning can help us understand more about language, human learning, intercultural communication, and how it's all connected. Practically, people can know what makes second language learning successful or unsuccessful, we can help teachers and students learn more effectively. It requires theory to understand this in a structured way. These theories not only describe, but also explain how learning happens:

- Property Theory: Focuses on the language system being learned, such as grammar or vocabulary.
- Transition Theory: Focuses on the developmental process of language learning.

It focuses on the fundamental principles and rules that govern language behavior, popularized by Noam Chomsky. Chomsky argued that theoretical linguistics should study language competence—the abstract knowledge of language in our minds that allows us to create and understand new sentences, rather than simply analyzing performance (Mitchell et al., 2019). Studying competence is challenging, however, as performance data is only an imperfect reflection of a complex language system.

#### **1.7.4 Definition of Interest**

The feeling of love and eagerness towards something or an activity without being compelled by anyone is known as (Aprilia et al., 2020, p. 369). Ginny et al (2022) pointed out interest is an emotional state that affects one's mind and actions. Interest is characterized by a concern towards something, along with the desire to know, learn, and prove further. Interest can be defined as a psychological condition marked by increased attention, activity, and emotional response within a specific moment (Ginny et al., 2022, p. 5).

Additionally, it represents a persistent inclination to repeatedly engage with a specific object or subject over an extended period, referred to as individual interest Hidi and Renninger (2006) as cited in (Harackiewicz et al., 2016, P. 2). Interest is the outcome of an individual's interaction with their environment and is characterized by their psychological state, cognitive motivation, and affective engagement with the content of interest over time (Renninger & Hidi, 2015, p. 9). Then, Tan et al (2021, p. 4) stated that interest is a situation involves individual interaction with a specific object and a predisposition to sustain that interest towards it.

From the various perspectives above that interest is when someone really care about something and want to know more. It can be a short-term excitement in the moment, called situational interest. Or, it can be a long-term liking for a specific thing over time, known as individual interest. Basically, interest is about being curious, paying attention, and having feelings about things that catch someone attention, whether for a little while or for a long time.



#### **1.7.4.1. The Study of Interest**

The study of interest has gained attention since the 1970s, has initiated by Schank this is initially characterized interest as an emotional response to situational stimuli (Schank, 1979, p. 273). Interest plays a crucial role in learning. According to Erlidawati (2023, p. 97) interest in learning, particularly in reading, can enhance students' understanding of the subject. One of the things that may have shaped students' reading interest was a book's engaging and cohesive content. If students met and fulfilled their essential needs security, status, a specific position, and freedom based on their actual circumstances and developmental stage, then their reading habit or activity was deemed successful or useful (Rinawati, 2019, p. 3). When students are interested, they experience pleasure and satisfaction. If the learning material aligns with their interests, they are more likely to learn and perform well. As this means, motivation and interest are interconnected because engagement with content can support the development of interests, but at the same time, interest in the content can motivate individuals to maintain involvement with it (Tan et al., 2021, p. 14).

According to Renninger & Hidi (2015) the understanding of interest encompasses two aspects: the psychological state and motivational inclination. Psychological state using experienced while engaging with a particular content, such as mathematics, bass fishing, or music. And the motivational inclination intended to re-engage with that content over time.

#### **1.7.4.2. Interest as Motivation Trigger**

Motivation Research began in Canada with Gardner and Lambert in the 1950s. In book "The Psychology Of The Language Learner" by Dornyei and Ryan (2015, p. 47) they realized that learning a foreign language is different from other subjects because it is influenced by social-psychological factors, such as attitudes towards the language culture, cultural stereotypes, and geopolitical conditions. They said that attitudes toward the specific language group would affect the success of language learning. This was groundbreaking because previously, successful language learning was more often considered the result of aptitude and effective teaching. Gardner created a model that combined individual factors (such as needs,

goals, interests) with socio-psychological factors (relationships between first and second language communities). This was considered revolutionary in this day (Dornyei and Ryan, 2015, p. 75). The model includes:

- Initial factors (such as age, gender, learning experience)
- Individual difference variables (such as intelligence, learning strategies, anxiety)
- Language learning context
- Learning outcomes

Then according to Gardner, motivation is divided into two:

- Integrative Motivation: The desire to get closer to the second language culture or community.
- Instrumental Motivation: Focus on practical benefits (e.g. higher salary or career opportunities).

If students have a positive attitude towards English culture (integrative), they will prefer to read texts that are relevant to that culture. If they feel that reading texts can help their careers or school grades (instrumental), their interest will also increase.

#### **1.7.4.3. The Development of Interest**

There are two categories of interest in educational research: situational interest and individual interest. Situational interest is the initial stage of interest development and signifies a feeling of attraction to a particular activity (Renninger & Hidi, 2015, p. 13). Whereas, individual interest refers to a person's long-lasting tendency to revisit specific content and to the emotional state triggered when this tendency is activated (Hidi & Renninger, 2006, p. 113). In other words, interest represents both a psychological state and a motivational disposition that arise from the interaction of an individual's characteristics and their environment as depicted in table 1.1. This table cited in (Renninger & Hidi, 2015)

**Table 1. 1**  
*The Four Phase of Interest Development*

**The Four Phase of Interest development**

<i>Phases of interest development</i>				
<i>Less developed (earlier)</i>			<i>More developed (later)</i>	
	Phase I: Triggered situational interest	Phase 2: Maintained situational interest	Phase 3: Emerging individual interest	Phase 4: Well-developed individual interest
Definition	1. Psychological state resulting from short-term changes in cognitive and affective processing associated with a particular class of content	1. Psychological state that involves focused attention to a particular class of content that reoccurs and/or persists over time	1. Psychological state and the beginning of relatively enduring predisposition to seek reengagement with a particular class of content over time	1. Psychological state and a relatively enduring predisposition to reengage a particular class of content over time
Learner characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attends to content, if only fleetingly</li> <li>● May or may not be reflectively aware of the experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reengages content that previously triggered attention</li> <li>● Is developing knowledge of content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is likely to independently reengage content</li> <li>● Has stored knowledge and stored value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Independently reengages content</li> <li>● Has stored knowledge and value</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● May need support to engage from others and through instructional design</li> <li>● May experience either positive or negative feelings</li> <li>● May not persevere when confronted with difficulty</li> <li>● May simply want to be told what to do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is developing a sense of the content's value</li> <li>● Is likely to be able to be supported by others to find connections to content based on existing skills, knowledge, and/or prior experience</li> <li>● Is likely to have positive feelings</li> <li>● May not persevere when confronted with difficulty</li> <li>● May want to be told what to do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is reflective about the content</li> <li>● Is focused on their own questions</li> <li>● Has positive feelings</li> <li>● May not persevere when confronted with difficulty</li> <li>● May not want feedback from others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is reflective about the content</li> <li>● Is likely to recognize others' contributions to the discipline</li> <li>● Self-regulates easily to reframe questions and seek answers</li> <li>● Has positive feelings</li> <li>● Can persevere through frustration and challenge in order to meet goals</li> <li>● Appreciates and may actively seek feedback</li> </ul>
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### 1.7.5 Definition of Preference

Preference can be understood as the act of selecting one thing over another, while emphasizing the dominant, good, or important qualities of that thing, qualities of the chosen thing ((Aydın, 2023, p. 129). In different contexts, the term preference is understood in various ways. In a journal Warren et al (2011, p. 194) economists and behavioral decision theorists often see it as synonymous with choice or willingness to pay. In simpler terms, if someone prefers option A over B and C, it means they either chose an over the others or were willing to pay more for A. This understanding is called expressed preference.

Preference is how much someone likes one thing more than another, though sometimes more choices are needed, especially for those with developmental disabilities (Martin et al., 2006, p. 236). Falk et al (2023, p. 1938) serve preferences are characteristics that influence how individuals make decisions concerning risk, time, and social interactions, shaping their personalities.

Moreover, in reading context preference is refer to a basic understanding of a person's reading habits, this encompasses both the specific subjects or genres of literature that an individual prefers to read, as well as the quantity and depth of reading material (Baba and Rostam Affendi, 2020, p. 103).

In conclusion, preference is the act of choosing one option over another, highlighting the valued qualities of the chosen option. In the context of reading, preference refers to an individual's reading habits, encompassing the specific subjects or genres they prefer, as well as the quantity and depth of reading material consumed. Understanding reading preferences provides insight into an individual's literary inclinations and the extent of their engagement with written material.

### 1.7.6 Definition of Reading

A number of experts have differently defined what is reading, but all agree reading is the activity of looking at and understanding written words in order to gain information, learn, or simply enjoy the content (Al-Jarf, 2023, p. 32). It is an activity that people of various ages and educational backgrounds participate in during their free time. Moreover, Seidenberg et al (2020, p. 5119) stated that reading is an immensely intricate task that engages nearly all of our cognitive and neural abilities.

Bojovic (2010, p. 1) believes that reading is a complex and purposeful activity that takes time and effort to develop. It involves understanding and flexibility, requiring considerable resources to become proficient. Furthermore, reading is described as a process that readers undertake to grasp the message conveyed by the author (Mendelman, 2007, p. 3). People who read in different languages use similar ways of understanding, even if the writing looks very different. This is in line Maharsi et al (2019, p. 80) reading is a vital skill that students need to develop in language acquisition, especially for students in countries like Indonesia where English is considered a foreign language (EFL) and is often challenging to learn.

Fatmawaty et al (2022, p. 206) define that reading is required in order to identify, retain, or recall the specific details that are mentioned directly in a paragraph. Finding information that isn't explicitly mentioned in a section requires the reader to use interest, instinct, and inference abilities while reading for informational comprehension.

Adapted from various definitions above, it can be simplified. Reading is an activity when someone looks at words to gain information or enjoy what is written. It requires comprehension and flexibility, and is a skill that can be used for both practical and enjoyment purposes

### 1.7.7 Definition of English Text

Before offering a broad definition, let's analyze the terms English and text to gain a deep understanding. English is an international language and has many varieties, a person only needs one accent to be able to pronounce and speak English (Amalia et al., 2022, p. 80). According to Ario Utomo and Sibaroni (2019) English is a language commonly used in the international world. Then, English that is often used in society is British English and American English. This is in line with Rao (2019, p. 1) English serves as a global language even though there are some variations in habits, cultures, traditions, regions. Then, English is widely recognized as an international language, which is essential for communication in various fields such as education, science, and technology (Septiyana et al., 2021, p. 68).

Furthermore, in academic terms, a text refers to anything that communicates a set of meanings to the individual who analyzes it (Budiarti, 2013, p. 9). As cited by Halliday & Hasan (1976) in Fransiskus Jemadi (2017, p. 23) a text is a coherent passage of discourse that exhibits two forms of coherence: it aligns with the context of the situation, maintaining consistency in register, and it maintains internal cohesion within itself. In linguistics, text refers to any meaningful piece of language, usually written down, it can take various forms, such as graffiti or diary entries, and once created, they are used by readers or responders (Barton & Lee, 2013, p. 26). Furthermore, Wilson (2012, p. 342) stated that text are the use of language in specific situations that involve some ideas that possess meaning and can take the form of written documents or tools for accomplishing tasks.

Texts are not limited to written materials such as books, magazines, and newspapers (Isnaini, 2014, p. 13). They also include movies, paintings, television shows, songs, political cartoons, online materials, advertisements, maps, works of art, and even gatherings of people. If something can be observed, explored, and reveals layers of meaning, allowing us to derive information and draw conclusions, then it qualifies as a text (Wilson, 2012, p. 346).



In the course of conducting analysis, the researcher typically assesses the end result of the process, which is commonly referred to as an English text. The definition offered is a general explanation that is based on the commonly accepted understanding of the term English text. It does not specifically cite a particular expert because it draws from the collective knowledge and usage of the English language. English text refers to written or printed language in the English language, encompassing a wide range of forms such as books, articles, essays, emails, and more. It serves as a means of communication, conveying ideas, information, or narratives through the use of English words and grammar.

The model for genre, text and grammar proposed in the book was written by Knapp and Watkins (2005) presented in “Context Text Grammar”. In his book define texts are always created within a specific context, it is shaped by the world around them. Therefore, the context of the text is not solely determined by the individual who produces it, but also by the broader social environment and other texts.

Texts can be categorized and organized in various ways, such as every day, formal, entertaining, or informational (Knapp & Watkins, 2005, p. 29). Historically, different types of texts have been identified and labeled according to established conventions. Knapp & Watkins (2005) claimed that texts are divided into 3 classifications, namely; literary, factual and media.

1) Literary texts

Literary texts are a wide range of writings that explore and explain individual and social life, whether real or imaginary. These texts go beyond everyday experiences, using language in a way that sparks readers' imagination and invites them to connect their own meanings with the author's. Literary texts, like novels, poems, and dramas, use figurative language and poetics more than everyday texts.

2) Factual texts

In education are those that aim to share knowledge according to educational standards. These texts cover various subjects and are part of our daily activities. Examples include technical descriptions and procedures, which focus on being clear

and efficient. On the other hand, essays, reviews, and arguments aim to persuade and take more time to present ideas and opinions.

### 3) Media texts

The classification of texts poses challenges, especially as modalities evolve rapidly. For instance, discussions about the impact of SMS and emails on spelling and syntax are beyond the scope of this book. As mentioned earlier, one dynamic aspect of any text concept is users shaping it. It's crucial to recognize that media texts, whether literary or factual, used in mass communication channels like print, broadcasting, cable, film, and video, impact the literacy experiences of all students.

Media texts take different forms based on the technology of the media. Understanding these texts involves grasping the technologies and production modes of the respective media. In the English learning area, students are expected to comprehend how English functions in various text categories. For instance, the language used in a poem differs significantly from that in a set of instructions. While functional English can be effectively taught in the context of other learning areas, more figurative or literary aspects require specific instruction in English.

To provide students with a technical understanding of how texts work, teachers must use a technical language for the task. Without this language about language, acquiring such knowledge would be challenging in many cases and nearly impossible in others.

## 1.8 Previous Studies

In this part, the researcher identifies previous studies that align with their current research. These studies, available in both thesis and journal formats, serve as evidence that similar research has been carried out in the past.

First, after analyzing the results and discussing the matter from Zur et al (2022) entitled “*Students Interest in Reading Text*” it is clear that students’ level of interest in reading is influenced by several factors such as their effort in reading, motivation, and assumptions about reading. Among these factors, motivation plays a dominant role in shaping students’ interest in reading. The desire to acquire new and interesting information on engaging topics serves as the primary motivator for

students to read. It is worth noting that students who are more interested in reading tend to have higher levels of reading comprehension. Given the significance of reading, it is essential to provide students with captivating reading materials and effective teaching methods to foster their interest in reading.

Second, the research by Mustaqima (2022) entitled “Relationship among motivation, reading habits, and writing ability of the eighth grade students” stated that the relationship between students’ reading habits and their motivation is evident. Students who have developed good reading habits possess a wealth of knowledge and ideas that they can apply in their knowledge. Motivation is a crucial element that encourages students to take action, including achieving goals in their learning. Without motivation, students may lack direction and only pursue activities that interest them personally. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can contribute to students’ goals in writing. Those who are intrinsically motivated write because they have an innate desire to learn and value the process, without expecting any rewards or recognition.

Third, research was conducted by Sari Dewi (2018) entitled “Identifying Reading Preferences of Secondary School Students” the findings show that students studying English Language Teaching in Jember have varied attitudes toward reading activities. Many do not enjoy reading in the classroom, mainly due to difficulties with the materials provided. The students often find the texts given by lecturers too challenging and uninteresting. As a result, they limit their reading habits, rarely engaging in reading outside the classroom. Their reading collection is mostly limited to textbooks for academic purposes, seen more as an obligation than a personal interest. The quality of reading material is crucial for effective reading activities. Lecturers should carefully consider the difficulty level and whether the material interests the students. Student engagement relies heavily on the appeal of the reading material. Interesting readings contribute positively to the overall lesson content, while unappealing ones can lead to disinterest. It's emphasized that providing unattractive readings not only harms interest in the material but also impacts the overall lesson content. In summary, the study indicates that English Language Teaching students in Jember often dislike the reading texts provided in

their classrooms. This dislike stems from the texts not aligning with student interests, being too challenging, and other factors. Additionally, students express preferences for reading topics related to lifestyle, health, education, arts, and religion, while avoiding topics related to politics and history.

Fourth, the research was conducted by Hussain and Munshi (2011) with the title “Identifying Reading Preferences of Secondary School Students” most students enjoyed reading books, magazines, and poetry for fun and learning, using it to gain new knowledge and connecting it to their experiences. During holidays, many read for leisure and as a hobby. They were imaginative and emotional readers, not reading to show off but to understand concepts. As mostly Muslim students, they preferred religious books, also liking literary books, novels, story books, and romantic literature. They were interested in informative materials like newspapers, travel stories, and scientific books. Autobiographies and magazines were popular for learning about people. They enjoyed poetry (romantic and classical) and drama (comedy and tragedy) for life’s colors. Students sought guidance from teachers, parents, and friends in choosing what to read. Some learned about books through media ads and made their own choices. Students had diverse reading preferences, enjoying books on Islam, travel, science, and various literature. The students read for pleasure, learning, and as a hobby for emotional satisfaction. While guided by parents and teachers, they faced challenges like poorly maintained libraries, heavy workloads, book costs, availability, personal interests, and time management.

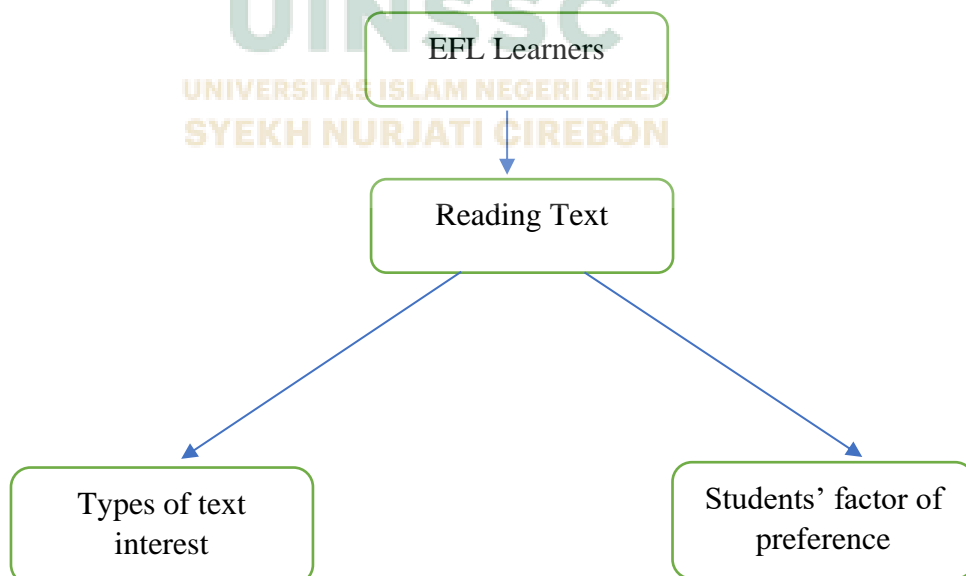
And the last is Kulikauskienė and Naujokienė (2023) revealed that reading regularly helps develop a reading habit, which can be measured by the materials read, reading frequency, and time spent reading. Most respondents prefer reading online content from social networks and news portals daily, but printed books remain popular. This suggests that while digital reading is on the rise, traditional books still have a strong presence. These habits are shaped by internal factors such as age and gender, and external factors like technology and crisis conditions, can evolve. Library data analysis reveals that women and individuals aged 36–55 are the most active readers. A survey indicates that most people read for leisure and

relaxation for several hours daily or weekly, with time constraints being a significant limiting factor.

### 1.9 Frame of Thought

To understand what drives EFL learners' interest in reading English texts and what their specific preferences are. This understanding can inform teaching practices and material selection. The reading interest of students is a powerful tool that aids in their comprehension and analysis of text, which help their learning experience (Purnama et al., 2023, p. 19). To maximize the chances of students' interest in reading, it's important to give them many reasons to do so. These reasons should be clearly communicated, repeated often, and cover a wide range of benefits (Gallagher, 2003, p. 13). Although several previous studies have been conducted, no one have explicitly identified the specific types of English texts that are of genuine interest to students, which would ultimately motivate them to persist in their reading habits and reading ability. Thus, students have their own reading preferences

**Figure 1.9** *Frame of Thought*



## **1.10 Research Method**

In this chapter, the researcher presents the specific procedures or method used to identify, select, process and analyze a topic's data. It consists of the research design and steps of the research, source and type of data, technique of data collection, technique of data analysis, and also research timeline.

### **1.10.1 Research Design and Steps of The Research**

In this study titled Exploring EFL Learners' Interest and Preferences in Reading English Texts. It used a qualitative research methodology to gain a deeper understanding of the learners' perspectives. This type of research not only uncovers new information about previously little-known subjects but also generates concepts and insights that contribute to broader interpretations of human experiences and behaviors (Yin, 2016, p. 119). Furthermore, the researcher using a phenomenology approach. In educational research, phenomenology concerned with the participants perceptions of their everyday lived experiences in the specialised school environment (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015, p. 254). Hence, this research emphasizes an in-depth understanding of experiences related to students' reading interest that are intentionally provided for their unique academic needs. To interpret the data so that it looks more transparent and conclusive, this research also uses data quantification. One of the purposes of using numbers in qualitative data is to make our qualitative data look objective (Monrouxe and Rees, 2020, p. 2). The use of numbers is not really important, what is more important is how and where the numbers are used, such as the use of words like some participants, some, about half, the majority, and so on (Monrouxe and Rees, 2020, p. 1).

### **1.10.2 Source and Type of Data**

Data is a representation of facts or ideas in a formalized manner, capable of being communicated or manipulated by a process that has the ability to create knowledge (Sanders, 2016, p. 5). The data gathered from interviews with EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. In phenomenological research, transcripts of in-depth interviews form the basis of the data used (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015, p. 254). This type of data is rich in detail and depth, providing insights into the students' interest, preferences, and psychological development on adolescent when reading English texts. The data also includes notes taken and documentation during the interviews, providing context and further clarification of the students' responses.

### **1.10.3 Technique of Data Collection**

The researcher conducted unstructured interviews with 21 EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students, including 15 female students and 6 male students. An unstructured interview is a qualitative research method without set questions or hypotheses, where the researcher engages in open-ended conversations to uncover unexpected themes and understand the interviewees' social realities (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009, p. 251).

Data from the results of unstructured interviews were then obtained by generalizing concepts to make a theory Chenitz and Swanson (1986) describe unstructured interviews as a conversation with a purpose. Recorded interviews should be transcribed and coded for sentences, words, and comments that are keywords (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015, p. 252). . The participants were randomly selected from each each class to ensure that diverse perceptions of interest and need-appropriate reading preferences could be heard. Then making codes and enable to reduction the data (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015, p. 252). Furthermore, codes are selected into categories and focused on categories to be formulated into theories on the area under study.



#### 1.10.4 Technique of Data Analysis

In qualitative studies, findings include themes or categories that form a rich, complex picture, which would be the interpret data by relating to the existing research and reflecting on the significance (Creswell, 2012, p. 18). That involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within the data. The technique for data analysis is adopted from (Hossain et al., 2024) and (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015), which includes three steps:

1) Transcribe in interview recording manually

Transcribe in interview recording manually is the first analytical step in phenomenology approach where. It is important for the researcher to start this step by looking at how code is paired to create the big themes in the data (Hossain et al., 2024, p. 161). In this stage, the researcher must examine each word from the recording in detail by asking in-depth questions about its meaning and context, to identify codes and understand each student's answers. This process involves distilling text or transcripts into codes that represent meaning. Listening to the participant's voice helps the researcher to become more aware of changes in tone of voice and why students might pause at certain points in the interview. The task of the write-up, the process of defining and naming themes includes creating a thorough examination of each topic, figuring out its focus and breadth, and figuring out its "narrative" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 23).

2) Cross-checked the transcription with the interview recording

In the second step of this research. In this stage, researchers focus on questions such as why, how, when, and where. After the codes are formed, the codes are grouped into categories or subcategories based on commonality. The principle is that categories must similar to each other and separetes from different categories, and not overlap with each other. At this stage, the researcher have not carried out free interpretation, but only grouped the data descriptively, following what happened based on the data. The researcher seeks to understand the

interviewee's experience carefully, without bias, while noting changes in meaning and recalling the nuances of the interview (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015, p. 255).

### 3) Listing and Preliminary Grouping

This step helped to formulate sub-themes and main themes, which at this stage began to indicate a point of data saturation, where the researcher could see if any new data emerged from each interview transcript (Hossain et al., 2024, p. 165). After the categories are formed, the researcher validates the relationships between the categories and completes what is still missing. Existing categories are then classified into similar themes based on patterns or common threads that emerge. At this stage, summarize the data because it is at a more general level. This process is interpretive, meaning that the themes are generated from the researcher's interpretation of the codes and categories that have been created, and these themes explain how the phenomenon under study occurs

### 4) Reduction and Elimination

These start with lots of codes to ensure all possible meanings are covered, then reduce or refine the codes to fit the research focus. This process is not completed all at once because qualitative analysis is cyclical, so the researcher goes back and forth to revise the code while considering relevant research questions and theories. In this way, different perceptions among the respondents tended to be reduced and thus data saturation could be more closely achieved. (Hossain et al., 2024, p. 166) In this stage, the researcher stopped conducting interviews with new respondents after the ninth and tenth interviews, as it was very clear that no new data had been entered at this stage of the interview and data saturation had been achieved. Stop the interview when the last two or three respondents repeat the same information, meaning no new data are coming and thus saturation is occurred.

### 1.10.5 Research Timeline

	April	May	Juny	July	August
Literature review					
Collecting data					
Analysis of data					
Writing report					
Revision					

