

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of Study

Reading is one of the most essential language skills in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Through reading, students are able to acquire information, expand their vocabulary, understand language structures, and develop critical thinking skills. Moreover, reading also contributes to the mastery of other language skills such as writing, speaking, and listening. In the context of English learning at the secondary level, reading proficiency becomes a primary goal since it provides students with access to a wide range of knowledge resources.

In practice, however, reading remains a major challenge, particularly for students whose English proficiency is still at a basic level. One of the main obstacles is limited vocabulary. Students with insufficient vocabulary often find it difficult to grasp the meaning of texts, especially when the texts are long and complex. Without translation or teacher support, they tend to feel confused, struggle to understand sentence structures, and fail to identify the main ideas of the passage. This condition not only reduces their reading comprehension but also decreases learning motivation, as reading is perceived more as a burden than as an enjoyable activity.

To address this issue, teachers employ a variety of approaches, one of which is *Task-Based Language Teaching* (TBLT). This approach emphasizes meaningful task-based learning, where students are encouraged to use the target language actively and

contextually. Theoretically, TBLT is considered effective in improving reading skills because it does not merely focus on linguistic theory but also connects language to authentic use through various activities such as analyzing, discussing, and completing tasks based on texts.

Nevertheless, preliminary observations reveal that implementing TBLT with students at the basic reading level does not always run smoothly. Many students still struggle to complete reading tasks due to vocabulary limitations and the complex sentence structures found in longer texts. To address this, teachers adapt the materials by selecting shorter texts that are more suitable for the students' abilities. While this strategy helps students comprehend the text and participate more actively, it also raises a critical question: to what extent can TBLT with simplified texts effectively enhance vocabulary and reading comprehension among basic-level learners?

From an Islamic perspective, the urgency of reading is highlighted in the very first revelation given to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), namely in Surah Al-'Alaq verse 1–5 :

اَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ① خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلْقٍ ② اَقْرَأْ وَرَبِّكَ  
اَلْأَكْرَمُ ③ الَّذِي عَلَمَ بِالْقَلْمَ ④ عَلَمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ⑤

This verse emphasizes that reading is not only a divine command but also the primary gateway to acquiring knowledge. Reading is therefore not merely an academic activity but also an act of worship and a means of developing human potential. In relation to this research, the verse is highly relevant as it underscores the importance of reading

skills, including reading in a foreign language, as a pathway to broadening horizons and enhancing intellectual capacity.

Furthermore, the Qur'an also stresses the importance of adopting appropriate strategies in teaching and learning. This is reflected in Surah An-Nahl verse 125:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلُهُمْ بِالْتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ<sup>٢</sup>  
إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهَتَّدِينَ ١٢٥

This verse highlights that effective teaching requires wisdom, good methods, and strategies suited to learners' conditions. In the context of this study, TBLT reflects this principle by emphasizing meaningful learning activities, active engagement, and adaptation to students' levels of ability. The teacher's decision to use shorter texts as part of TBLT demonstrates wisdom in teaching: adjusting materials so that students can continue learning without losing motivation.

Based on this background, the present study seeks to explore students' experiences in learning reading skills through TBLT, particularly in relation to vocabulary limitations and difficulties in comprehending longer texts. It also aims to examine students' perceptions of the use of shorter texts within TBLT and to investigate the strategies employed by both teachers and students in adapting the method to suit the needs of basic-level learners. The findings are expected to provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of TBLT in the context of reading instruction for EFL students at the basic level, as well as to offer practical recommendations for

teachers in designing strategies, techniques, and reading materials that are more appropriate and effective.

## **B. Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid misunderstanding and to clarify how key terms were used in this study, the following operational definitions are provided :

### **1. Students' Experiences**

In this study, students' experiences referred to students' perceptions, feelings, and responses toward learning reading through Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Operationally, students' experiences were identified through students' verbal accounts during interviews and their observable behaviors during reading activities, such as participation, confidence, engagement, and responses to reading tasks.

### **2. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)**

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) was operationally defined as a teaching approach in which reading instruction was organized around meaningful tasks rather than explicit grammar instruction. In this research, TBLT was implemented through three stages: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. The application of TBLT was observed through the use of reading tasks that required students to understand texts, complete task-based activities, and interact with peers under teacher guidance.

### **3. Reading Skills**

Reading skills in this study referred to students' ability to understand written English texts. Operationally, reading skills were indicated by students' performance in completing reading tasks, including identifying main ideas, understanding vocabulary in context, and responding to comprehension questions during TBLT activities.

### **4. Students' Difficulties**

Students' difficulties were operationally defined as the problems encountered by students during reading activities using TBLT. These difficulties were identified through interview responses and classroom observations and included limited vocabulary, difficulty comprehending long texts, confusion in understanding task instructions, and dependence on teacher support.

### **5. Teacher's Adaptation Strategies**

Teacher's adaptation strategies referred to the actions taken by the teacher to adjust the implementation of TBLT to students' proficiency levels. Operationally, these strategies were identified through classroom observation and teacher interviews and included simplifying reading texts, pre-teaching vocabulary, providing scaffolding, clarifying task instructions, and giving feedback after task completion.

### **C. Research Questions**

1. How do students experience learning reading through Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)?
2. What difficulties do students encounter while learning reading through Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)?
3. What adaptation strategies does the teacher use in implementing TBLT to teach reading?

### **D. Objectives of Study**

1. To describe the students' experiences in learning reading through Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).
2. To identify the difficulties faced by students in learning reading through Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).
3. To analyze the teacher's adaptation strategies in implementing TBLT for teaching reading.

### **E. Significance of Study**

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions as follows :

1. Theoretical Significance
  - a. The findings of this study will enrich the body of knowledge in English language teaching, particularly in the application of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) for students with basic reading proficiency.

- b. It will contribute to the existing literature by offering insights into how vocabulary limitations and difficulties in comprehending longer texts affect the implementation of TBLT in reading instruction.
- c. The study also provides a nuanced perspective on the role of text length and task adaptation in facilitating students' reading development within the TBLT framework

## 2. Practical Significance

- a. For teachers, the research can serve as a reference in designing more effective TBLT-based reading activities that are suitable for students with limited vocabulary and basic reading skills. It highlights strategies for selecting and adapting reading texts as well as scaffolding techniques to support comprehension.
- b. For students, the findings are expected to help them become more aware of their own learning challenges and strategies, thereby fostering greater autonomy, confidence, and motivation in developing reading skills.
- c. For educational institutions, the research can provide input for curriculum development and instructional planning, especially in contexts where students face significant challenges in vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension