

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher discusses and elaborates on the background of the research. The researcher explains the reasons why the researcher decides to do this research. Furthermore, this chapter includes the identification of the problem, the limitation of the problem, the research question, the purpose of the research, and the significance of the research.

### **Background of the Research**

Reading is understanding context and transferring knowledge to its readers. Sabatini, O'Reilly, and Deane (2013) stated that reading is understanding the context in so many ways. For example, it recognizes its word, sentence, and its vocabulary. Reading is understanding a set of written rules. (Hansen, 2016) stated that "Reading is basic to all learning" (p. 7), which means that reading is one of the essential skills. This statement indicated that reading should be considered an important skill that students should mastering if they want to succeed in all their learning.

As one of the learning processes, Inderjit (2014) found out that reading is the foundation of everything in the learning process. With reading, everyone will be able to get new information, for example, in education, politics, entertainment, and business. Inderjit (2014) also stated that people would gain knowledge and mastery of new vocabulary and new grammatical skills with reading activity.

Reading is one of the four language skills besides listening, writing, and speaking. According to Doğan (2014), reading is important for three primary reasons. The first one is a social reason, academic reason, and personal reason. For academic reasons, reading is very important for students because they can transfer and acquire new knowledge, improve language skills, and develop critical and creative thinking skills (Doğan, 2014). It makes reading ability a crucial skill that everyone should have. Therefore, reading is one of the essential skills in the learning process.

In the learning process, reading plays the most important role as an activity for the learning process because students must engage with reading in order to get new resources from books, journals, articles, and many other resources for their learning process (Iftanti, 2014). On the other hand, one of the researcher's teachers did ask students to do pre-class reading assignments where the teacher gave specific materials for the next learning and students must read the materials before the next class and it is a must for all students.

Furthermore, Heiner and Banet (2012) stated that pre-class reading is an activity to prepare students for the next class, to make students more understand about materials that they will learn for the next class. Heiner and Banet (2012) also mentioned that pre-class reading has a few standard components, such as teachers giving a specific guided reading to students and telling them which chapters or parts they should read. Teachers should ask students to read the whole material in order to understand the entire material correctly and clearly for the

next class. Teachers should provide students with pre-class reading assignments if they want all students to understand the materials in the learning process.

Teachers should encourage them to read many resources to gain their students' knowledge and prepare them to follow more about the subject they will learn in the class.

In another study, Miller et al. (2018) stated that giving open-ended questions to test whether students read or not is considered as a follow-up activity in pre-class reading assignments. In the reading pre-class reading process, there must be a challenge that students meet in the process. It can be from inside and outside factors. Sani and Chik (2011) explained that motivation is the most significant factor affecting students' reading skills. If students do not have the motivation to read, when students have poor reading habits, then they will find it challenging to follow any type of reading activity. Low motivation is the biggest struggle that students face in the process of reading; when they have the ability to read but do not want to do it. Once students have poor reading motivation, it will be challenging to change, even if teachers always ask them to do pre-class reading assignments. The researcher once found out some students do not read anything. However, the teachers already told them to do so. They decided to get some help from their friends to get the information from the materials they should read because they found it difficult to read them. Finally, they know the information about the materials, but they cannot improve their reading skill because they did not follow the process of getting knowledge and materials.

## **Identification of the problem**

An English Education Department in one of the private universities in Yogyakarta implements pre-class reading activities in several courses. The implementation of pre-class reading assignments in this English Education Department is where teachers provide students with particular materials. Materials that teachers provide for students to read are materials students will learn for the next class, it could be from books, articles, and other resources. This activity is implemented in several courses, such as Teaching English as a foreign language course, Instructional Design, Interpretive Reading and Argumentative Course, Curriculum Design, and Basic Reading and Writing.

After conducting informal conversational interview for this research, most English students in this private university find it challenging to understand whole materials in their English learning process. Those students often fail in their learning process because they have a lack of preparation before entering the classroom and a lack of motivation to learn, they often experience understanding failure in the learning process. It caused them to face a lack of understanding in the learning process. English students often think that English materials are too difficult to understand, and it fails them to have an understanding in the classroom. Those challenges make them struggle in their learning because they do not understand what teachers explain in the classroom. Still, the fact that the most used materials for them written in English make them read it no matter what, and

they should understand the content clearly if they want to follow the class activities.

The researcher finds that those English students who face those challenges in the reading and learning process believe that they can avoid understanding failure in several courses implementing pre-class reading assignments than the other classes without pre-class reading assignments. After conducting the informal conversational interview, many students believe pre-class reading assignments help them in so many ways are the main reason why the researcher is curious to conduct this research because English students' main course is using English materials that are hard to understand. They cannot avoid reading activity no matter what if all students want a successful learning process. The researcher is curious about what is benefits and challenges of pre-class reading assignments. Is this strategy can reduce the lack of understanding in reading materials. Is this strategy can help students to understand more about materials during the learning process. This research explores English students' perception of pre-class reading assignments and what is benefits and challenges of it.

### **Delimitation of the Problem**

There are many topics in implementing pre-class reading assignments, but the researcher focused only on finding out students' perceptions about the benefits that students get from the implementation of pre-class reading assignments in their classroom and challenges during this activity. About how this activity can help students in the learning process and what benefits students get by following

this activity. The researcher explored those students' perceptions about this activity and elaborate on the information that students will acquire and will face in the process of pre-class reading assignments. The researcher needed to know English students' points of view clearly about how pre-class reading can help students in the English learning process.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is English education department students' perception on the benefits of pre-class reading assignments?
2. What is English education department students' perception on the challenges of pre-class reading assignments?

### **Purpose of the Research**

1. To find out English education department students' perception on the benefits of pre-class reading assignments.
2. To find out English education department students' perception on the challenges of pre-class reading assignments.

### **Significance of the Research**

The researcher hoped that this research can be useful and beneficial for:

*The researcher*

The researcher hoped that this research could help the researcher herself because the researcher could take many lessons during the research process such

as how to conduct good research, getting new knowledge by reading many related studies to the topic of this research, and took the positive side that the researcher found in the process of this research.

### *Teachers*

The researcher predicted that this research is very beneficial for all teachers, not only for teachers who teach English students but also for all teachers who teach English as a foreign language in other departments. This research gave benefits to all teachers because this research told them about the use of pre-class reading activities and its benefits and its challenges. Therefore, they could adopt the positive sides and avoid the negative sides of pre-class reading assignments.

### *Students*

Poor understanding while learning English in the classroom is happening to English students and all students in other departments that learn English. Therefore, this research guided them to know what kind of strategy can make students understand English materials, and students who read this research can apply it in real life. On the other hand, when it came to factors that make students easier to control their English learning process, readers could adopt the positive sides and avoid opposing sides right after they read this research.

### *Other researchers*

Hopefully, this research gave other researchers a clear picture of how to conduct research related to the implementation of pre-class reading assignments in

classrooms and picturing the activity by reading the flow of the research. This research also provided many resources related to the topic of pre-class reading, and other researchers know about conditions and findings if they want to do this research in the future.