

## **STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN READING COMPREHENSION AT THE EIGHT GRADE STUDENTS OF SMPN 22 KOTA JAMBI**

**Aida<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>[aidut0901@gmail.com](mailto:aidut0901@gmail.com)

UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi

### **ABSTRACT**

This research aimed to analyze students' difficulties in reading comprehension at SMPN 22 Jambi. This is a qualitative research. The technique of data collection used in this research is observation and interviews. The subjects in this study were students of class VIII G at SMPN 22 Jambi. The results of this study indicate that the difficulties faced by class VIII G students in reading comprehension are four difficulties. Firstly, students have difficulty in understanding complexity of grammar. Secondly, the students has difficulty in knowing certain vocabulary when understanding reading. Thirdly, students have difficulty in using reading strategies, and the last one the students have difficulty in concentrations.

*Keywords:* Difficulties, Students' Difficulties, Reading Comprehension

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Reading is one of crucial parts of humans' life especially for students. Students will easy to get a lot of information, knowledge or an idea from reading, the more students read the text, the more information and knowledge they will get, later on reading is the main foundation for humans to get information from a book. People could not get complete information from a novel, magazine, book without read the text. Some kinds of written discourse people can read, such as science book, novel, advertisement, newspaper, etc. According to Harmer (2007) if students

more or less understand what they read, the more they read, the better they get at it. The students could read text in everywhere they can see to get the information like at internet websites, newspapers, billboards, signboards, Novels, book or E-book, etc.

Reading is useful for other skill in English language. For the students who learn foreign language, they need to master four skills, they are reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Blachowicz and Ogle (2017) found that reading is crucial. It is as crucial skill to have to be able to learn other subjects.

According to Harmer (2003), to study English language process, such as vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and the technique we use to create sentence, paragraphs and textbook given the opportunity by reading. It means that reading is the main foundation for a student to become genius in other skills. It caused the reading skill will makes the students to know much about other skill by reading. All of students at school require mastering in many subjects and mostly have a book in each subject. Before learning, other skill like writing, speaking, etc. the students must be reading about the theory of each skill to become master from textbook. The article “How to Teach Reading like a Pro” noted that Reading is an important competence to educational achievement, and then all of us know how crucial it is. We would not waste time we do

teaching if we did not appreciate reading (p. 68). In addition, Reading has a decisive role in the education world. Students can easy to understand all of information and knowledge from the text by reading. By reading, students could open their mind through book and study about they do not know before to reach new information.

The researcher chosen to analyze the students’ difficulties in reading comprehension at SMPN 22 Kota Jambi especially in eight grade students. The researcher chosen this school because this school have never made an effort to find out more about students’ difficulties in reading comprehension. Moreover, the principals school and teachers received the research activities that will be carried out at the school and then the researcher want to get the accurately data from SMPN 22 Kota Jambi.

Based on preliminary observation, the researcher did interview with English teachers at SMPN 22 Kota Jambi. The teachers said that students have some difficulties in comprehended reading text and the students experience slight decline in learning.

Based on explanation above, the author was interested to analyze deeply about student's difficulties of reading comprehension that faced by the students. The researcher intends to conduct a research entitled "Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension at the eighth grade students of SMPN 22 Kota Jambi."

### **1. Difficulties in Learning**

Difficulty in learning could be an obstacle for students' process on education. According to Nurjan (2016) there are two factors that students have difficulties in learning, it is internal and external factors, as follow:

Internal Factors.

This factor comes from situations and conditions of students, it means like psychology and psychology factors of students. There is students' intelligence, talents, interests, motivation, and mental health.

External Factors.

This factor comes from outside of students; it means that this factor comes from students' environment and non-social environments that does not support students' activity to study.

### **2. Difficulties in Reading Comprehension**

The difficulty in reading could give bad impact to the students such as the students do not enjoyed and fun to learn English language. According to Aukerman (1972), He additionally factor of three elements that have an effect on the readability of written material, there are length of sentence, grammatical complexity of the text and vocabulary. Meanwhile, According to Forgan and Mangrum (1985), The problem of someone who read could be due to several elements such as inadequate word recognition skill, limited background knowledge lack or poor in using strategies and psychological factor. For that reason, from those elements rise up several difficulties in reading comprehension the subsequent segment will discuss of seven fields in reading difficulties that are commonly found through the reader during reading. There are as follow:

1. Difficulty in Understanding Long Sentences.
2. Difficulty in Understanding Grammatical Complexity of Sentence.

3. Difficulty in Knowing Certain Vocabulary Used in the Text.
4. Difficulty in Understanding Unfamiliar Content or Topic of the Text.
5. Difficulty in Using Reading Strategies.
6. Difficulty in Concentration.

### **3. Reading**

Reading is a way for someone who reads a text to acquire information and knowledge from a text. The reader can communicate with a text by reading. According to Cline et al. (2006) Reading is interpreting and understanding written text content. The readers know new information, acquire new knowledge, and explore new ideas through reading. Students should be able to understand what they are reading and the more they learn, the better they will become at it.

Reading Comprehension is one of the crucial components in reading skill. According to Moore et al. (2016), Reading comprehension is a basic skill used for the reader to comprehend what they read, and this skill must be developed and advanced over the period. It means, this skill is critical not only to understand what comprehension is, but as well to find out how to be relevant various understanding strategies based on the kinds text being read.

Reading Comprehension Strategies The students could improve their reading by make a lot of practice. To help students improve their reading comprehension, there is several reading comprehensions to helps students practice in reading comprehension. There are guessing meaning from context, scanning, skimming, inferring, predicting, summarizing, questioning, making inferences, intensive and extensive reading. Reading Comprehension Aspect According to Nuttal (1996), there are several aspects of reading comprehension, which students face in comprehending text. Such as determining main idea, understanding vocabulary, making inference and detail information. Level of Reading Comprehension As cited in Suprpti (2009), in academic context for students' junior high school and senior high school, emphasis development of reading skill still bigger direct to literal and inferential comprehension with teaching materials that are taken from various types of the text authentic such as it should be found on students' abilities.

## **B. METHOD**

The researcher would use a qualitative. Research design is a general pattern of research that will be used to researchers; research design will follow the pattern of the research method chosen by the researcher. to get the data, the researchers approach phenomenological research. The research took place at SMPN 22 Kota Jambi. It is located on HM. Thaib Fahrudin Simpang Rimbo, Kenali Besar, Alam Barajo Kota Jambi. The research conducted on eight grade students. The researcher took class VIII G as the subject research. In this school, English on the class VIII G was held twice a week. The subject of this research would be the students of class VIII G that consist of 32 students, but the researcher only took 10 students as the subject of the research for interview, it caused the researcher used cluster sampling to get sample from the population.

In this research, to collect data the researcher used document, observation and interview as the instrument. Nevertheless, after writer did research in the school, the writer did not get document complete to support this research. Therefore, the researchers used observation and interview to collect the data.

## **C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In the research, the researcher classified the findings into several points that consist of students' difficulties in reading comprehension. Obtaining the data, the researcher did an observation of students' learning activity in the classroom, and did interview with the students and teacher. The subject of this research was limited to the eight grade students of SMPN 22 Kota Jambi.

The research findings were discovering students' difficulties in reading comprehension at SMPN 22 Kota Jambi. Data collection was carried out through interview with 10 students by using cluster sampling. The result of the research showed that students have several difficulties in reading comprehension. There are students' difficulties in understanding grammatical

complexity of sentence, difficulty in knowing certain vocabulary used in the text, difficulty in using reading strategies, and difficulty in concentration.

Based on finding above, the researcher discussed the research finding covering the students' difficulties in reading comprehension. That has been studied in some things. In addition, the researcher would discuss and answer this research question in the previous section. The research's question is "what are the difficulties in reading comprehension that faced by students at the eighth grade students of SMPN 22 Kota Jambi?" Moreover, to answer this question, the findings from observation and interview with students at SMPN 22 Kota Jambi were used on this research. The researcher concluded that the difficulties in reading comprehension that faced by students at the eighth grade students of SMPN 22 Kota Jambi that the students have some difficulties, there are: difficulty in understanding grammatical complexity of sentence, difficulty in knowing certain vocabulary used in the text, difficulty in using reading strategies, and difficulty in concentration.

### **1. Difficulty in understanding grammatical complexity of sentence.**

The students had difficulty in understanding grammatical complexity of sentence. The students still lack about grammar knowledge. They still confused when they find grammatical complexity of the sentence used in the reading text. Grammatical in the text is crucial part to master in English. Grammar knowledge it could help the student to know the reading text as easy because they would easy understanding reading comprehensions if they master in grammar.

Based on the observation, when the students tried to reading narrative text, some of them still confused with grammar used on the text. For example, the students still confused with the verb used in the sentence, because one of them did not know if narrative text used verb 2. Therefore, they could not found the meaning of the word in dictionary. Based on result in previous study by Susanti (2018) claimed that she also found some of the students still confused on grammatical text and the students struggled to distinguish between verb 2 and another. It means that the students should increase more their grammar knowledge to get easy understanding in reading comprehension.

## **2. Difficulty in knowing certain vocabulary used in the text.**

The vocabulary is foundation to students understanding text in reading comprehension text. As much as students know vocabulary so it could make the students get the point of reading text. The students need a lot to know vocabulary to improve their reading skill. But, if the students did not master in vocabulary, it made the students confused with the text because based on observation and interview, the students lack in vocabulary. They did not have much the vocabulary. Based on the interview, the students said that English subject is difficult, because they unfamiliar with the vocabulary. In addition, when teaching English, the teacher usually used and speak English, but they confused because they less in the vocabulary.

The English learner should master in vocabulary. According to Kennedy as cited in Kasvia (2017) stated, “An excessive vocabularies burden focuses the reader to rely on the dictionary or to bypass many important words.”. It means that the students have to increase their vocabulary to having well in reading comprehension. Based on observation, the researcher found that the students did not notice the teacher when the teacher asked about the meaning of word in the class. In addition, based on interview with students, the researcher found almost of the students lack in vocabulary, and some of them always forget to bring dictionary when learning and teaching English in the class. Based on observation at the eighth grade students a lot of students did not like the English subject especially in reading comprehension it because they lack in vocabulary. The students were still unfamiliar with the vocabulary. As an English language student, they should have initiative to increase their vocabulary, such as they take note to new vocabulary they got. It support in previous study by Qurniawan (2020), he showed that the students difficulties in comprehending reading text were caused by lack of vocabulary mastery. They came across unfamiliar words and did not recognize the meaning of words, which caused them to become confused with the text. They had difficulties obtaining information and understanding the text.

Besides that, based on interview on 4th June, the researcher found that students did not know much vocabulary, so they should find the meaning of word used of the text by using dictionary, but any students did not bring dictionary. It made the students hard to know the difficulty in

reading comprehension but one of them who did not find the meaning they tried to asked they teacher about that word.

### **3. Difficulty in using reading strategies.**

The strategies that used by the students in reading comprehension is low. One of them still do not know with the strategies in reading comprehension like skimming and scanning strategies and some of the student did not master in using reading strategies. Harmer (2007) claimed that Scanning means that students do not must read every word and every line. On the contrary, this method will prevent them from scanning successfully. It facilitated the students easy to find the main idea in the text and understanding reading text quickly. Therefore, it was necessary to guide students use appropriate skills to obtain information from the text appropriately and quickly. Based on result of previous study by Hidayati (2018) showed that 89% of students is difficult to understanding the strategies of reading text. It means that many students still low to know the techniques of reading text. In this problem, using strategies in reading comprehension could make the students easy to gain also gather information from the text. If the students lack in using strategies in reading comprehension, they will need more time to understanding reading text as correctly. Using strategies in reading comprehension is important to the students. It could make the students easy to understanding the content of the text as quickly. Moreover, the students would easy to get the information without read all of the text if the students know and used skimming strategies in reading comprehension.

### **4. Difficulty in concentration.**

Based on research finding, the students lack on the concentration it caused they not really interesting with the lesson, and unpleasant place of study such as they classroom very hot, and they friends so noisy while learning in the class. According to Dumont (1967), In order to achieve the greatest success in anything, you have to be able to focus all your thoughts on the ideas you are working on. Those who can concentrate will use all constructive thoughts and exclude all destructive thoughts. This the greatest human could not do anything if they are not focus or if they lack in concentration. Meanwhile, some of students at class VIII G at SMPN 22 Kota Jambi are lack in concentration.



Based on observation, the researcher found that the students still lack in concentration, they still felt bored when learning in the class. Their concentration makes their focus to be less in learning reading. For example, the students noisy in the class, one of the students did not listening the teacher explanation about the material. Furthermore, based on interview with students, they also could not focus in the learning at class because one or two their classmates are noisy in the learning activity. The lack concentration would make the students lack focus in understanding reading text. Having good concentration would make the students easy to gather information from the text or from teacher's explanation about the lesson in the class.

The students lack in the concentration in the class it caused some of the students did not interest with the subject material. It is supported by Kennedy's theory as cited in sari (2017) Except for the most thoroughly disciplined reader, it is difficult for students to focus on the material they dislike or are related to their personal interests. It would be trivial to understand the content of these materials without careful attention. It means that the students less in noticed the teacher explanation about the material and it could make the students difficulty to understanding in reading comprehension. On students concentration it is crucial aspect to students' language learners. If students' attention is not focused on teaching activities, they may would not notice the teacher's explanation of class materials. It means that the students should enjoy in teaching and learning activity and the students should increase their interest in the subject or in reading comprehension because, if students are interested in the subject, they must pay close attention to the subject. Based on this problem, the make students' focus on learning activity, the classroom activity must be pleasant and the students need motivation more to like the lesson to get good in concentration.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Based on the analyzed data of the researcher about students' difficulties faced in reading comprehension at the eighth grade students at SMPN 22 Kota Jambi, the researcher drawn the conclusion. Firstly, the students difficulties faced in reading comprehensions are they low in understanding grammatical complexity of sentence. Their grammar knowledge still low, because some of them still confused to know what grammatical used in sentences. Secondly,

the students difficulties faced in reading comprehensions are they lack in vocabulary and it makes them too difficult gain the meaning of reading comprehensions. The students were also unfamiliar with many vocabulary of the text. Their incomprehension with much of vocabulary made them confused and bored when learning English. Next, the students' difficulties faced in reading comprehensions are the students lack in using reading strategies or technique in reading comprehensions like scanning and skimming. The students did not master in using reading strategies to gather the information from the text quickly. Lastly, The students' difficulties faced in reading comprehensions are the students low in concentration based on researcher observation, the students did not focused when teaching and learning activity. Students' concentration is important to gather information and teacher explanation about the material in the class.

In order to complete this research, there are some suggestions that must make consider as follows: more collections of English books.

## REFERENCES

- Aida, A. (2021). STUDENTS'DIFFICULTIES IN READIN COMPREHENSION AT THE EIGHT GRADE STUDENTS OF SMPN 22 KOTA JAMBI. *JR-ELT (Journal of Research in English Language Teaching)*, 5(1), 1-11.
- Barfield, A. (1999). In other words: how learners construct reading difficulties. *Literacy across Cultures*.
- Blachowicz, C., & Ogle, D. (2017). *Reading comprehension: Strategies for independent learners*. Guilford Publications.
- Cline, F., Johnstone, C., & King, T. (2006). Focus Group Reactions to Three Definitions of Reading (As Originally Developed in Support of NARAP Goal 1). *National Accessible Reading Assessment Projects*.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Day, R. R., Bamford, J., Renandya, W. A., Jacobs, G. M., & Yu, V. W. S. (1998). Extensive reading in the second language classroom. *RELJ Journal*, 29(2), 187-191.
- Dumont, T. Q. (1877). *The power of concentration*. NuVision Publications, LLC.

- Forgan, H. W., & Mangrum, C. T. (1976). Teaching content area reading skills: A modular preservice and inservice program. (*No Title*).
- Harmer, J. (2007). The practice of English language teaching 4th ed. *England: Pearson Education Limited*.
- Hidayati, D. (2018). *Students difficulties in reading comprehension at the first grade of SMAN 1 Darussalam Aceh Besar* (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh).
- Latief, M. A. (2017). Research Methods on Language Learning on Introduction 6thEd. *Malang: Universitas Negeri Malang*.
- Leavy, P. (2018). Introduction to arts-based research. *Handbook of arts-based research*, 3-21.
- Moore, J. J., Ph, D., Alef, E. C., & Vogel, E. D. (2016). The Simplicity and Complexity of Reading Comprehension University of Mississippi Susan S . McClelland , Ph . D University of Mississippi. 7(6), 20–26.
- Nuttall, C. (1996). *Teaching reading skills in a foreign language*. Heinemann, 361 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801-3912.
- Oberholzer, B. (2005). *The Relationship Between Reading Difficulties and Academic Performance Among a Group of Foundation Phase Learners who Have Been: Identified as Experiencing Difficulty with Reading and Referred for Reading for Reading Remediation* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Zululand).
- Prihatini, S. O. (2020). AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS'DIFFICULTIES IN READING COMPREHENSION AT SMA NEGERI 1 SUKODADI LAMONGAN. *E-Link Journal*, 7(1), 21-29.
- Sari, Y. K. (2017). An Analysis Of Students' Difficulties In Comprehending English Reading Text On The Mts Negeri Mlinjon Klaten In Academic Year 2016/2017. *Islamic Institute Of Surakarta: English Education Department*.
- Suprapti, S. (2009). MODEL KOGNITIF READING COMPREHENSION DALAM PENGAJARAN BAHASA INGGRIS. *Lingua: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 5(2).
- Susanti, R. (2018). Case study on students' difficulties in comprehending narrative text at SMPN 1 Siman Ponorogo. *Unpublished Thesis*). *Graduate School. State Institute of Islamic Studies. Ponorogo*.