# Undergraduate Thesis

# EXPLORING THE STUDENTS" DIFFICULTIES IN UNDERSTANDING READING TEXTS ATTHE NINTH GRADE OF SMPN 1 BAMBAIRA



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# APPROVAL SHEET

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Has been successfully defended the thesis in front of the Examiner Team of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2025

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#### ABSTRAK

**MARDAWATI**: Menggali Kesulitan Siswa dalam Memahami Teks Bacaan pada Siswa Kelas 1X di SMPN 1 Bambaira. **Skripsi Majene:** Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu pendidikan, Universitas Sulawesi Barat.

Pemahaman bacaan merupakan salah satu tantangan utama dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, terutama karena perbedaan antara bahasa ibu dan bahasa Inggris, seperti dalam kosakata dan kompleksitas tata bahasa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk: 1) Menggali kesulitan yang dialami siswa kelas IX dalam memahami teks bacaan bahasa Inggris; dan 2) Mengidentifikasi faktor penyebab kesulitan tersebut. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus, melalui wawancara dan observasi. Populasi penelitian adalah 24 siswa kelas IX di SMPN 1 Bambaira, dan sampel yang dipilih secara purposive terdiri dari 4 siswa serta 1 guru bahasa Inggris. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa mengalami kesulitan karena keterbatasan kosakata, kurangnya strategi membaca (seperti skimming dan scanning), motivasi rendah, kecemasan, dan metode pengajaran yang tidak efektif. Faktor lingkungan seperti kurangnya dukungan keluarga dan teman sebaya juga memengaruhi pemahaman bacaan siswa. Dengan demikian, baik faktor linguistik maupun non-linguistik sangat berpengaruh. Berdasarkan studi-studi sebelumnya, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa penelitian terdahulu saling terkait, terutama mengenai kesulitan memahami teks bacaan bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini berbeda karena lebih mendalam dalam mengkaji kesulitan siswa, serta memiliki perbedaan dalam lokasi, metode, dan subjek penelitian. Peneliti menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif untuk mengeksplorasi dan mendeskripsikan kesulitan pemahaman teks bacaan bahasa Inggris secara lebih terfokus.

**Kata Kunci:** pemahaman bacaan, kesulitan siswa, kosakata, motivasi, penelitian kualitatif, SMPN 1 Bambaira.

#### **ABSTRACT**

MARDAWATI: Exploring the Students "Difficulties in Understanding Reading Texts at The Ninth- Grade of SMPN 1 Bambaira. Thesis. Majene: Faculty Of Teacher Training And Education, Sulawesi Barat University, 2024.

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Reading comprehension is one of the main challenges in learning English, primarily due to differences between students" native language and English, especially in terms of vocabulary and grammatical complexity. This study aims to: 1) Explore the difficulties experienced by ninth-grade students in understanding English reading texts; and 2) Identify the factors that contribute to these difficulties. The method used is qualitative with a case study approach, employing interviews and observations as instruments. The population of the study consists of 24 ninth-grade students at SMPN 1 Bambaira, and the sample was purposively selected, comprising 4 students and 1 English teacher. The findings indicate that students face difficulties due to limited vocabulary, lack of reading strategies (such as skimming and scanning), low motivation, anxiety, and ineffective teaching methods. Environmental factors such as limited support from family and peers also influence students" reading comprehension. Thus, both linguistic and non-linguistic factors play a significant role. Based on previous studies, the researcher concludes that earlier research is interrelated, particularly concerning difficulties in understanding English reading texts. This study is different in that it investigates students" difficulties more deeply and involves variations in terms of location, methods, and research subjects. The researcher adopts a qualitative approach to explore and describe students" difficulties in understanding English reading texts more specifically.

**Keywords:** reading comprehension, students" difficulties, vocabulary, motivation, qualitative research, SMPN 1 Bambaira

#### **CHAPTER I**

#### INTRODUCTION

# A. Background

Reading is a hobby for some people but there are also those who think that reading is a boring thing, especially in reading books in foreign languages so that it becomes difficult to understand. Reading can be defined as a process carried out by the reader to obtain messages conveyed by the author through the medium of written language besides that, reading is also an activity of seeing and understanding the contents of what is written, either visually or only inwardly internal and external factors including the readers" intelligence, interests, attitudes, talents, motivation, goals, and environment.

According to Widasari (2017), reading is an understanding of written and spoken thoughts or ideas in reading material. Where understanding is a measurable reading product not a physical action that only sits for several hours in the classroom. According to Broto (2015), reading is not only speaking written language or symbols of language sounds, but also responding to and understanding the content of written language. Thus the reader will understand the content or information contained in a reading.

Reading has an important role and position, especially in today"s era of communication and information. Reading can be a bridge for students who wish to progress and succeed both in the family, school, and society. Given the importance of reading, it is very natural to be taught from primary to secondary education based on the learning objectives of reading.

According to Rahim in Rafika 2020, reading is a process that is not just saying the writing, but also involves various visual, psyholinguistic, thingking, and metacognitive activities. Reading also means one of the activities to receive news including content and reading comprehension, therefore reading skills are very important for students. According to Dadan Hidayat, and Titi Dewi Rohati (2020), Reading is a important skill

in learning English but sometimes students get some problems I the learning process because they limited vocabulary knowledge so that they poor in comprehension and they difficult to recall information after reading.

According to Jusman A.Sahmal et.all, (2022), Reading is one of the for language skills taught in english language learning Processs besides listening, speaking and writing. According to Kartawijaya (2017), reading is known as the language skill that very important int teaching and learning English. It is the process of getting information from something that was written, to obtain information and to improve the science and knowledge. In this case, Fitri and Rozimela (2020) said that the study about students' reading comprehension is important since it is an important language skill in Indonesian curriculum.

According to Intan Ayu Tusfiana and Dewi Tryanasari (2020), Reading is one of the abilities that must be mastered by students in elementary school, because reading ability is directly related to the learning process. Reading is a process that is used and carries by the reader to obtain messages or information that is conveyed writer through his writings. Reading comprehension is an activity to read the drip emphasis on the content of the reading. In mastering the ability of reading comprehension often encountered some obstacles and interference that experienced by students, thus causing them to experience difficulty reading comprehension.

Comprehension reading is a complex intellectual process that includes two main abilities, namely mastery of word meaning and the ability to think about verbal concepts (Masduqi & Subiyanto, 2021). This opinion views that in reading comprehension, simultaneously a two-way concentration occurs in the reader's mind. in the reader's mind in carrying out reading activities, the reader actively responds by expressing the sounds of writing and language used by the reader. reveal the sounds of writing and language used by the author. In reading comprehension, what reading comprehension, what is done is not only pronouncing the symbols

and letters in the reading but is more focused on the reader's ability to really understand the meaning of the text. the reader's ability to really understand the meaning that the author wants to convey (Sutherland & Westbrook, 2021).

Reading ability has a goal for students to be able to understand a reading and improve students' ability to communicate. According to Aulia (2024), the purpose of reading is to find and obtain information, cover the content, and understand the meaning of reading. Meaning is closely related to the purpose of reading. According to Akda & Dafit (2021), there are two important aspects in reading, namely mechanical skills (letter from recognition, vocabulary recognition, recognition of spelling, and sound pattern relationships) and comprehension skills (understanding simple understanding meaning, evaluation, and reading speed). According to Astutik (2021), reading plays an important role in life, because learning cannot be separated from reading activities I n all fields of research in order to obtain information and knowledge.

There are two factors that influence reading success, namely internal and external factors. Internal factors are influenced by intelligence, attitudes, language mastery, gender differences at a young age, and differences in accent with the reading language. While factors from outside the student are influenced by reading conditions, language, content, readability level, reading compatibility with the reader's ability to catch, socio-economic status, and reading instruction of the teacher who supervises it.

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted in February 2024 with ninth grade teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Bambaira, Kab. Pasangkayu there are problems, namely difficulties in understanding English reading text caused by language differences, pronunciation differences, with students" native language or mother tongue. Furthermore, the lack of motivation to learn so that there is no material understanding of the importance of learning English and the lack of support from the surrounding environment such as parents, friends, and the living

environment.

Learners with reading difficulties generally experience difficulties in skills such as spelling and stammering. According to Yani et al (2021), in managing the reading learning difficulties of students in elementary schools, of course, class teachers must understand the characteristics of students at primary school age which is called the intellectual period. In line with Wulandari et al (2020), Students' reading difficulties are unable to identify word so that students experience low reading comprehension. Difficulties in reading if not resolved immediately was certainly have an impact on students' reading skills. Therefore, teachers who are close to students need to seek assistance and assistance so that students who experience reading difficulties immediately get the right treatment. The reading difficulties of students at SMP Negeri 1 Bambaira, Kab. Pasangkayu require the role of teachers in coaching to help students succeed in performing their developmental tasks. Because teachers have a big influence on the success of students, especially when learning to read.

Based on the above problems, the researcher is interested in conducting research with the title ""Exploring the students" difficulties to understanding reading text" with the aim of knowing, and describing reading difficulties and knowing the factors that cause students to have difficulty understanding reading text in students of SMP Negeri 1 Bambaira.

Based on previous research, the researchers concluded that the previous studies are interconnected with all other research, especially in terms of difficulties in understanding English reading passages. The general objective of this study is to explore, identify, and describe the difficulties in understanding English reading texts, as well as to determine the factors causing students to struggle with comprehension. The main difference between previous research focused more on the limits of students" abilities in reading English texts, while my study aims to delve into the difficulties students face in understanding reading texts and differentiates based on the location, methods, and subjects of the research.

In this study, the researcher conducts qualitative research to explore and describe the difficulties in understanding English reading texts.

#### **B.** Problem Identification

- 1. Lack of student motivation in carrying out English language learning, especially reading text.
- 2. There are still relatively few opportunities to learn English.

# C. Research Questions

While the problem formulation of this research is as follows:

- 1. What are the students" difficulties in understanding English reading text?
- 2. What are the factors that make it difficult for students to understand English reading texts?

#### D. Research Focus

This research focuses on exploring the students difficulties to understanding reading text in grade ninth.

# E. Research Objective

Based on Research Benefits the background, and the formulation of the problem, the research aims to:

- 1. To find out the difficulties in understanding English reading texts among ninth-grade high school students.
- 2. To find out the factors that cause students to have difficulty understanding reading text.

#### F. Research Benefits

The benefits of this research include:

#### 1. Theoretical Benefits

Used as a reference material in efforts to overcome studeents" reading difficulties such as:

- a. Lack of the student motivation in understanding English texts.
- b. Limited opportunity to learn English.

#### 2. Practical Benefits

#### a. For Students

This survey was assist learners in developing develop good

reading habits, acquire knowledge and skills as well as preparing themselves to continue their education to a higher level.

#### b. For Teacher

The results provide valuable insights for teachers to understand the factors causing students" reading difficulties. This knowledge can help them choose and apply more effective teaching methods tailored to students" needs.

#### c. For School

The research offers useful input for schools to develop or improve programs that support English language learning, particulary in reading comprehension.

# d. For Researchers

The research can identify students" reading difficulties and identify the factors that cause students to exprience difficulties. And can inspire other researchers to conduct further research on student problems in English subjects.

# CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### A. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the researcher concludes that the primary issue faced by students is their difficulty in understanding reading texts. This difficulty arises from a combination of linguistic, cognitive, emotional, and contextual factors. Linguistically, limited vocabulary and complex grammatical structures, such as irregular verbs and passive voice, create barriers to comprehension. Furthermore, students" lack of proficiency in essential reading strategies like skimming, scanning, and summarizing also hinders their ability to process and extract key information effectively. These factors contribute to weak reading comprehension and make it challenging for students to engage meaningfully with the text. Regarding the factors that make it difficult for students to understand reading texts, the research identifies several key obstacles. Ineffective teaching methods that do not encourage active participation or interaction with the text contribute significantly to comprehension difficulties. Psychological factors, such as anxiety, low selfconfidence, and fear of making mistakes, further inhibit students from engaging fully with the material. External factors, including classroom noise and student fatigue, also detract from their ability to focus. Additionally, many students struggle with underdeveloped analytical reading skills and lack familiarity with visual aids or interactive media, making reading tasks feel more difficult and overwhelming. Together, these factors create a challenging learning environment for students, limiting their ability to comprehend and engage with reading materials effectively.

# **B.** Suggestion

Based on the results of the study, the researcher provides several suggestions:

#### 1. Teachers

Junior high school teachers should be more active in observing and noting the types of difficulties that students often encounter when reading texts. Teachers are advised to use enjoyable and age- appropriate teaching approaches, such as reading together, role- playing from texts, or creating concept maps, to help students better understand the content of the reading.

#### 2. Students

Junior high school students are encouraged to regurarly practice their reading skills by reading texts from various sources such as textbooks, articles, and short stories. Students are also expected not to ask teachers or discuss with peers when encountering difficulties in understanding the content of the reading

#### 3. Schools

Schools need to provide facilities that support literacy activities, such as reading corners in classrooms, engaging libraries, and regular programs like "15 minutes of reading before lessons." Additionally, schools can oragnize training for teachers on using creative reading instructions methods.

#### 4. For Researchers

Future researchers are advised to futher explore the factors that influence reading difficulties among junior high school students, including psychological aspects, learning environments, and the use of instructional media. Research can also be developed using quantitative or mixed- method approaches for more comprehensive results.

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