

A STUDY ON THE FACTORS CAUSING STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN UNDERSTANDING READING TEXT AT ELEVENTH GRADE OF SMAN IT SYECH WALID THAIB SHALEH INDRAGIRI SUNGAI ILIRAN

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ABSTRACT

The problem of this research was the tenth-grade students of Eleventh Grade of SMAN Islam Terpadu Syech Walid Thaib Shaleh Indragiri Sungai Iliran feel difficult to answer some questions in reading. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to know “factors causing students difficulties in understanding Reading Text”. This research was descriptive quantitative research. The researcher was distributing questionnaire to 20 respondents to answer the purpose above. The sample was taken by using total sampling, because the sample is limited. After collecting the data, the researcher found that there are four factors causing students difficulties in understanding reading text at Eleventh Grade of SMAN Islam Terpadu Syech Walid Thaib Shaleh Indragiri. They are feeling bored and lazy in reading, cannot use the leisure time maximally for reading, lack of English book at school and uninteresting teaching learning process.

Key words: *Factors, Students Difficulties*

INTRODUCTION

Reading, along with writing, listening, and speaking, is one of the most important skills that students must master when learning English. Students must be able to master linguistic elements such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar in order to achieve competencies, particularly in English.

According to Suhadi (2008) in Siumarlata, et al (2019:109) Reading is vital because it can provide new insights and many new things. Reading is important because it allows you to absorb as much life-saving science as possible.

It means that comprehension is the most important aspect of reading. It will improve students' knowledge, memory, and vocabulary, as well as assist them in finding new information during the learning process. Understanding the text

while reading is a difficult task because it is a complex process. Previous studies have been conducted to investigate students' difficulties or problems with reading and answering text-related questions. One of them is research conducted by Nurmala Sari & Haryudin (2021). This study discovered some of the reasons why students find it difficult to learn to read in class. Many of them report difficulty with grammar and a lack of vocabulary. As a result, they do not fully comprehend the text's overall meaning. They only focused on words that were familiar to them, such as animal characteristics. The students' dominant response in the test results is not quite answer, they are difficult to answer because they do not know how to write the answer exactly, and the sentence is not structured well.

In SMAN Islam Terpadu Syech Walid Thaib Shaleh Indragiri, the students are also learning English, they are learning all the skill such as speaking, reading, writing and listening, but they are taught reading very often. Even though, like the previous research, difficulties in understanding reading text have also found.

Based on the researchers preliminary research, there are some difficulties found by the students in this school especially when they try to understand the text. Most of students of the eleventh grade still have lack of grammar knowledge; they even still translate the meaning of tobe. They also still have lack of vocabulary because they use dictionary for translating word by word in the text. They also still need long time to translate a short text and they also still get confused about answering a question about main idea or information detail in a text. Those problems found make the researcher want to find the factors causing the difficulties. Therefore, to know the factors causing those problems, she will conduct a research about “Factors Causing Students Difficulties in Understanding Reading Text in SMAN Islam Terpadu Syech Walid Thaib Shaleh Indragiri”.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Difficulty

Limited theories found about difficulty. According to Staff (2004) in Septia, et al (2022:11) that “difficulty is the quality or state of being hard to do, deal with, or understand something”.

She also adds that Learning disabilities can make it difficult for students to achieve their full potential in the classroom. It is a psychological disorder that affects hearing, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, and spelling. (Septia, et al, 2022: 14).

According to Mulyadi in Brigitta (2017), the learning difficulties is a condition in a learning process characterized by certain constraints to achieve learning outcomes. The difficulties include into a category of disorders that affect the process of information in human brain. This condition is important learn and understanding the concepts and experience trouble in learning process (Department of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 2014).

Therefore, based on the explanation above, difficulty in learning is a condition where students find some problems while learning, it can be problems in understanding the material, interaction or even the instruction from the teachers.

Reading Comprehension

In reading comprehension, readers must not only read but also comprehend the information in the text. When students read, they are thinking by comprehending all of the words, sentences, and paragraphs in order to understand the meaning of the text as a whole and its content. Meaning that having ability to comprehend the text is very important because people can find many information in the text. As Darrel (2005) & Oberholzer (2005) in Mohammed & Amponsah (2018: 273) highlight that Reading is a fundamental life skill and a pillar of success in school and in life; thus, students who can read well can function more effectively in everyday school activities.

Besides, Reading will help you think more creatively, critically, analytically, and imaginatively. Reading will develop the ability to think through the process of capturing ideas/information, understanding, imagining, applying, and expressing them (Siumarlata, et al, 2019:109).

Therefore, to get benefit from many texts, students need to be able to comprehend the text they read. As like Suwanaroa (2021:18) says that reading comprehension means understanding the direct and implicit meaning to capture

the importance and details of what is read expressing opinions and arguments about the subject being read and writing the conceptual framework, concept map, and summary.

In another source, it is explained that reading comprehension is the process of concurrently extracting and building that means through interaction and involvement with written language (Snow, 2002 in Septia, et al, 2022:12).

But another claims that comprehend the text is not easy. It is a difficult work to do, especially for students, because reading skill demands the learners not only to pronounce the words correctly, but also to comprehend the meaning of the diction used or semantic structures of the English language (Kiew & Shuh, 2020: 2641). They also add that reading comprehension is an active cognitive process that require an individual to interact with the reading materials (Chang et al. 2018 in Kiew & Shah, 2020: 2641).

Besides, Ebrahimi (2012) in Jayanti (2016:296) says that Reading is a complex, interactive mental activities of constructing meaning from written text. In reading, readers do not only rely on the features of the text they are facing but it also involves the features of readers and tasks.

So, reading is a process in which the reader creates meaning by combining prior knowledge and prior experience. They make connections between textual information and what they already know. In the act of communication, information ideas are exchanged between the writer and the reader. The writer uses language to express his or her thoughts on paper, using whatever skills and style she or he has developed personally. The reader attempts to make sense of the printed page. Reading is more than just comprehension; it is also about becoming aware of how writers express meaning and being able to reconstruct those meanings for our own understanding.

Reading Comprehension Strategies

According to Septia, et al (2022: 14) there are some reading strategies can be used to understand the text, namely predicting, skimming, scanning, inferring guessing of new words, and self-monitoring.

Predicting

Predicting implies thinking about what might happen next in the text rather than predicting what is in the text. The reader can apply prediction by using images, title text, and personal experiences. However, to determine whether the reader correctly predicted the use of text and whether the reader confirms or disproves predictions to support the text.

Skimming

When you want to learn about a writer quickly, skimming is useful. You can skim to see what the author thinks about something. This is the author's perspective. You don't have to read everything to get the writer's point of view. You only need to read a few key words in phrase.

Scanning

Scanning is a very fast reading method. When scanning, you look for information as quickly as possible. Scanning can assist you in improving your reading skills. Many students read slowly in order to read every word in a passage. When scanning, you can read every word. You must skip many words. Scanning practice teaches you how to skip over words. You can improve your reading speed and comprehension.

Self-Monitoring

Self-monitoring strategies enable students to keep track of what they do and understand while reading a complex text on their own. Other advantages of self-monitoring reading strategies include providing students with greater independence, fostering a deeper understanding of a text, allowing students to learn more effectively, encouraging risk taking, encouraging students to take more responsibility for their learning, and empowering students.

Summarizing

Summarizing is a short description of the main ideas or points of something without any details. Tips for teaching comprehension strategy, making connections, learners make personal connections from the text with: something in their own life (text to self), something in another text (text to text), or something happening in the world (text to world). Summarizing is the process of retelling the most important parts of a passage in a much shorter form.

Reference

The relationship between a grammatical unit, usually a pronoun, that refers to (or stands in for) another grammatical unit, usually a noun or noun phrase, is referred to as a reference. Students are expected to understand why pronouns in sentences are used, such as those used to show people, places, or situations, when identifying reference.

Understanding the Meaning of Word

Students must find the meaning of difficult words in the context of the text by comprehending the meaning of the sentence or text, and then they will find the appropriate meaning of the word. Hedge observed that vocabulary is another major component of reading ability that language learners will struggle with. As a result, before reading the material, students should be taught unfamiliar vocabularies about the text so that they can understand it easily.

Factors Causing Students Difficulties in Understanding Reading Comprehension

Kusumawanti and Bharati (2018) in Meylana (2019;2) explained that among English proficiencies, reading skills has the most important role for students learning success since overall activities of learning are started and developed by the reading activity. But it is not easy to do, some difficulties found while reading. As like a research result found by Suwanaroa (2015) that many students get problem with the grammar, vocabulary and personal experiences while reading the text.

Therefore, those problems may influence by some factors. According to Brewster, Ellis, & Girard, (1992) in Septia, et al (2022: 14) that students difficulties in reading are influenced by two factors. They are external and internal. Below is the explanation of both:

Internal Factor

Internal factors includes physics, intellectual and psychological of the students that can influence their ability in understanding reading text. There are some internal factors that influence the students in reading comprehension that are

generally found by the reader during reading, namely (Westwood, 2008 in Septia, et al, 2022: 15):

a. Difficulty in understanding long sentence

In a common problem that most of students finds difficulty in understanding the long sentence with complicated structure. It is supported by report of Barfield, that shows almost 12% of students had difficulty in understanding long sentence in graded story and 20 % in academic text.

b. Difficulty in using reading strategies

The students who are lack of reading strategies often fail in understanding the text. The students who are not familiar with reading strategies such as skimming and scanning will feel down and frustrated because they are lack of tool necessary to succeed in reading comprehension test. There are characteristics of the students who are lack of using reading strategies. First, the students read word by word within the text, relying too heavily on their visual information, which greatly impedes their reading speed and hampers their reading comprehension. Second ,the students spent a lot attention on detail with the result they often miss the main idea of the text. Third, they just focused too much attention on form of the expense meaning.

c. Difficulty in Concentration

Difficulty in concentration during reading can be caused by a psychological factor. Bad concentration will lead the students fail to comprehend the text. It can be worse when the students do reading test. Difficulty in concentration is another reason for students poor reading because concentration is an important factor for a good and effective reading. Shaw states that comprehension of a text results from reading with concentration. But students, in most cases, cannot or do not concentrate properly while reading.

d. Students attitude in reading text

In addition, Suwanaroa (2015:18) also adds the internal factor that can cause students difficulties in reading, and this is very important internal factor that can influence their ability in reading comprehension, that is attitude. It is the way students behave while understanding the text. When they have good attitude, they

will get better understanding. For example, lazy or not, having enthusiasm or not, having good strategies or not and using dictionary or fast tool to translate (like application or google translate).

External factors

External factors mean another factors besides internal factors that influence students reading comprehension such as Home and school environments. Those are the two kinds of learners environment that can influence their learning reading achievement:

House environment/ Family support

It cannot be neglected that parents play important role in the home. Freeman and Long in Septia, et al (2022: 14) state that every student needs attention from their parents to reach their learning achievement. Since learning English is not the same as learning Indonesia, childrens need parents or his/her family attention to learn about English. Learning reading without family attention will make students feel difficult in learning. They can feel down if no one support them to learn English text.

As also supported by Cigdemir & Akyol (2022:152) indicate that one factor affecting the student's academic success more than the school was the family environment the child is in. therefore, family support is needed to help students in reading comprehension. It is also supported by Liu, et al (2022:02), say that a growing body of research has demonstrated that family factors play a very important role in the development students reading skills it even suggests that family engagement a better predictor of student achievement compared to school engagement.

School environment/ teaching and learning process

The school environment also can be a cause of students learning difficulties in reading comprehension, such as school with lack of learning media. The lack of learning media such as English books, magazines or newspapers make reading learning process become ineffective and will be impeding students in understanding the material. Besides, teaching and learning process is also one of factors related school environment, such as the way teacher teach in the

classroom. Teachers need to use good methods and interesting way of teaching in the classroom.

According to Lucas (2011) and Rany (2013) in Mohammed & Amponsah (2018:274) also note that pupils may have low reading ability due to school heads not availing the necessary course books for practice reading, lack of appropriate curriculum to help improve pupils reading abilities and classroom environments that are crowded and noisy for an appropriate teaching pedagogy to be fulfilled.

Liu, et al (2022:02) also add that school is the primary place where students live and learn in their daily education. School-level factors that affect students reading literacy are mainly school climate and type, teachers classroom teaching, among other. So, both of the external factors above are the most important factors that can influence students difficulties in reading.

In this research, the researcher will directly take the indicators of factors causing students difficulties in reading from Suwanaroas research, they are attitude, family support and also school environment or teaching and learning process. This indicators are strengthen by Cigdemir & Akyol (2022:152) in their research that there are three external factors that are effective in helping individuals gain the habit of reading were (in order of importance): 1) Family, 2) School, 3) The environment.

They also add that in a study conducted by the Ministry of Education Research and Development Department (2007) to determine the reading levels of students, it was concluded that if a child's family does not see buying books and reading as a priority, then the time the child spends reading books is also minimal. In addition, it was determined that suggesting to a student who had grown up in such an environment that they should read, whether the suggestion came from their family, environment, or teacher, did not positively affect the child (Cigdemir & Akyol, 2022:15).

Then, based on the research result from Rohimah (2021:6) Reading difficulties are influenced by several factors. There are two factors that affect reading difficulties, internal factors and external factors. Internal factors can be seen from the physical students. Physical weakness can affect reading difficulties.

External factors of students that can affect reading difficulties are factors from the social environment and the most influential is the role of parents who accompany children to read at home.

Next, it is also supported by another research result by Torres (2019:7) Learners who did not read reading materials at house or school affect their reading comprehension skills. As she cited in Camosa (1987) in De Leon (2009) states that if the child is exposed to reading materials it would have a great impact on the reading habit and interest of the learners (Torres, 2019:7). Besides, Learner-related factors such as prior knowledge, understanding, attitude and motivation if low hindered the reading comprehension skills of the students (Torres, 2019:7).

Therefore, based on the supported theories above, those three indicators above are really influencing students reading comprehension, and also because of this reason, the researcher just focus on those three indicators above.

RESEARCH METHOD

Descriptive quantitative research was used as the design of this research. The sample of the study were 20 students at Eleventh Grade at SMAN Islam Terpadu Syech Walid Thaib Shaleh Indragiri Sungai Iliran. In collecting data, the researcher used questionnaire which was distributed to the sample. There are 15 statements in the questionnaire. Then data gathered were analyzed by finding the statements which is categorized into strongly agree and agree position will be taken as the factor.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

FINDING

From the result of the questionnaire above, it was found that there are four factors causing students difficulties in understanding reading text at the eleventh grade of SMAN Islam Terpadu Syech Walid Thaib Shaleh Indragiri Sungai Iliran. Those four factors are they are bored and lazy when reading English text, they usually spend more leisure time on entertaining activities such as watching TV, chatting online, going online on Facebook, or playing games than reading, lack of

English books in school and Activities in reading class are obsolete and not interesting.

Based on the finding above, it can be interpreted that the factors that causing students difficulties in reading are from their selves and their school environment. Therefore, they need to find strategies to make them like reading and school needs to facilitate them in order they like to read. Such as providing many English books and teachers need to have more interesting teaching method to make the students like to read.

DISCUSSION

Based on the finding above, it can be interpreted that the factors that causing students difficulties in reading are from their selves and their school environment. Therefore, they need to find strategies to make them like reading and school needs to facilitate them in order they like to read. Such as providing many English books and teachers need to have more interesting teaching method to make the students like to read.

CONCLUSION

This research was aimed at investigating the factors causing students difficulties students understanding reading text. To answer this problem, the researcher used questionnaire as research instrument. The instrument were answered by 20 samples where they are students of eleventh grade in this school.

After conducting a research and getting the data, the researcher concludes that there are four factors causing students difficulties in understanding reading text, they are feel bored and lazy, cannot use the leisure time maximally for reading, lack of English book at school and uninteresting teaching learning process. Those factors included in two factors, that is students attitude and teaching and learning in the classroom.

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