



STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING READING COMPREHENSION OF EXPLANATORY TEXT

Rizka Rahayu & Erlidawati

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Lhokseumawe

Abstract: Reading is the way in developing students' comprehension of the written texts. The objective of reading is to know the main idea of reading to obtain and get the information involve content and the meaning from the text. In learning reading comprehension, the students faced many obstacles in comprehending the text. Cause of they have lack vocabulary and they do not know the meaning from the text. While they must learn various of text in learning reading. One of the texts that they must learn is explanatory text. Explanatory text explains about social, culture, scientific and other phenomena how and why something happen. It makes students' bore in learning the reading, they assume that reading is difficult for them and they do not interest in learning reading comprehension. Some factors can influence students' difficulties in learning reading comprehension like; the students are difficult to grasp the meaning from the text and they cannot different the sound of word that written and read. Then, they find the strange words when they read a text.

Keywords; Students' difficulties, Reading Comprehension, Explanatory Text

Introduction

English is now nearly universally used as an international language. These days, many individuals are beginning to study and use this foreign language from all over the world. A few individuals already know how important English is in daily life. People began reading English news items and articles, speaking English, and listening to English music. English reading is ubiquitous in daily life, particularly on the internet, which people use every day to obtain information. As a result, some people are aware of how crucial it is to read in English to obtain information. Reading, in Smith's opinion, is a procedure that develops comprehension of the core ideas in written texts. This implies that reading is a collaborative process that helps readers understand written stuff. Individuals who

comprehend the meaning of English texts they read are considered to have high reading skills. As a result, an English reader needs to be able to fully comprehend what he is reading. Arham & Hudriati made it very evident that a person's reading comprehension skills are strong if they can fully comprehend or assimilate the information found in reading. There are numerous English-readable text formats, each with specific authoring guidelines. An explanation text is one of them. The explanatory text, according to Restuti in Samhis Setiawan, is a text that explains procedures associated with social, scientific, cultural, and other phenomena.¹ According to Kemendikbud, an explanation text is a non-fiction work that explains how or why something occurs.² That is, since the author usually gives a rationale for the phenomenon, the explanation text discusses something that genuinely occurs in our surroundings.

In learning reading process, all students must learn various text in English. The students get some difficulties like; in pronouncing word by word from text and sentence by sentence caused Indonesian students learn English lesson when they are in the school. They do not understand the meaning from the text, because of they do not master the vocabulary and

¹Setiawan, S, "Materi Teks Eksplanasi", Nov 7, 2022, dari gurupendidikan.co.id: <https://www.gurupendidikan.co.id/contoh-teks-eksplanasi/>.

²Kemendikbud. *Model Pengembangan RPP*. (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan dasar dan Sekolah Menengah, 2017). P. 1-10

rarely read the text after the leaning process. Some of the students do not interest for reading, it makes them boring because they do not comprehend what they read. One of the texts is explanatory text that they learn it at eleventh grade students of senior high school. In learning this text get difficulties for students to understand the content from the text, because they get the strange word make them confused.

On the 2006 curriculum and 2013 curriculum for SMA expect students able to understand several reading texts in the form of interpersonal and transactional, formal or informal, in the following types especially in the explanatory text.³

The curriculum has designed a good system for teaching learning process to develop the students' knowledge in learning reading, but the students have the difficulties from their side and outside that it can improve the students' capability.

Review of Related Literature

1. Definition of Reading Comprehension

Arianto claims that as reading activities allow students to apply the knowledge they have learned, they will be more involved in the learning process⁴. Reading can help pupils learn new topics. Students will learn more easily if they frequently participate in reading activities. Klingner defines reading comprehension as the process of making sense of words by coordinating several complex activities, including word reading, word knowledge, and fluency.⁵ Snow also stated that the process of concurrently deriving and creating meaning through interaction and involvement with written language is known as reading comprehension. There are three of them. The reader, the text, and the reading task or objective make up its

³Abidin, Y, *Desain Sistem Pembelajaran Dalam Konteks Kurikulum 2013*. (Bandung: PT Refika Aditma 2018). P. 57

⁴Arianto, M. A," *Critical Reading strategy in Terms of Gender Used by the Four Graduate Students in the ELT program of Universitas Negeri Malang*". (Disertasi dan Tesis program pascasarjana UM, 2017). P. 141

⁵ Janette K. Klinger, Sharon Vaughn, and Alison Boardman, *Teaching Reading Comprehension To Students with Learning Difficulties*, (New York: The Guilford Press, 2007). P. 20

three components.⁶

According to the explanation given above, reading comprehension is the process of developing a sophisticated grasp of the words and phrases used in English texts. It involves more than just reading; it also entails comprehending the meaning and purpose of the text's interaction with the reader.

2. Purpose of Reading Comprehension

According to Abidin, the main idea of reading to get and to find information include content and meaning of the text. Based on principle here there some of purposes of reading:

- a. Reading for knowledge, that is to find knowledge or useful information inside order to generate ideas and knowledge of person.
- b. Reading to product, that is done to profit from financial (business) aspect.
- c. Reading to entertain, namely reading what to do to get enjoyment, freshness, and enjoyment from reading materials he read. The readers make an inference the purpose of reading is pointed to understanding and comprehending the text.⁷ There are many advantages to reading, particularly for kids who wish to learn things outside of the classroom as well as within it. It is therefore essential of teachers to assist pupils in developing their reading skills by utilizing intended purposes, appropriate reading strategies, and practical ways and approaches. Instructors are supposed to assist students in improving their reading abilities by employing strategies, tactics, and appropriate reading approaches that serve the intended objectives.

⁶Catherine, E. Snow, *Reading for Understanding: Toward an R & D Program in Reading Comprehension*, (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2002). P. 31.

⁷ Abidin, Y. *Strategi membaca Teori dan Pembelajarannya*. (Bandung: RIZQI PRESS, 2010). P. 9.

3. Types of Reading

Types of Reading according to Patel and Jain, the types of reading:

a. Intensive Reading

Under the direction of the teacher, intensive reading is linked to continuing language acquisition. Reading extensively will give you a foundation for understanding structural challenges and expanding your vocabulary and idiom knowledge. The foundation of classroom activities will be extensive reading material. In addition to being read, it will also be thoroughly discussed in the target language, occasionally examined and utilized as the foundation for writing tasks. Text or passage reading is considered intensive reading. The reader's goal in this reading was to gain insight or understanding from the text. Reading condensed material is the aim of this reading exercise. The purpose of this reading is to obtain precise information.

b. Extensive Reading

Reading more than one book at a time can help you gain a general understanding of a subject and can also be enjoyable. The reader is curious to learn more. After reading, the reader is uninterested in specific or crucial facts. People typically read to stay current.

c. Aloud Reading

Reading aloud is a basic form of classroom organization and discipline. When read aloud, students are exposed to written sentences that have never been spoken before. The purpose of reading aloud is to achieve or improve students' speaking ability and pronunciation. Reading aloud is only useful at certain times. Reading aloud prevents students from learning to understand the meaning of sentences, even though they may not know the words in the sentences.

d. Silent Reading

Silent reading is a very important skill in English class. This kind of reading should be used to improve students' reading skills. To get a lot of information, read silently. Silent reading must be based on a text selected by the student. Silent reading allows students to read completely silently, without making sounds or moving their lips. This means she can read quickly, easily and fluently. This promotes understanding and expands students' vocabulary. When reading silently, students can more easily adjust

to the rhythm or speed of their own material.⁸

From explanation above that there are four different kinds of reading: extensive reading, which raises awareness of language and is used to attain fluency in reading, and intensive reading, which is used to introduce a new language. Reading a much can also help youngsters develop a love of reading from a young age. Moreover, reading aloud to kids is a straightforward practice that involves dedicating a brief period to read stories to them on a regular and continuous basis. This helps students become accustomed to hearing, develop a desire to read, and eventually become proficient readers. and lastly, silent reading, which aims to increase pupils' attention spans by having them read every word or concept so that it.

4. Technique of Reading

Wood in Irawati indicates the technique of reading are important categories as follow:

a. Skimming

The eyes scan the text quickly to discover the main idea and point. So skimming happens when a reader quickly looks at the contents page, chapter title, subtitle 10, etc. of the book. This is called skimming. When a reader quickly scrolls through the newspaper to see what the day's topics are, it often means they only glance at the headlines. What the reader wants to understand through a particular passage, such as a newspaper article, just for the sake of understanding it.

b. Scanning

The reader should pay attention to a certain element, the text says. You can scan to find a name, a date, static data or written facts. The focus quickly turns to writing life.

c. Intensive Reading

This is also called study reading and requires careful study of the text. Since the level of comprehension must be high, the reading speed is correspondingly slower. Three reading strategies for reading proficiency

⁸ Patel, M. F. & Jain, Praveen M. *ENGLISH Language Teaching*. (Jaipur : Sunrise Publisher & Distributors, 2008). P. 117-123.

based on the justification provided. These are necessary for the kids to read passages or stories with ease.

5. Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension Skill

One of the factors that influence students' reading comprehension, according to Dennis, is the complexity of the text. This factor depends on the reader's strength and ability to use the language and understand its usage and different meanings. Environmental conditions also influence students when they attempt to read text. When students are in a state of danger, they find it difficult to concentrate on reading. Anxiety is also a factor affecting students' reading ability. Problems with exams or homework can put pressure on students who read for pleasure.

Some factors influence reading comprehension. These include the complexity of the text read, environmental influences, anxiety during reading comprehension, interest and motivation, speed of decoding or recognizing words, and health problems. These factors are discussed in detail in the following section:

a. Complexity of the texts.

This factor is influenced by the reader's strength and command of language, as well as his understanding of its usage and different meanings. Speaking ability plays an important role in determining a reader's proficiency level because students hear words and acquire a large vocabulary. A large vocabulary helps students clarify unfamiliar words through contextual feedback.

b. Factor related to the environmental conditions that impact the learners who try to read a passage.

Readers may have more difficulty understanding text in an unstructured environment than readers reading in a quiet, controlled place. When students are in an unsafe place, they find it difficult to concentrate on reading. When they are in a safe environment, their reading comprehension skills improve. The reader loses focus on understanding the text when he hears noises such as television or radio.

c. Factor is pertinent to the anxiety during reading comprehension.

Examinations, class work, or homework situations can put more pressure on readers' reading than reading for enjoyment. Some learners

react positively to examinations while others are overwhelmed by the pressure to carry out a reading activity. Learners who experience this anxiety may not completely understand the instructions and this may lead to confusion and poor comprehension of the reading task.

d. Factor interest and motivation.

Student interest and motivation are very important for the development of their reading comprehension. If readers find the material, they are reading monotonous, they will have great difficulty concentrating on understanding it. This can lead to poorer reading comprehension among readers. If the material read interests students, they can easily understand and remember it. English teachers should motivate their students by providing them with interesting reading material in class.

e. Factor is related to decoding or word recognition speed.

Readers who have difficulty decoding and recognizing words read slowly and have more difficulty understanding the meaning of passages than those who do not have trouble decoding. He said vocabulary influences reading comprehension because readers use their decoding skills to understand the pronunciation and meaning of words they have never seen before. People with sufficient vocabulary can explain meaning or read passages more quickly than people who must guess the meaning of unknown words based on contextual clues.

f. Factor is concerned with the medical problems.

Poor reading comprehension skills may be related to medical problems that may not be treated until the child is older. These include undiagnosed ADD (attention deficit disorder), speech problems and hearing loss. He pointed out that students with speech and hearing disabilities are less likely to participate in oral readings and class discussions. These are two exercises that will help students improve their reading comprehension.⁹

Based on the description provided above, it can be concluded that

⁹ Hollowell, K. *Factors Affecting Poor Reading Comprehension Skills*. e-How Contributor On line magazine. (2013). P. 13. Retrieved from http://www.ehow.com/info_8423949_factors-poor-reading-comprehension-skills.html, accessed on 7 september 2022.

there are variety of internal factors that also have a significant impact on students' fluency in reading comprehension. Students' reading abilities are required to support other factors, and if they lack motivation to read, they may find it difficult to understand, lose focus, or experience anxiety when faced with challenging reading.

6. Definition of Explanatory Text

An explanatory text includes explanations for natural, social, scientific, cultural and other phenomena. This paragraph describes why and how something occurs.¹⁰ In this way, the explanatory text serves to provide information to readers about a process. Through explanatory text, students can conduct academic and scientific thinking.¹¹ Explanatory text is one of the academic types, which is very important for student learning.¹² It not only requires students to understand the technical discourse but also requires students to have art subjects, even subjects such as history, it has text characteristics that are like scientific causal explanations.

From the description above, it can be concluded that explanatory text is a text that provides information about natural, cultural, natural, and social phenomena, as well as about how these phenomena occur.

7. Linguistic Characteristics of Explanatory Texts

According to Suherly there are two linguistic characteristics of explanatory texts, namely:

- a. Causal conjunctions.

Causality conjunctions are connecting words between clauses and between sentences that express a cause-and-effect relationship. There are several examples of causality conjunctions: I didn't go because it was raining

¹⁰ Masitoh, D. *Buku Klasik, Kekinian, Lengkap, Sistematis: Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA Kelas X, XI, XII* (Rian (ed.)). Cakrawala, 2017). P. 29.

¹¹ Meladina. *Students' Ability, Problems and Causes of Problem in Writing Explanation Text At the First Grade of Sman 1 Batusangkar*. Curricula, 4(1),(2019). P. 8. <https://doi.org/10.22216/jcc.2019.v4i1.3893>. Accessed on 24 mei 2023.

¹²Ting, S., Campbell, Y. M., Law, L., & Poh, H. *Explanations without a purpose? Genre-based instruction and academic writing*. Journal of Academic Language and Learning, 7(1), (2013). P. A26-A39–A39.

heavily. Causal conjunctions i.e. because, because, because of that, because of that and so.

b. Chronological conjunction.

Chronological conjunction is a conjunction that is used to connect words, sentences or other forms. What is clear, by using it we are given an explanation that there is still a relationship between the previous word/sentence. Conjunctions that include chronological conjunctions are, then, then, after that, and finally. Drawing from the aforementioned explanation, it can be inferred that explanatory texts possess certain language features, including the usage of causal conjunctions, such as area, to explain causality. as well as chronological conjunctions like ultimately, that, and then.

8. Definition of Student Difficulties

Difficulties include problems with reading, writing and spelling. When reading, they may have basic difficulty recognizing and decoding words, or they may have difficulty understanding what they are reading even if they can identify the words on the page.¹³ The difficulty is that they are less likely to use automatic playback use. process and make more conscious efforts when reading. This situation often leads to cognitive overload, causing inference-based processing of new words to be less than¹⁴. Harrison argues that the difficulties are related to students' learning difficulties, which makes them feel more insecure than some of their classmates. In addition to difficulties, there are also causes of errors in syntax, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and other types of errors that students make when learning a foreign language¹⁵ According to Westwood, student stress is a condition in which students do not properly understand the educational material provided to them and do not achieve positive outcomes for their

¹³ Peter Westwood, *Teaching and Learning Difficulties*, (Camberwell : AcerPress, 2006), p.105.

¹⁴ Garry Woolley, *Reading Comprehension Assisting Children with Learning Difficulties*,(London: Spinger, 2011). P. 15.

¹⁵Harrison, *Incorporating Animation Concepts and Participles In STEM Education. The Technology Teacher*, (2010): USA.

students.¹⁶

The rationale provided above leads one to the conclusion that difficulty is defined as any issue, barrier, or thing that gets in the way of achieving a goal. Students' challenges refer to the barriers they face during the learning process, specifically in reading comprehension, where they struggle to grasp the ideas and significance of a text. It requires work to comprehend a passage written in unfamiliar language. Students may struggle to grasp texts for a variety of reasons, including word choice, syntax, grammar, pronunciation, and other issues.

8. Student's Difficulties In Reading Comprehension

Students often have difficulty in reading. Students often have difficulty in reading. There are several difficulties that students often experience in reading comprehension. that are:

a. Issues with de-coding

Decoding, also called word sounding, allows children to combine sounds with letters to create the sound of written language. Beginning readers often have difficulty when encountering new or unfamiliar terms, but decoding usually becomes easier with phonics instruction and repeated practice of the reading load. If a child continues to have difficulties, they may have a specific learning disability, which is a physical impairment that prevents them from physically seeing letters or hearing spoken language. For more information, see our articles on dyslexia and visual impairment in the classroom.

b. Poor Comprehension

There is a lot to do while reading. From letter and recognition to understanding meaning at the expression, sentence and paragraph level. When If a beginner encounters vocabulary that he does not know or recognize due to inaccurate decoding, he can move on to the next step. The more blank lines there are in a line of text that the reader is supposed to understand, the more cognitively demanding and frustrating the reading task becomes. Therefore, poor comprehension can occur if a student has

¹⁶ Westwood, P, *What Teacher need to Know About Teaching Methods*. (Victoria : Acer Press, 2008). P. 11

difficulty decoding, has a limited vocabulary, or tries to read the text at too high a level.

c. Speed

The more students read, the more often they come across unfamiliar terms. Often the context in which these new words are found gives children all the clues they need to guess their meaning. As students expand their vocabulary, they visually recognize more words and their reading speeds up. Students who are still decoding might benefit from over-studying words like those on the stupid list.

According to the description given above, there are a few common reading comprehension problems that students run into. These problems are primarily related to decoding, which makes it easier for students to remember and identify new words that they don't often hear or read when a teacher reads aloud. Next, children frequently struggle with learning how to interpret the material, and they also frequently have trouble keeping up with reading speed.

Conclusion

Reading comprehension is the activities to develop understanding of the vocabulary and sentence by sentence in English text. It needs comprehending the meaning and the aim of the text's interaction with the reader. In learning reading, it has four types; there are extensive reading, it is the students must learn reading in focusing on language and to reach fluency in reading. Intensive reading, the students read the text to focus on the language and helps students love to develop of reading. Aloud reading, the students must read the text in loud voice to accustomed hearing and they can improve their reading. Silent reading, the students concern on the word by word and concept of the text.

Readers who struggle with word recognition and decoding read more slowly and find it harder to comprehend passages than readers who do not struggle with decoding. According to him, vocabulary has an impact on reading comprehension since readers utilize their decoding abilities to figure out how to pronounce and comprehend words they have never seen before. A person with a large enough vocabulary can read passages more rapidly or explain meaning more quickly than someone who must infer the

meaning of unknown terms from context.

Numerous internal elements also play a major role in influencing how fluently kids comprehend what they read. The reading skills of students are necessary to support other elements; if they are not motivated to read, they may become anxious when presented with tough reading or struggle to grasp.

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