

# Student Difficulties on Reading Comprehension in Explanation Text at Eleventh Grade Students of MAN 1 Makassar

Achmad Chrisbianto Sachran<sup>1</sup>, Munir<sup>2\*</sup>, Nur Aeni<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>English Education Department, State University of Makassar, Indonesia

\*Corresponding E-mail: [munir@unm.ac.id](mailto:munir@unm.ac.id)

## **Abstract**

The activity of reading is very important because with reading students get new words in learning English, especially in writing, speaking, and listening. And also Reading skills teach students how to pronounce the words of the sentence in the text. With reading, students can understand the existing conditions and situations. The student also will do some activities by reading in every place, reading some words, and sentences or passages. By reading, students will get the information, knowledge, and idea. Reading is also having important in education, especially in teaching and learning processes. Nowadays teachers usually teach reading only gives the clue or material point related to the material.

*Keywords: Student Difficulty, Qualitative Research, Explanation Text.*

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## **1. Introduction**

Reading is one of the basic skills in learning English that has to be mastered by the students, by reading, information, and new knowledge will be gotten in their learning. The activity of reading is very important because with reading students get new words in learning English, especially in writing, speaking, and listening. And also Reading skills teach students how to pronounce the words of the sentence in the text. With reading, students can understand the existing conditions and situations. The student also will do some activities by reading in every place, reading some words, and sentences or passages. By reading, students will get the information, knowledge, and idea.

Reading is also having important in education, especially in teaching and learning processes.

Nowadays teachers usually teach reading only gives the clue or material point related to the material. It is meant the students will find the material by themselves and the materials are in written forms. Therefore, the students need to improve their reading skills.

Prihatini (2020) in her research “An Analysis of Students’ Difficulties in Reading Comprehension at SMA Negeri 1 Sukodadi Lamongan” found that the result of the research showed that some students had difficulties in reading comprehension and they had difficulty in different levels, namely literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, critical comprehension.

Septiana (2019) A Descriptive Analysis of Students’ Difficulties in Comprehending English Reading Text. The result of the study

shows that the aspects of reading comprehension are determining the main idea, locating references, understanding vocabulary, making inferences, detailing information.

Hidayati (2018) *Students Difficulties in Reading Comprehension at the First Grade of SMAN 1 Darussalam Aceh Besar*. The result of the research found difficulties including answering the main idea, making inferences, and locating reference questions. The most difficult aspect encountered by the students of SMAN 1 Darussalam, Aceh Besar was finding main idea questions, because the located main idea was difficult to find. Besides, based on the students' responses in the questionnaire, they mostly got difficulties in understanding vocabulary, poor mastery of grammar, difficulty in understanding long sentences, lack of media learning, less support from the family, lack of knowledge of strategies in reading comprehension.

From the previous research above, the researchers can conclude that difficulties in understanding the reading text are very important to be known by the students and the teacher. Since every student probably has different difficulties in understanding the reading text, the researchers got the inspiration to do research based on this topic.

However, the problems faced by the students in one school might be different from the other schools. This research will differ from all of those previous researches in some aspects. First, in this research, the researchers emphasized the difficulties in understanding reading text faced by senior high school students. This is important to help the teacher be aware of the problems and consequently try to solve the problem in the earlier level of study and improve students' competence.

Second, this research will focus on the students' difficulties in understanding the explanation text. This was based on the preliminary study result that many students still face difficulty in understanding the Explanation text. Moreover, the differences are also about the place, conceptual framework, data collection technique, and the data analysis used in this research. and all teachers have to teach differently so that in almost every region there are students who have difficulties in learning reading text. Teaching or learning English must be fun, enjoyable, and entertaining for both teachers and students. Because teaching reading comprehension should use interesting, amusing, and entertaining material to attract the students in the teaching-learning process. The teacher and the students must be cohesive in the learning process, to get the expected goals. According to (Tarigan (1990:7) in Jaenal 2010) reading is a process that is carried out and used by readers who want to get the message delivered by the author through the medium of words or written language. Based on the explanation above students can proceed in reading and understanding the contents of the text so that students get the contents of the message conveyed by the author through the medium of words or written language. According to Harmer (2007:99), reading is useful for language acquisition. Provided that students more or less understand what, they read, the more they read, the better they get at it.

According to Oakhill, Cain, and Elbro (2015:1), Reading Comprehension is a complex task, which requires the orchestration of many different Cognitive skills and abilities. It means that reading comprehension is the ability to read text, process, and understand its meaning.

The similarities among the previous studies are students' difficulties in reading comprehension. The difference among those previous studies and this research are the purpose, the next researchers focus in students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation text. The researchers will focus on analysis students' difficulties in determining main idea, understanding meaning of word, making inferences, identifying references, finding specific detail information.

Based on the observation, the students in MAN 1 Makassar have difficulties in making an inference, determining the main idea, and locating references. The researchers are interested in analyzing the students' difficulties in reading comprehension and finding out the difficulties factors that the students face in reading comprehension. Based on the problem above, the researchers are interested in conducting research concerning "Students' Difficulties on Reading Comprehension in Explanation Text at Eleventh-grade Students of MAN 1 Makassar."

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2. 1. Reading Comprehension**

Reading is an activity to understand the content of the text that we read. By reading, the reader can get any message and information which can increase knowledge. According to Pang et al. (2003), reading about understands written texts and comprehension is the process of making sense of words, sentences, and connected text. Reading comprehension involves both perception and thought. Readers will use the background of knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, and other strategies to help them to understand a written text. It means reading is a process of communication between the writer and the reader. The writer has a message such as

feelings, facts, ideas, and arguments they want to share. Then, the writer puts the message into the words. So, reading is a way in which something is interpreted or understood. Reading does not only mean understanding the words or the grammar. It is not just translating but reading is thinking, to read well in English reading material text, and the reader must think what the text means.

English is a foreign language for Indonesian students. It is certainly not easy for students to interpret the meaning or the idea from written text. Because to understand the reading text, the students must have good competence in knowing the meaning of words, sentences, contents, and the most important is to know about the writer's ideas. From the explanation above, the researchers conclude that reading comprehension is the process of getting the meaning of the content and all information about the topic in the text. Comprehending an English text is not easy to do for students because English is a foreign language. Many readers are not able to catch the author's idea because of the limitation of thinking and analyzing the meaning of words and sentences. Therefore, the reader should have good concentration in reading text to get the meaning of the author's idea.

According to Burgmeier, Eldred, and Zimmerman (2007), the difficulty of reading comprehension can divide; establishing a context, understanding words, putting words into a sentence, and using words in context. For faster reading with comprehension, you should be able to make reading and study time a more meaningful valuable, productive, and enjoyable experience. (Cutler, 2003, p. 2). Students' difficulties in comprehending the reading text are Vocabulary, Grammatical structure, Literal comprehension, Inferential comprehension, Applied comprehension,

Critical Reading, and Format of reading text. (Jaya, 2005, p. 25).

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

To comprehend a text, Westwood (2001: 31) argues that readers must use the information they already possess to filter, interpret, organize and reflect upon the incoming information they get from the text. He thinks that efficient interpretation of the text involves a combination of word recognition skills, linking of new information to prior knowledge, and application of appropriate strategies such as locating the main idea, making connections, questioning, inferring, and predicting. Therefore, comprehending the English reading text is not an easy thing, so that is why many students find difficulties in comprehending the English text. Reading difficulty refers to problems associated with reading and it was causing to fall behind in terms of reading requirements within the classroom (Oberholzer, 2005). It means that reading difficulty is the problem that is faced by the students in comprehending the text. This problem can harm their study, especially their reading ability. Moreover, Kuswidyastutik (2013) said that someone's understanding of things can be measured by whether or not he was in answering questions related to it and the difficulty can be seen from the mistakes he did while working on the questions. The basic questions on the reading test are about the main idea, finding references, understanding the difficult word, and making an inference based on the passage. The researchers consider that those questions are also the basic difficulties that are faced by the students in comprehending the text. But in this research, the researchers analyzed the students' difficulties based on the five aspects of reading comprehension by Nuttal above. Below, the researchers show some of the causes of

students' difficulties in comprehending the text according to Reis (2016).

## **2. 3. Explanation Text**

Explanation Text is one of the texts used to explain how (process) something happens, especially those related to natural phenomena, the scientific world, or socio-cultural. The goal is to tell the reader or listener how something happened. An Explanation text usually comes from the author's questions regarding the 'why' and 'how' of an existing phenomenon.

The communicative purpose of explanation text is to explain the processes that occur in the formation of something related to natural, social, scientific, cultural, and other phenomena that aim to explain how or why this can happen.

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3. 1. Research Design**

Qualitative research as an instrument, serves to determine the focus of research, select informants as data sources, assess data quality, analyze data, interpret data and draw conclusions from their findings (Sugiyono, 2017).

In qualitative research, the main instrument for data collection is a human being that is, the researchers themselves or others who helped investigators. In qualitative research, the researchers himself collects data by asking, listening, and taking. Researchers can ask for help from others to collect data, called the interviewer. In this case, an interviewer directly collects data by asking, listening, and taking (Afrizal, 2014). In this research, the researchers will use descriptive qualitative. The research descriptive is going to describe

systematically the facts and characteristics of the subject (students from MAN 1 Makassar). The researchers use descriptive design, become in this case, the research is focusing on certain phenomena in the school environment about students' difficulties in reading comprehension.

The subject of this research is the tenth-grade students at MAN 1 Makassar 2020-2021 and the source of data is observation and students' answer in the interview is to find out the factors that cause students to have difficulties.

### **3. 2. Instruments of Research**

Instruments are tools or facilities used by researchers in collecting data so that their work is easier and the results are better, so they are easy to process (Arikunto, 2006). The instruments of this research are In-depth interview. In qualitative research, the main tool or instrument of data collection is human or the researchers himself by observing, asking, listening, asking, and taking data research. Researchers must get valid data so that not just any sources Interview. Therefore, the condition of the informant must also be clear according to the needs data so that the validity of the data can be recognized.

To collect data from information sources (informants), the researchers use an instrument. The main research requires an instrument of assistance. There are two kinds of aid instruments commonly used are 1) in-depth interview guides or guidelines. Questions usually of a general nature require a long answer, not a yes or no answer; 2) recording tool. Researchers can use recording tools such as tape recorders, cell phones, photo cameras, and video cameras to record interview results. Recording tools are used when researchers have difficulty recording the results of interviews (Afrizal, 2014).

The researchers will use structured or standardized interviews and In-depth interviews. Some limitations to this type of interview. This makes the data obtained is not rich. The interview schedule contains several pre-planned questions. Each participant was asked a question the same in the same order. This type of interview resembles a questionnaire written survey. The interview instrument is used in qualitative research because it can reveal information across time, which is related to the past, present, and future that will come. And the data generated from the interviews are open, comprehensive, and unlimited, to be able to form complete and comprehensive information that reveals qualitative research (Ulfatin, 2014).

### **3. 3. Analisis Data**

The scores of students' responses toward procedure describe all steps in collecting data, from beginning to end in order, in which they will occur (Gay et al, 2012). In collecting data, the researchers use some procedures, as follows:

- a. The researchers ask the teacher for coming to the class.
- b. After the class, the researchers will interview the class about students' difficulties when learning explanation text on reading comprehension.
- c. The researchers use in-depth interview and standardized interview.
- d. The researchers write the interview in the table in the transcript.

Miles & Huberman (2007) developed the following qualitative analysis process: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

## 4. Findings

Based on the results of the interview with the subjects of this study, the researchers presented the findings of the study below:

### 4. 1. Students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation text

In this research, the researchers found data about students' difficulties on reading comprehension in the explanation text of students' MAN1 Makassar through the interview. There are five aspects of student difficulties that the researchers will focus on in this section, such as determining the main idea, finding specific details information, making inferences, identifying references, and understanding the meaning of words (Nuttal 1982).

Based on the result of the interview, the researchers found that most of the students had more difficulties understanding the meaning of the word, making inferences, and identifying references than the other two aspects, such as determining the main idea and finding specific details information. As it can be seen from the result of the interview, most students said that they had difficulty understanding the meaning of English words; they felt it was difficult to make references because it was too specific and formal; and they also had difficulty making references because it required certain abilities.

#### a. Understanding meaning the meaning of words

In understanding the meaning of words, Hedge (2000: 193) noticed that vocabulary is another major component of reading ability with which language learners will experience difficulty. Most students find it difficult when they are required to understand the meaning of an

English text, in this case, an explanation text. The students also feel confused if the teacher asks them to read and respond to an English text, in this case, an explanation text.

#### b. Making inferences

In the making of inference, the students are expected to comprehend the text to find the conclusion of the statements in the text. Students sometimes find it difficult to conclude the text because the meaning of the statement is not written in the text sometimes. It is even more difficult when students have to write and rearrange the conclusion of the text, as seen in the interviews that have been conducted.

#### c. Identifying references

Reference is 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 (Rainbolt and Dwyer, 2011). Most students agree; some of them say that identifying references in an English text is still very difficult and specific for them.

#### d. Determining the main idea

In determining the main idea, the students are expected to find the main idea of the text, so they should comprehend the topic that is presented in the text. Most students say that determining the main idea of a sentence is actually easy. What makes it difficult is because of the language itself. As the researchers said before, the main problem for most of the students is understanding the meaning of an English word.

#### e. Finding specific details information

In finding the specific information, the students have to find the detailed information or idea that was mentioned in the text. Therefore, sometimes it is difficult for a

student to see and distinguish between important and unimportant information in the text to find specific pieces of information such as names and dates. Words or phrases, and references in the text. Most students find it easy to find specific detailed information in a text. However, students felt that when a text is too long, it will be difficult to find specific details of information.

#### **4. 2. The factors of the students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation text**

In this research, the researchers divided the factors of the students' difficulties on reading comprehension in the explanation text.

##### **a. Understanding the meaning of words**

As mentioned by student A: *"Saya masih kesulitan dalam memahami makna kata bahasa Inggris kak, karena masih terlalu asing bahasanya bagi saya, apalagi bahasa Inggris itu bukan bahasa sehari-hari dan jarang saya dengar"*. ("I'm still having trouble understanding the meaning of English words because the language is still too foreign to me; besides, the English language is not an everyday language and I rarely hear it"). So it can be said that most students still have trouble understanding the meaning of English words, especially in the English language, which they rarely hear.

##### **b. Making inferences**

As mentioned by student B: *"Saya kesulitan dalam membuat kesimpulan dalam teks bahasa inggris kak, karena diperlukanki 2 kemampuan didalamnya, pertama kemampuan mengartikan makna kata, dan yang kedua adalah kemampuan untuk menyusun kembali kesimpulannya"*. ("I have difficulty making inferences in English texts because making references takes two abilities: the first one is the ability to interpret the meaning of the word;

and the second is the ability to rearrange the conclusions"). Most students have difficulty making references because it requires certain abilities.

##### **c. Identifying references**

As mentioned by student C: *"Saya kesulitan dan kadang bingung dalam mengidentifikasi referensi dalam teks bahasa inggris kak, karena selain bahasanya, mengidentifikasi referensi juga diperlukan fokus dan konsentrasi, selain karena memang referensi itu terlalu baku dan spesifik"*. ("I find it difficult and sometimes confusing to identify references in English texts because of the language, and also because identifying references requires focus and concentration, other than because the references are too standard and specific"). Most students feel that identifying references in English texts is difficult because the texts are too specific and the language is difficult to understand.

##### **d. Determining the main idea**

As mentioned by student D: *"Sebenarnya toh kak, kalo untuk menemukan ide pokok itu sebenarnya mudahji, yang sulit untuk saya adalah memahami makna teks bahasa Inggrisnya, karena untuk menemukan ide pokok itu diperlukanki pemahaman isi teks terlebih dahulu kak"*. ("Actually, finding the main idea in a text is easy. What makes it difficult for me is the meaning of the English text, because in order to find the main idea, we need to understand the content of the text first"). So, most students say that determining the main idea of a sentence is actually easy. What makes it difficult is because of the language itself.

##### **e. Finding specific details information**

As mentioned by student E: *"Menemukan informasi detail yang spesifik dalam teks bahasa inggris itu mudahji kak, kecuali kalau teksnya terlalu panjang, karena*

*membutuhkanki ketelitian tersendiri lagi untuk memilih*". ("Finding specific detailed information in the English text is easy, except if the text is too long, because it requires more precision to choose"). Most students find it easy to find specific detailed information in an English text. However, students felt that when a text is too long, it will be difficult to find specific details of information.

## 5. Discussions

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this research aims to find out the students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation texts and the factors of the students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation texts.

### 5. 1. Students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation text

The result got in the findings has found the data about the students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation text through the interview. In the data, the researchers found that there are five aspects of students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation text: determining the main idea, finding specific details information, making inferences, identifying references, and understanding the meaning of words (Nuttal 1982).

The dominant aspects of the students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation text are understanding the meaning of the word, making inferences, and identifying references. The researchers analyzed the data and discovered that understanding the meaning of the word, making inferences, and identifying references were more difficult than the other two aspects,

such as determining the main idea and finding specific details information.

Based on an interview, the researchers found that understanding the meaning of the word, making inferences, and identifying references are the biggest problems for students. Students find it difficult because they do not understand the meaning of the English word; they felt it was difficult to make references because it was too specific and formal; and they also had difficulty making references because it required certain abilities, it was made the students find it difficulty in responding to any English text in terms of explanation text in their reading learning process.

Students feel that after understanding the meaning of the word, making inferences and identifying references, then followed by determining the main idea and finding specific details information, which is relatively easy for students to do, sometimes students feel it is difficult because of the language itself or if the text is too long. As a result, this is also related to the point of understanding the meaning of the words, which is the main problem for most of students.

### 5. 2. The factors of the students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation text

Based on the researchers, students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation text is a personal ability caused by several things, such as a lack of understanding of the English texts they are studying, not understanding English texts that are too long, the ability to spell, and still having difficulties with texts that are too formal and specific.

The main problem for most students is the difficulty in understanding the meaning of the



English word which makes students feel difficulties to respond to all aspects such as determining the main idea, finding specific details information, making inferences, identifying references, and understanding the meaning of words (Nuttal 1982).

Those four main points of causes mentioned above are all due to their limited abilities as mentioned by Hedge (2000: 193) who noticed that vocabulary is another major component of reading ability with which language learners will experience difficulty, Kopitski (2007) also said the readers need to practice combining clues from the text with their background knowledge to make inferences, and Reference is 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 (Rainbolt and Dwyer, 2011) . The researchers found that all the causes of students' difficulties were due to their limited personal abilities.

Based on the findings of this research, the researchers divided the factors of students' difficulties in understanding the readings in explanation texts, such as lack of understanding of the meaning of English words, lack of vocabulary, difficulties in encountering foreign languages that they rarely see and hear, difficulties in finding texts that are too long, difficulties with texts that are too formal and specific, and lack of spelling abilities.

Initially, the factors of students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation text are caused by lack of understanding of the meaning of English words, lack of vocabulary, difficulties in encountering foreign languages that they rarely see and hear, the complexity of word knowledge, and lack of spelling abilities. Based on interview most students still have trouble understanding the meaning of English

words, especially in the English language, which they rarely hear. In line with that, Hedge (2000: 193) was noticed that vocabulary is another major component of reading ability with which language learners will experience difficulty. Moreover, most students say that identifying references in an English text is still very difficult and specific for them, as (Rainbolt and Dwyer, 2011) state that Reference is 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. Moreover, it is even more difficult when students have to rearrange the conclusion of the text, as seen in the interviews that have been conducted. This is related to Kopitski (2007) who says that the readers need to practice combining clues from the text with their background knowledge to make inferences.

Furthermore, their daily habits that rarely find English vocabulary both at home and at school are factors that cause them to be foreign to English. They also have difficulty in making references because their ability to conclude and rearrange sentences in English is still too limited. We will find the same thing if they are asked to spell English, it's all because they are still very foreign to English.

Secondly, the factors cause the students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation text are caused by their limited personal abilities, including lack of understanding of the meaning of English words, lack of vocabulary, the complexity of word knowledge, difficulties in encountering foreign languages that they rarely see and hear, and lack of spelling abilities. It can be seen from the interview, which show that most students find it difficulty in understanding the meaning of the English word which makes students feel difficulties to respond to all aspects such as determining the main idea,

finding specific details information, making inferences, identifying references, and understanding the meaning of words (Nuttal 1982), where it is all included in the personal abilities of students. Moreover, the result of the interview of students related to lack of understanding the meaning of English words and lack of vocabulary, shows that students find it difficulties in English reading text because they can't understand the meaning of the English word he is reading if they are lack of vocabulary. Meanwhile, the result of an interview related to the complexity of word knowledge, shows that students find it difficulties in English reading text because they are not familiar with English in their daily life; it makes it difficult for them to understand the complexity of word knowledge. It is also related to the problem of lack of spelling abilities, which makes it difficult for them because they are not familiar with English spelling in their daily lives. So, it's all about sourcing from their daily habits in their lives.

## 6. Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussion of the study, the researchers conclude:

- a. The students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation text at eleventh grade students of man 1 Makassar are understanding the meaning of the words, making inferences, and identifying references. The dominant aspect of the students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation text is understanding the meaning of the words.
- b. The factors of students' difficulties on reading comprehension in explanation text is a personal ability caused by several things, such as a lack of understanding of the English texts they are studying, not understanding English texts that are too long, the ability to spell, and still having

difficulties with texts that are too formal and specific.

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