**THE STUDENTS’ DIFFICULTIES IN READING COMPREHENSION**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This research investigated students' difficulties in reading comprehension. The research questions were (1) what are the linguistic difficulties faced by the students’ SMK Negeri 3 Baubau in reading comprehension? (2) what are the non-linguistic difficulties faced by students of SMK Negeri 3 Baubau in reading comprehension? The purpose of this research is to find out the linguistics and non-linguistics difficulties faced by the students of SMK Negeri 3 Baubau in class reading comprehension.*

*This research used descriptive qualitative method. The subjects of the research were consisted of 28 students in which the researchers divided the students into seven groups who were interviewed as research subjects. In collecting the data, the researcher used several procedures namely observation, interview, audio recording and documentation. Three times meetings of EFL classroom interaction were observed. Researcher was using audio recordings and documentation. Records of interviews transcribed and analyzed with matches to: (1) linguistic difficulties encountered by the students in reading comprehension and; (2) Non-linguistic difficulties encountered by the students in reading comprehension.*

*The results of the research indicated that: (1) the linguistic difficulties encountered by the students of SMKN 3 BauBau in reading comprehension are: morphological aspects (word formation); syntax (sentence formation); and semantic aspects (meaning); and (2) the non-linguistic difficulties encountered by the students of SMKN 3 BauBau in reading comprehension are: (psychological aspect) that is the lack of learning spirit of the students; (aspect of learners) that is the intensity to repeating lessons very less from students; (teacher aspect) that is teacher skill in processing materials and method is still lack; (aspects of facilities and infrastructure) that is the function of teaching aids is still not maximized; (method aspect) that is method of activating learners still less attention; (time aspect) that is less good time management by students; (aspect of support) is the lack of business power of schools in realizing the learning program about foreign languages. So, based on the result above the researcher conclude that the students’ are still having a lot of difficulties in reading comprehension*.

*Keywords: Students’ Difficulties, Reading Difficulties, Reading Comprehension.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Reading is a complex "[cognitive process](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_process)" of decoding [symbols](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbols) in order to construct or derive meaning ([reading comprehension](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reading_comprehension)). Reading is a means of [language acquisition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_acquisition), communication, and of sharing [information](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information) and ideas. Like all languages, it is a complex interaction between the text and the reader which is shaped by the reader’s prior knowledge, experiences, attitude, and language community which is culturally and socially situated. Reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation. Learn how readers integrate these facets to make meaning from print.

Having a good reading is really important for students, they mostly start learning English through reading books, texts, articles, etc. Considering the great importance of reading for EFL learners, knowing about what constitute reading skill and what reading difficulty for EFL learners in the course of reading a text deem to be crucial. And the students are differ quite significantly between one to the other students. So, the researcher tries to findan actual students difficulties to comprehending the text in reading problems. Reading is very important for the students’ to comprehension what their read that can help the students to develop their ability in reading strategies. However in fact, many senior high school students’ make a lot of mistakes in English reading comprehension especially in vocational high school eleventh grade students’ of SMKN 3 BauBau. Most of their problems relate to the element areas of English, namely poor phonology, poor semantics, poor grammatical, or long text which may cause the difficulty in reading comprehension. So, reading difficulties is some problems are encountered by the students to get the main idea with other idea related the text.

Sadtono (1995) in Ismayanti (2015) offers that the reading difficulties in two major categories. They are linguistic problem and non–linguistic problems. The linguistic areas stand for the problems in the structure and vocabulary, as well as the problem of understanding sentences, phrases, paragraphs, and longer discourse. The while in non–linguistic sections come to some factors such as: learner factors, the instruction factors, instructor factors, evaluation, opportunity to learn, and the college administrators and socio cultural factors.

By reading strategies the students have to build their ability and knowledge to improve their learning especially in reading comprehension. According to Hedge, 2003, as cited in Alyousef, 2005 : The importance of teaching reading is to build the ability and knowledge of the students. The ability to built knowledge of the English language, the ability to build schematic knowledge, the ability to develop an awareness of the structure of written text in English, and the ability to take or assume a critical perspective concerning the contents of the text. In line with these condition, the students find difficulties to comprehend what their reading. From this problem the students can have effect in academic performance. So, the researcher will find out the strategy of reading to comprehending the text. A reading comprehension result when the reader knows which skills and strategies appropriate for the type of the text and understand to apply them to accomplish the reading purpose. The readers do not develop the ability to comprehend texts quickly, easily or independently. So, they have not enjoying and not effectively in reading activity which lead them have low motivation in reading achievement.

**RELATED LITERATURE**

1. The Definition of Reading

Reading means a result of interaction between the writer’s mind and the reader’s mind. It can be seen from the way the reader tries to understand and get the writers’ message on the text. To understand the writer’s message, readers have to do word recognition first before doing comprehension. Pang (2003:6) also emphasizes that reading is defined as understanding written texts. He says that reading consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension. Reading is making meaning from print. It requires that we:

* + Identify the words in print –a process called word recognition
  + Construct an understanding from them –a process called comprehension
  + Coordinate identifying words and making meaning so that reading is automatic and accurate –an achievement called fluency

Sometimes you can make meaning from print without being able to identify all the words. Word recognition is defined as the process of getting how written symbols correspond to one’s spoken language while comprehension is the process of making the meaning of words, sentences and connected text. He adds his statement that the reader who has background knowledge vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and on the strategies can help them understand written texts.

Reading is considered as the most difficult language skill, which involves the interaction of multiple cognitive, meta-cognitive, linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects. i.e.; some other sub-Skills operate all together in order to perform the task. Reading is not a passive task, but rather an active one. In fact, reading requires both the learner’s mental and experimental inputs of who is expected to comprehend the written message. In highlighting the importance of reading comprehension, Rivers (1981:147) stated that “reading is the most important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also as a means of consolidating and extending ones which are knowledge of the language”.

Reading is individual process; interactive cognitive process of extracting meaning from text which explains the different interpretations of different readers (Maarof & Yaacob, 2011). So, the students active participant, constructing meaning from clues of reading text and the students have to explore strategies that will be used to address reading difficulty among them of senior high school. Because the main factors such as poor met linguistic and non-linguistic cognitive awareness in reading comprehension.

The central purpose of reading is to understand a text. Consequently, Grabe (2009:14) defines reading as a comprehending process. Readers read to comprehend what the writer intended to convey in writing. They also want to figure out about the text and what information they can get from the text. Readers read to comprehend what the writer intended to convey in writing. They also want to figure out about the text and what information they can get from the text. The efforts do not only come from the readers, but also come from the writer. The writer also tries to share message in his mind to the reader. He or she need to make the message clear to his or her readers. Therefore, Nuttall (1996:11) adds that reading as an interactive process. It means that while a reader reads a text to comprehend the writer’s intention, the text provides information that the writer wants the reader to understand in certain ways.

So It can be concluded that motivation is the reasons behinds our choices and actions or a reason that makes someone want to do something because they want to achieve the goals or gets satisfaction with actions.

1. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the process of making meaning from text. The goal, therefore, is to gain an overall understanding of what is described in the text rather than to obtain meaning from isolated words or sentences. In understanding read text information children developed mental models, or representations of meaning of the text ideas during the reading process.

There are many strategies to learn reading, and many factors affect reading comprehension. There have been many studies about reading, but they were merely studies which study reading specifically, such as a study about reading comprehension question types. Studies focused on various aspects of reading, such as the relation between skills in comprehension and the ability to make inferences, and their relation to background knowledge have been conducted by Cain, Oakhill, Barnes, and Bryant (2001). This study found that students commonly failed in inference-making because they were poor at selecting the relevant information in the text or they did not know how to integrate one piece of information to another piece in order to make an inference. Here the students failed to recall information in the text because they could not comprehend the text which in turn was caused by their weaknesses in vocabulary (Oakhill, Barnes, & Bryant, 2001:857).

In conclusion, reading comprehension is a brain process involving several components in which those components interact with one another to draw the meaning of the text. Those components are mainly from the reader, the text and the activity. Those aspects should interact well with each other. If there is an interference growing between them, there will be difficulties in reading.

1. Reading Difficulties

Many factors of the students that contribute the reading difficulties causes of their reading problems may be largely unknown (Lewis and Doorlag 1999). It has been found that the prevalence of children with reading difficulties is often linked with the economic and social circumstances of the home. For example, many children identified as having reading difficulties experience significant language and cultural differences between home and school (Elkins 2002a, b; McNaughton et al. 2004; Rohl and Rivalland 2002).

The students can be successful or fail in reading depending on the type of text being read. As a study conducted by Schoenbach, et al. (1999) found that readers will face difficulties in reading when they are unfamiliar with the particular language structure and features of the text and then their language processing ability will break down. Students who are less interested in reading, with low motivation use few meta cognitive strategies to monitor their learning from the text, and have inadequate vocabulary and background knowledge with which to connect and link new ideas to previous learning are often failed in reading comprehension (Klinger, Vaughn, & Boardman, 2007:4). Calvo (2005:62) further states that “readers with large vocabularies will be more likely to find in their memory words with which to represent the inference that they are drawing”. In other words, the more knowledge of vocabulary that a reader has, the easier it is for the reader to produce inferences.

Sadtono (1995) in Ismayanti (2015) offers that the reading difficulties in two major categories. They are linguistic problem and non–linguistic problems. The linguistic areas stand for the problems in the structure and vocabulary, as well as the problem of understanding sentences, phrases, paragraphs, and longer discourse. The while in non–linguistic sections come to some factors such as:

1. The learner factors.

Learner factors affecting to second language learning have a crucial influence to students’ accomplishment in acquiring language. Several factors, including internal and external factors, result in students’ ability to learn. Knowledge about learner factors contributes to understanding of how to manage suitable classroom environment for second or foreign language learning. Internal Factors*-*intelligence, age, personality and motivation, are likely to play a crucial role in students’ language learning accomplishment, while External Factors including motivation, opportunity and environment can bring about students’ positive attitude toward the instructor and subject. According to Sudsa (2017) summarized that a good language learner is a willing and accurate guesser and has strong drive to communicate, or to learn from communication. He/she is willing to do many things to get his message across.

1. The instruction factors

In learning the second language learning the students has to learn about what the teacher have to give the instruction. But the instruction that can make the students understands or not, because Learners are exposed to a considerable amount of language through stimulating content. Learners explore interesting content and are engaged in appropriate language-dependent activities. Languages are not learned through direct instruction, but rather acquired "naturally" or automatically.

1. The instructor factor.

An instructor is a content resource. Most content experts share their knowledge through writing or lectures. When they instruct, they appear as the “sage on the stage” imparting all knowledge to a passive participant. They are a content resource. They control what is taught and when. It is up to the participant to adapt their personal style and prior knowledge to learn new skills and knowledge. Instructors can also be referred to as a [facilitator](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facilitator), who may be knowledgeable and experienced in the learning material, but can also be used more for their facilitation skills and ability to deliver material to learners. The instructors may deliver training in a [lecture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lecture) or [classroom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classroom) format, as an interactive workshop, as a demonstration with the opportunity for learners to practice, or even virtually, utilising [video-conferencing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video-conferencing) tools; and the instructor may have facilitation and teaching skills, in which they can utilise different methods to engage learners and embrace different [learning styles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning_styles). Other learning delivery methods include [e-learning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-learning) which delivers [self-paced courses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-paced_instruction)on line, and [blended learning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blended_learning) which mixes instructor-led and e-learning elements.

1. The evaluation. Opportunity to learn.

Training evaluation can be described as a systematic process of collecting and analyzing information for and about a training programme which can be used for planning and guiding decision making as well as assessing the relevance, effectiveness, and the impact of various training components (Raab et al*.,* 1991).

1. The college administrators and high – ranking – official, and The socio cultural factors.

The teacher’s overall concepts of reading strongly influence the method to diagnosing reading difficulty and of teaching reading. If the teacher thinks of reading primarily as a visual task, the teacher will be concerned with the concretion of visual defects and the provision of legible reading materials. If reading for the teacher is word recognition, the teacher will drill on the basic word recognition skills. Reading as a contributing to personal development and social welfare, he will provide his students with reading materials that will help them develop sounds values that will have some application to their lives and to the modern world (Alao and Jacob, 2008).

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This research applied a descriptive qualitative method in order to get more the students’ difficulties to understanding about reading comprehension. Gay (2006): qualitative research is the collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual data in order to gain insights into a particular phenomenon. This method used is to describe and analyze the difficulties linguistics faced by the students’ in reading comprehension and analyze the difficulties non-linguistics faced by the students’ in reading comprehension. The data analyzed was taken in form of open-ended questions.

As the participant in this research, the researcher choose the eleventh grade students of XI design class at SMKN 3 BauBau that consists of 23 females and 5 males. The criteria for selecting the students as a subject are based on the classes that are taught by the prospective teacher and their English achievement (the English score). It includes the students who got low score in learning English. To get the data, the researcher used interview guide. Interview was conducted three times by using audio recorder to collect data about the difficulties in linguistics faced by the students’ in reading comprehension and the difficulties in non-linguistics faced by the students’ in reading comprehension.

The data analysis consists of three kinds steps of activities. Miles and Huber man (2004) divide this analysis model in three kinds, namely data reduction, data display, and verification. Initially, the data were transcribed and selected the most important part which is relevant to the topic, the data was interpreted and analyzed in extracts of kinds of difficulties and then the relevant data wre identified and discussied.

**FINDINGS**

The findings of this research deals with the difficulties linguistics faced by the students of SMKN 3 BauBau in reading comprehension and difficulties non-linguistics faced by the students of SMKN 3 BauBau in reading comprehension. The result of the data findings found that there were many kinds of difficulties linguistics and non-linguistics faced by the students of SMKN 3 BauBau in reading comprehension. The data was interpreted in data analysis following :

### Linguistics Difficulties in Reading comprehension

Linguistics is the study of human speech including the units, nature, structure, and modification of language. So, in this linguistics aspects the research concluded the students difficulties in linguistics problem were phonological aspects (phonetic), morphological aspects (word formation), syntactic aspects (sentence formation), semantic aspect (meaning). Discussing this difficulty, the researcher found more dominant about the students difficulties in reading comprehension were aspect of semantics about lack of vocabulary (semantic aspects), they were:

1. Phonological Aspects (Phonetic)

Phonology is defined as the study of sound patterns and their meanings, both within and across languages. An example of phonology is the study of movements the body goes through in order to create sounds – such as the pronunciation of the letter “t” in “bet” where the vocal chords stop vibrating causing the “t” sound to be a result of the placement of tongue behind the teeth and the flow of air.

1. Morphological Aspects (Word Formation)

Morphology is the arrangement and relationships of the smallest meaningful units in a language. Or morphology is the branch of linguistics (and one of the major components of grammar) that studies words structures, especially in terms of morphemes. When we take a morpheme independently and use it as a stand-alone word in a sentence, it is known as a base. As the chart indicated, these can be nouns, verb, adjectives, conjunction, preposition, or determines. We also classify a morpheme that can function as stand-alone word as free. For example the bird like man hardly touched his food at dinner.

1. Syntactic Aspects (Sentence Formation)

Syntax refers to the ways in which we order specific words to create logical, meaningful sentences. While the parts of speech are all the different types of words that we can use, syntax is the set of rules, patterns, or processes by which we can put them together.

1. Smantic Aspect (Meaning)

Semantics is one of the important branches of linguistics, and deals with interpretation and meaning of the words, sentence structure, and symbols. It deals with the reading comprehension of the readers, in how they understand others and their interpretations. In addition, semantics constructs a relation between adjoining words and clarifies the sense of a sentence, whether the meaning of words are literal or figurative.

In the table following below, mention about the students difficulties in reading comprehension in linguistics aspects. The researcher found the more dominant reading difficulties encountered by the students were the semantic aspect and morphological aspect.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Reading difficulties (linguistics)** | **Example** |
| 1. | Phonological aspect | *S1: I don’t know how to pronounce adjective in British English*  *S2: for me, to pronounce a word or paragraph is difficult.* |
| 2. | Morphological aspect | *S1: I don’t understand in part of adjective*  *S2: I still confuse to recognize the word. Like verb, adjective, and noun.* |
| 3. | Syntactic aspect | *S1: for me structure its very difficult. Because I don’t know the formula.*  *S2: in part of past tense is very difficult because sometimes I forget the times.* |
| 4. | Semantic aspect | *S1: I feel difficult if the teacher giving us the assignment to looking for the adjective of the text.*  *S2: after I read a text, I don’t know what the meaning all the text.*  *S3: the verb I don’t know the verb.* |

Aspect of semantics or vocabulary becomes a huge problem. The statement above mentioned problems are just a few of other problems but in my opinion these are the major ones faced by students. So, to improve the vocabulary read an English language, reading habit will improve not only the students’ vocabulary but also the sense of making sentences. And to correct the pronunciation, listening an English channel will improve pronunciation skill. Some English cartoons are very helpful due to pace of speaking in them and different characters speak very slow and the students can understand every word they speak. Other students’ difficulties in reading is to recognize the words, the students don’t know the form of the word they really feel difficult with that. So, to improve their word recognition is to expose the students to words by offering activities that use this words like matching games (like where the word for adjective, verb, pronoun, and noun) and how to spell it in low and loud speak. The hardest for a teacher in this case is to actually create a new structure of the English grammar while trying not to dismantle the existing language structure of their mother tongue. The students should be able to use both the language with ease.

1. Non-linguistics Difficulties in Reading Comprehension

Non-linguistics is anything not consisting of or not related to language. The research concluded the students difficulties in non-linguistics problem were used seven aspects non-linguistics in students’ difficulties reading comprehension. Namely: aspects of psychology, aspects of students, aspects of teachers, aspects facilities and infrastructure, aspects of methods, aspects of time, environmental aspects. Discussing this difficulty the research found that more dominant about the students difficulties in reading comprehension were aspect of teacher, aspect students and aspect method. There were about the teacher explanation, method, and subject matter, namely:

1. Aspects Psychology

The problem associated with psychological factors such as motivation and interest in learning. Learning without motivation will never succeed, especially if the embedded hatred against material and teachers teach it.

1. Aspects of Students’

Aspect of students is about the problem of students’ individual differences in class, both in terms of ability and orientation learning. So, learning difficulties learners/ students include a board understanding, including: a) learning disorder, b) learning disfunction, c) under achiever, d) slow learner, e) learning disabilities.

1. Aspects of Teacher

Talking about aspect of teacher is like the competence, whether academic, pedagogic, personal, and social. Teachers become an integral part in teaching, because success or failure of learning as well depending on the effort of the teacher who has been taught.

1. Aspects of Facilities and Infrastructure

Aspect facilitates and infrastructure is about media infrastructure, media and learning resources such as story English book and English Language module book or other supporting books. The claim is that it can cause feeling of pleasure and make students feel at home in the classroom. And include in the form of teaching tools, which is an act or situation of an object deliberately to achieve educational goals. The role of props is really important, because with the presence of these props the material can be easily makes the students understand especially in reading comprehension.

1. Aspects of Methods

The methods are the ways teachers use in make contact with the students at the time in teaching. The use of the right method is helpful in achieve the success of a learning process. Because with the appropriate method, the message of that material delivered can be accepted by students easily and can making the students unsaturated in following the process learning in the classroom.

1. Aspects of Time

Aspect of time is always available, the solution is sufficient time to get service, both in class and outside class. Utilization of the right lesson time will be great assisting in the achievement of learning process objectives. The amount of time that is destined in a processes learning will be helpful in achieving the goals.

1. Environmental Aspects

The learning environmental in school, which can be encouraging students dare to speak without any same and fear wrong. The higher the same and the fear of being wrong, the more it will never be created an atmosphere of language. This includes the environment in which students live, in terms of the learning process, the role of environment student residence also greatly affects students in learn. Therefore, need for a learning environment conducive to support a learning process.

In the following below, mention about the students difficulties in reading comprehension in non-linguistics. The non-lingustics specific aspects are about subject phonological aspect, morphological aspect, syntactic aspect, semantic aspect.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Reading difficulties (non-linguistics)** | **Example** |
| 1. | Aspect of Psychology | *S1: I still confuse if I answer the question from the text, because not all the meaning of the text I understand.*  *S2: I think the evaluation is very difficult because I don’t know the meaning from the text.that makes me lazy to learn reading English.* |
| 2. | Aspect of Students | *S1: I still confuse the meaning of the text, especially in other subject matter like math in English, it is very difficult to know the meaning.*  *S2: for me, just reading English is very difficult even less the other subject in English, huft.* |
| 3. | Aspect of Teachers | *S1: eventually the teacher has giving us the example, sometimes we don’t know what the teacher explanation.*  *S2: the instruction from the teacher still less because she giving us the explanation always using full English. So, some explanation we don’t know the meaning.* |
| 4. | Aspect Facilities and Infrastructure | *S1: I don’t have any book English to practicing my pronunciation.*  *S2: I have a dictionary and Google to learn reading text.* |
| 5. | Aspect of Methods | *S1: always practicing my speak English.*  *S3: using my dictionary or Google translate to makes me easy to comprehend the text.* |
| 6. | Aspect of Time | *S1: the time is good enough*  *S2: full time I don’t understand the teacher explanation.*  *S3: not effective in a long time to learn.* |
| 7. | Environmental Aspect | *S1: I like reading English text because I follow English course the side of my house.*  *S2: I like to read every writings of English that exist around my environment.* |

The statement above mentioned problems are just a few of other problems but in my opinion these are the major ones faced by students. As we know that nothing is ever simple in education. So, to improve the students understand in learning English, the teacher has to make sure the students are understood in subject matter, for the example giving a familiar text to building the students’ vocabulary. And the teacher has to know more the students background culture, to make easy for the teacher to giving explanation for the students to easy understand. Because the students feel less in the teacher instruction, so the teacher has to giving explanation in easy ways and giving the instruction in mix languages because the students lack of vocabulary so the teacher has to increase their interaction with the students. If the students did not have more difficulties in reading, they can improve they vocabulary in learning to improve their comprehension.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Based on the findings and the discussion, it can be concluded that English learning process that took place in SMKN 3 BauBau, the outline has been well implementation accordingly with the leaning steps listed on the plan of implementation of learning (RPP) with KTSP curriculum. Only educators or teachers are less concerned about aspects of implementation classroom teaching process in accordance with government regulation number 19 (2005) on national education standards (SPN), points first that; learning processing educational until organized interactivelly, inspiration, fun, challenging, motivate learners to participate actively, and to provide enough space for initiate, creativity, and independence accordingly with talents, interests and physical and psychological development of the participants educate.

Based on the findings and the discussions in the previous section, it can be concluded that:

1. Linguistics problematic, as follow: students’ still difficulties in some respects, namely studying formation the origin of the word and its changes (the morphological aspect), studying the formation of sentences and their development (syntactical aspects), difficulty in the process of meaning of words or sentence (aspect semantic).
2. Problematic in terms of non-linguistic namely : spirit of students less in learning (psychological aspect), intensity of repeatation the material is very minimal (aspect of students), assertiveness as well as strategies in understanding the material that is still lacking (aspect teacher), students’ and teachers are less able to maximize function props. In addition, the class condition with the glass large windows, deeply disturbing the learning process (aspects of suggestions infrastructure), the method used is less able to invite students to be more active, especially on learning grammar/structure (aspect method), lack of linguistics activeness outside of school hours English in class (aspect of time), speechless language less driven in the school environment, as well as many support programs language in school that cannot be realized (aspect environment).

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