

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

Reading is widely recognized as one of the most challenging skills in learning English as a foreign language. Unlike speaking or listening, reading requires learners to engage with unfamiliar vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and abstract ideas without the aid of real-time context or verbal cues. For junior high school students, particularly in rural or less resource-rich environments, reading English texts can become an intimidating task. This challenge becomes more apparent as students are expected to read and comprehend longer and more varied texts in accordance with the national curriculum. In response to these challenges, researchers and educators have made significant efforts to explore effective strategies for improving reading comprehension among EFL learners.¹ Numerous studies have focused on the use of reading strategies, vocabulary enrichment, and the integration of digital tools in reading instruction. For example, the use of skimming and scanning techniques, graphic organizers, and context clue strategies has been promoted in many classroom settings. Despite these developments, the effectiveness of such strategies still heavily depends on students' initial reading ability, motivation, and the availability of proper guidance from teachers.

According to Grabe and Stoller, reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret the information appropriately.² This definition emphasises that reading is not just a passive process of recognising words, but also an active cognitive skill involving comprehension, interpretation and critical thinking. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), this process becomes more complex

¹ Hezam, T. A., Ali, J., Imtiaz, S., Saifi, M. A., & Islam, M. R. (2022). *Challenges and Problems of Reading Comprehension Experienced by EFL Learners*. <https://doi.org/10.56540/jesaf.v1i2.28>

² William Grabe and Stoller, 2002 Newyork *Teaching and Researching Reading*.p.9

as students have to navigate unfamiliar vocabulary, grammatical structures, and cultural references to extract meaning from the text. Thus, reading in a second language environment is not only about linguistic decoding but also about constructing meaning in a way that suits the context and purpose of the reader. This definition also highlights the importance of reading as an interactive process between the reader and the text. Successful reading requires the integration of background knowledge, language proficiency and the use of effective reading strategies. For students at the junior secondary level, especially those in rural or less developed educational environments, this can be a significant challenge. Many students not only struggle in recognising words, but also in understanding the overall message and drawing conclusions. Therefore, improving reading ability should focus not only on language input but also on helping students to recognise words and make sense of them.

However, problems in reading comprehension still persist, especially in specific educational contexts such as in Islamic junior high schools (MTs) located in rural areas. At MTs Ma'arif Munggung Ponorogo, many students in class 8U reportedly struggle when engaging with English reading texts. These struggles include difficulty in understanding main ideas, guessing word meanings from context, and making inferences. Preliminary observations and teacher interviews suggest that these difficulties are not only due to linguistic limitations but also due to limited exposure to English outside the classroom and a lack of reading habit. In addition, many studies on students' reading difficulties have been conducted in urban schools or international contexts, which may not accurately reflect the conditions of students in rural Indonesian madrasahs. There is a limited amount of research that focuses specifically on how students in smaller or less developed schools approach reading in English. This gap raises the need for localized research that not only identifies the difficulties but also considers the cultural, educational, and environmental context in which students are learning. This study aims to analyse the difficulties faced by eighth grade students at MTs Ma'arif Munggung Ponorogo in reading English texts. By understanding the root causes of reading difficulties, this study aims to provide insights that can improve students' reading ability and improve the overall quality of English education at MTs

Ma'arif Munggun Ponorogo. Formulating the research title based on the aforementioned background, this study is titled: "Analysis of English Text Reading Difficulties of Grade 8U Students at MTs Ma'arif Munggun Ponorogo". This title summarises the focus of the research, highlighting the population, the skills under study, and the specific challenges being addressed.

B. Problem of The Study

Based on on the back ground and problem identification, this study addresses the following reaserch questions:

1. What types of difficulties are faced by class 8U students of MTS MA'ARIF MUNGUNG PONOROGO in reading english texts?
2. What are the factors that cause difficulties for grade 8U students at MTS MA'ARIF MUNGUNG PONOROGO in reading english texts?

C. Objective of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the types of difficulties faced by Grade 8U students at MTs Ma'arif Munggun Ponorogo in reading English texts.
2. To find out the factors causing difficulties for grade 8U students of Mts Ma'arif Munggun Ponorogo in reading English texts.

D. Significance of The Study

The explanation of the importance of this research can be divided into two main aspects, namely theoretical and practical. The following is the explanation:

1. Theoritical Significance

This aspect explains how the research contributes to the development of relevant knowledge, theories, or concepts in the field of study. This study theoretically has some important contributions to Enriching Literacy in English Language Learning Studies, as well as adding academic insights related to the difficulties of reading English texts faced by junior secondary level students. It contributes to the literature of English language education, particularly in the area of reading comprehension. The

results of this study also can support relevant theories of language learning, such as theories of reading strategies, language acquisition, and factors that influence students' reading ability (e.g. vocabulary, grammar, and cultural background).

2. Practical Significance

This aspect explains how the research results can be applied in real life or provide direct benefits to society, organizations, or individuals. Practical significance includes:

- a) For Teachers: The study provides insights into the specific challenges students face, enabling teachers to design targeted interventions.
- b) For Students: Understanding the factors that influence reading comprehension can help students become aware of their challenges and work towards improving their skills.
- c) For School: The findings can guide the school in developing a supportive learning environment to promote English literacy.
- d) For Other Researchers: This study can serve as a basis for future research on reading comprehension challenges and effective teaching methodologies.

E. Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to analyze the reading difficulties among grade 8 students at MTs Ma'arif Munggun Ponorogo. This research specifically focuses on identifying the types of reading difficulties and the factors of reading difficulties. The research does not cover other aspects of English language skills, such as writing, speaking, or listening, and is limited to the context of one educational institution. This study is limited to analyze reading difficulties among grade 8U students at MTs Ma'arif Munggun Ponorogo. The research specifically focuses on identifying the types of reading difficulties and their causal factors.