
TEACHERS' CHALLENGES IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION AT ISLAMIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Ridwan Hidayat¹, Ridha Ilma², Eko Saputra³
UIN Raden Fatah Palembang
rdayat876@gmail.com¹, ridhailma_uin@radenfatah.ac.id²,
ekosaputra_uin@radenfatah.ac.id³

ABSTRACT: There are many challenges teachers must go through in terms of developing reading comprehension and the benefits can be seen after the teacher implements them, education stakeholders. This study used a qualitative study with a case study research approach to identify teacher challenges in teaching reading comprehension. There were two English teachers from one of the Islamic junior high schools in Palembang which was chosen as the sample by using purposive sampling and the interview was the instrument to collect the data. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The results showed that teachers faced several challenges in teaching reading comprehension, such as (1) challenges in teaching, (2) teaching method, (3) lack of understanding, (4) assessing students' abilities, (5) Students' lack of vocabulary mastery, (6) students' boredom, (7) mother tongue interference. It was hoped that English teachers might help students comprehend the meaning of a given text and choose reading materials that suit their reading level and interests.

Keywords: *teachers' challenges, reading comprehension.*

ANALISIS TANTANGAN GURU DALAM MENGAJAR PEMAHAMAN MEMBACA DI MTS

ABSTRAK: Banyak tantangan yang harus dilalui guru dalam mengembangkan pemahaman membaca dan manfaatnya terlihat setelah guru menerapkannya kepada para pemangku kepentingan pendidikan. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan desain penelitian studi kasus yang bertujuan untuk mengetahui tantangan guru dalam mengajar pemahaman membaca. Ada dua guru bahasa Inggris dari salah satu MTS di Palembang yang dipilih sebagai sampel dengan menggunakan purposive sampling dan wawancara sebagai instrumen untuk mengumpulkan data. Analisis tematik digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru menghadapi beberapa tantangan dalam mengajar pemahaman membaca, seperti: tantangan dalam mengajar, (2) metode mengajar, (3) kurangnya pemahaman, (4) menilai kemampuan siswa, (5) kurangnya penguasaan kosakata siswa, (6) kebosanan siswa, (7) gangguan bahasa ibu. Diharapkan guru bahasa Inggris dapat membantu siswa untuk memahami makna teks tertentu dan memilih bahan bacaan yang sesuai dengan tingkat dan minat membaca mereka.

Kata Kunci: *tantangan guru, pemahaman bacaan*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the language skills and plays an important role in all basic aspects of reading education is something that can help students to be able to understand what the meaning of a text that the teacher directs to lessons in class and not only that, reading is a means of transferring information between writers and readers (Martina et al., 2020). Reading comprehension instruction is a task that is not only challenging for instructors to deliver to their students in the classroom, but it is also an essential component of their jobs. Brown (2000) defined teaching reading comprehension is an activity which the teacher guides and facilitates learning, gives a chance for the learners to learn and sets the comprehension is the very heart and soul of reading. There are many factors influence students' reading habits such as excessive exposure to technology, especially at home, which can waste a child's productive time. Bad habits of students at home that can reduce interest in reading, and also allows them to be weak towards reading comprehension due to their bad habits. And lead them to something that is not necessary (Yienger, 2016).

Reading comprehension instruction is a task that is not only challenging for instructors to deliver to their students in the classroom, but it is also an essential component of their jobs. Because reading is so enjoyable for children at such an early age in today's society, many of those children are able to become proficient readers. On the other hand, students who struggle to learn have a reduced capacity to understand what they study. The capacity to read displayed by Indonesian students is quite lacking. They would prefer to watch entertainment programming on their electronic gadget rather than read novels on it. Yienger (2016) stated that many factors influence students' reading habits such as excessive exposure to technology, especially at home, which can waste a child's productive time. Bad habits of children at home that can reduce interest in reading, and also allows them to be weak towards reading comprehension due to their bad habits. And lead them to something that is not necessary.

There are many challenges that teachers must go through in terms of developing reading comprehension and the benefits can be seen after the teacher implements them education stakeholders. Astuti and Lammers (2017) stated that teachers in schools have a role to influence students deeply into literacy, the teachers are one of the elements that influence the teaching and learning process, particularly in the implementation of cooperative learning. The comprehension that teachers have of cooperative learning, which is part of the rule component, can generate systemic tension within a system of activities. Each of which sometimes has several obstacles. Souriyavongsa et al. (2013) stated that difficulties in learning reading comprehension are such as teacher competence, students lack confidence because they are afraid of making mistakes, teachers do not master reading comprehension lessons so that the results are not too much for the classroom environment. Through the process of developing reading comprehension certainly has found results. Research on the development of reading comprehension has achieved success and resulted in several effective reading strategies. However, scientifically based reading instruction programs are still not available very often used in the classroom by teachers (Koch and Spörrer, 2016). A scientific-based learning program was a program that will be run but of course there are still many considerations made by the teacher on the advantages and disadvantages of the program. As a result, teachers must be cautious and prepared to face the challenges of finding ways to teach reading comprehension to students so that they do not believe it is

too easy to disregard or that reading comprehension does not need to be addressed in their learning activities.

Several previous studies discussed an analysis of teacher challenges in teaching reading comprehension. The previous study was delivered by Prasetya (2021), who showed that some pandemic-stricken teachers struggle to teach online reading comprehension. Online reading comprehension instruction was difficult. Resource shortage student motivation pre-reading, insufficient vocabulary during reading, and less teacher preparation post-reading, pre-reading phases include pictures, vocabulary, questions, and answers. Teachers read aloud, test, and translate. The next study was delivered by Afriani (2021), she showed that the teachers faced difficulties because they could not measure the students' reading comprehension due to the gadgets and internet access that the students did not have, and the teachers were not comfortable in teaching online because the transition from face-to-face classroom to online.

In addition, based on a preliminary study conducted by interviewing English teachers at one of the junior high schools in Palembang, the researchers have found that teachers have many challenges with students. He also found that the teacher had complicated challenges because of the students' lack of understanding of reading comprehension. the teacher complained that many students lacked vocabulary and said that many students had a very poor understanding of learning English. In addition, they had conveyed from experience during teaching that many students become less motivated to learn English. This causes students to have low ability in reading comprehension. Therefore, this research discussed the difficulties experienced by English teachers, thus it was hoped that readers especially English teachers who experienced similar difficulties can use this research to increase their variety of learning activities and overcome the difficulties they faced.

METHODOLOGY

The research that had been done was qualitative research using the case study method, which was the method used as the research design. Qualitative research was used to investigate problems to gain a clear understanding of certain phenomena. Creswell's (2012) case study was a sometimes-explored issue that uncovers a finite system involving a deep understanding of the case or of events.

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Selecting individuals based on their characteristics was one of the steps of this research in order to realize what was desired from this research, namely a deep understanding of the main problems that can be studied by researchers (Creswell, 2012). Sampling techniques are usually used in qualitative research to identify the information content and characteristics of the population for research purposes. Based on the description above, the researcher selected two English teachers in one of private junior high schools in Palembang. Both had the same characteristics namely they had difficulties in teaching reading comprehensions and they had taught English for more than five years.

In this study, the researchers aimed to find data regarding teachers' difficulties in teaching reading comprehension to students and the data source was obtained from two teachers who were willing to be participants in this research. In data collection techniques, researchers had used interview techniques. Interview was one way used to collect data. This research was conducted to find out the challenges faced by English teachers in teaching reading comprehension. Interview was good and suitable method

because it was chosen to solve this problem. Face-to-face interviews was conducted with selected English teachers as participants.

The researchers had classified the material as qualitative research. As discussed in data collection, semi-structured interviews were used in this study as a means of data analysis. Clarifying how to use them appropriately and effectively can help researchers recognize their utility, versatility, and strengths. Thematic analysis is an appropriate analytical method when trying to understand experiences, thoughts, or behaviours across data sets. Thematic analysis is a practical data analysis approach to qualitative research (Kiger and Varpio, 2020).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The researchers discovered some perceptions of teachers challenges in teaching reading comprehensions after analysing the data from interviews. Table 1 summarizes the themes and codes derived from the analysis of qualitative data obtained from interviews:

Table 1. Themes and Codes of The Teachers Challenges in Teaching Reading Comprehension at MTS An-Nuur Palembang

No	Themes	Codes
1	Challenges in teaching	All teachers felt they had their own challenges when teaching reading comprehension
2	Teaching method	All teachers believed that repetition was a good way when teaching
3	Lack of understanding	All teachers had their difficulties The students had difficulties in comprehending material in reading
4	Assess students' abilities	All teachers have the same way of assessing students
5	Lack of vocabulary mastery	All teachers have the same method of using memorization as a way for students to acquire vocabulary
6	Students' Boredom	All teachers agreed that learning while playing g a m e would reduce the boredom of their students
7	Mother Tongue Interference	The two teachers had different opinions, the first teacher said he usually translates English into their mother tongue, so they understand better and the second teacher said he only guides them slowly

Challenges in Teaching

Based on the data obtained from the interviews, teachers often find it difficult to teach reading comprehension challenges, and the difficulty level of students is less than their own abilities, which makes teachers face challenges to teach reading comprehension. *The teacher with the initial's "W" says "Each lesson taught to students has its own challenges including reading comprehension in English texts which of course has its own challenges." (personal communication, July 27, 2023). Teacher with initials "e" also added "I also had a tough challenge in terms of teaching. Researchers also found challenges faced by teachers when teaching reading comprehension, namely*

problems related to the pronunciation of words that there are still errors in pronunciation and many students still do not understand the meaning of vocabulary. the teacher with the initials "W" said, "yes I still find some challenges in teaching reading comprehension, namely the students' pronunciation is still very bad and they still don't know the meaning of each word and what they read". (personal communication, July 27, 2023). "E" added, "Yes, most of the students are very poor at reading". (personal communication, July 27, 2023).

Teaching Method

Based on the data obtained from the interviews, the researchers found that the teacher had used one of the methods which was quite good in its implementation and was proven to increase the results that the teachers wanted, namely repeating the reading. *The teacher with the initial "W" said, "The method that I usually use is repeating in reading the text so they can remember every word in the text". With the same opinion, the teacher with the initials "E" said, "The repeating reading method was indeed very good for students and this is evidenced by the results of students who among them have been able to understand a text in reading comprehension lessons" (Personal Communication, July 27, 2023).*

The Lack of Vocabulary Understanding

Based on data obtained from interviews, the researchers found that the lack of understanding was due to a lack of material they reviewed and studied. Students was also less interested in reading comprehension. Therefore, a lack of understanding arises from every student they still have a little understanding and still need to learn a lot, especially in terms of reading they must enrich their reading so that they can know many things and understand the results of the reading. *The teacher with the initial "E" said, "a lack of interest in reading is a factor in students' lack of understanding and this is certainly a challenge that we must face going forward so that we can continue to evaluate what needs to be improved" (Personal Communication, 27 July 2023) Teacher with the initials "W" said "I don't know what causes students to lack interest in reading because it is very necessary for themselves, but I have tried ways to make them a little interested in reading" (Personal Communication, 27 July 2023).*

Assess Students' Abilities

Based on the data obtained from the interviews, the researcher found that assessing students' reading skills was quite difficult to do because every student has the ability to read. but not impossible to carry out the assessment. *The teacher with the initial "W" said that the assessment was carried out by looking at how to read or being given reading comprehension questions. With that we can assess the ability of students and decide what grades we give them. (Personal Communication, July 27, 2023). the teacher with the initials "E" commented "of course the way our assessment is the same as what my colleagues convey depends on the questions we give and the results they work on (Personal Communication, July 27, 2023).*

Students' Lack of Vocabulary Mastery

Based on data obtained from interviews, the researchers also found a lack of student vocabulary mastery *the teacher with the initial "E" said that "vocabulary is an important thing in this case we have provided a solution for students to master vocabulary by depositing our vocabulary as English teachers of course The aim is that our students will gain good vocabulary mastery" (Personal Communication, July 27, 2023). the teacher with the initial's "w" conveyed "the method that I use is also by depositing the vocabulary every week to me as an English teacher, but I add a little variation in this case, namely by using the vocabulary by including it in a sentence. this aims to make them better remember the vocabulary they memorize" (Personal Communication, July 27, 2023)*

Students' Boredom

Based on data obtained from interviews, the researchers also found the students' boredom. Boredom in learning is a common thing that happens in class. *Teachers with initials "w" said because of their lack of interest this makes me as a teacher have to be even more extra hard in teaching English. The way I do that is by combining English lessons with playing games. Of course, those related to topics in English lessons and thank God this can trigger students to be more active in learning" The teacher with the initial "E" said "The method I use is using games and using very light punishments so that students are more serious and flexible in learning English. this aims to eliminate the boredom that exists in them when studying. (Personal Communication, July 27, 2023).*

Mother Tongue Interference

Based on data obtained from interviews, the researchers found mother tongue interference in learning English which is a second language, it is very common to find mother tongue interference and this is not something that is scary or discourages learning English, this can be overcome, although it is not uncommon for students to still have a mother tongue that is very attached to them. And very hard to get rid of it. *The teacher with the initial "W" said that ": I usually translate English in their native language, so they understand better." This teacher with the initials "E" also said that "I will guide them slowly so that students can understand lessons in English". (Personal Communication, July 27, 2023).*

Discussion

The discussion of this study was based on the results of data analysis which aimed to confirm and strength the findings. After analysing the result of the research by using thematic analysis, the researchers found that there were some teachers challenges in teaching reading comprehension. Those are (1) challenges in teaching, (2) teaching method, (3) lack of understanding, (4) assess students' abilities, (5) Students' lack of vocabulary mastery, (6) students' boredom, (7) mother tongue interference. The results of research are discussed as follows:

First, it was found that the teachers challenge in teaching reading comprehension at MTS An-Nuur Palembang the first is challenges in teaching. All teachers think that their challenges in teaching English were quite a lot. Covering anything, of course, in teaching reading comprehension activities it includes student reading, students' mother tongue, weak understanding of students, and lack of vocabulary in students, this is what the teacher considers as a challenge. One example was when students found vocabulary they just read or words that were difficult for them to understand in the text they were reading. It could cause students to miss a lot of vocabulary in the text they read, and in the end, affect their understanding of the reading. Zuhra (2015) stated that one of the student's difficulties in understanding reading is their weakness in vocabulary mastery.

Second, the researchers found that the teacher's challenge in teaching reading comprehension at MTS An-Nuur Palembang was the teaching method. The researcher revealed that teachers and students still sometimes vary their learning methods, this is intended to make the learning system less rigid. Susiyanti (2019) defined a teacher as an expert person who is capable of imparting knowledge that helps learners build, identify, and achieve skills that will be useful to face the challenges in life. It was challenging for teachers to use ineffective methods and strategies because they must consider the transmission of all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). students divided into external and internal. Internal factors include physics, intellectual, and psychological. External factors include family and school environments. There were still many students who found difficulties in learning it.

Third, the lack of understanding makes it difficult for students to understand what they read. The findings found that all students found it difficult to relate their knowledge to the text. Students found it difficult to understand the text because there were many foreign words that they did not know the meaning of. Students who have less background knowledge had difficulty understanding the text they read. Where This makes it difficult for students to understand what the text was about, it causes their reading comprehension to be inaccurate. Therefore, students with less background knowledge affect their reading comprehension to be less good. Lack of interest in reading was a factor in student lack of understanding.

Fourth, assess students' abilities, assessing students' abilities were the result of learning activities. Of course, this was based on the considerations of the teachers to assess students in the aspects that were seen by each teacher. then from that student performance in learning is one of the most important in making decisions to assess. in this case, the teacher must be able to make and assess very wise results for students. Students are expected to be able to find specific information in the text to demonstrate reading comprehension. They read texts to achieve certain goals. Students choose materials based on their reading goals. According to Elizabeth (2005), details are important for achieving the goals of reading activities. The students need it to understand the text. It can be concluded that detailed information was used to check students' ability to understand the text.

Fifth, what the researchers found about the teacher's challenges in teaching reading comprehension at MTS An-Nuur Palembang was the lack of mastery of students' vocabulary. The researcher revealed that the teacher sees a phenomenon where students still do not understand or do not know a lot of vocabulary, this was certainly a challenge for a teacher, and of course, it must be addressed appropriately. There were times when students could not understand what the teacher was saying because they were not familiar with these words. Songbatumis, (2017) said that students in English as

a foreign language context were limited by their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary of the target language and must struggle to understand the context. In addition, many terms are the same but have different meanings, which causes confusion among students. For example, the term "express" can refer to something done quickly or the act of expressing your thoughts by words.

Sixth, what the researcher found was student boredom. Many students felt that learning was something boring, they chose to play rather than study and this was one of the challenges that must be faced by the teacher in making the classroom atmosphere less boring. Abrar, (2016) stated that when teaching and learning English, some students prefer to do other activities, such as playing, chatting with friends, and making noise. This was an indication of the lack of motivation and interest of students in learning English. Therefore, the teacher must be extra in dealing with the challenge of student boredom because it was can trigger bigger things related to reading comprehension.

Seventh, the researchers found about teachers' challenges in teaching reading comprehension was mother tongue interference. The researcher revealed that teachers found it was difficult to deal with this but there has been progress from students in the problems they were experiencing and that was a formidable challenge and must be overcome by the teacher. According to Fatiloro (2015) the cause of errors in English unconsciously was when students and teachers speak their own mother tongue fluently. Contamination from a native speaker's first language can cause problems with the grammar, pronunciation, meaning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results interviews, the researchers found several challenges teachers at the school face. Teachers' challenges in teaching reading comprehension came not only from the teachers but also from students. These challenges include low student interest and motivation in learning English, lack of mastery of student vocabulary, inappropriate teacher teaching methods and media, and the school still needs complete and adequate educational infrastructure and equipment to support teaching and learning activities at school. The solution made by the teacher to overcome this problem was to use appropriate, interesting, and varied learning media and methods to create effective learning. Furthermore, the teachers should improve vocabulary by recording new vocabulary and memorizing it. Regarding inadequate school facilities, teachers bring their own facilities to support the teaching and learning process in class, and schools always try to complete facilities that were not yet available to support learning activities.

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