

## Table Of Content

<b>Journal Cover</b>	2
<b>Author[s] Statement</b>	3
<b>Editorial Team</b>	4
<b>Article information</b>	5
Check this article update (crossmark)	5
Check this article impact	5
Cite this article	5
<b>Title page</b>	6
Article Title	6
Author information	6
Abstract	6
<b>Article content</b>	7

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# Academia Open



*By Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo*

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**Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension  
Narrative Text Faced by Ninth Grade Junior High School Students**

*Analisis Kesulitan Siswa dalam Pemahaman Membaca Teks Narasi  
yang Dihadapi Siswa Kelas Sembilan SMP*

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**Abstract**

This study aimed to find out the difficulties in reading comprehension of narrative text faced by students ninth-grade at SMP Muhammadiyah 3 Waru. This study used a qualitative descriptive method where data collection techniques is interview. The sample of this study were students of class 9-A SMP Muhammadiyah 3 Waru which consisted of 29 students. However, in this study only 15 students were willing to participate in the interview. The results of this study has shown that students had three difficulties in reading comprehension of narrative text, namely, students' difficult to understand the word, difficult to understand long sentences and difficult to understand the main idea.

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## Introduction

English has become the most commonly used language in the world for commerce, education, business, and tourism as a result of globalization. That is to say, English is widely used as a contact language in direct connection by individuals of various mother tongues and countries of origin,[1]. In Indonesia, the students take English lesson from elementary school level to university level. It's been explicitly stated in some official documents issued by the government, especially those relating to education. Reading comprehension is crucial in language because it allows students to comprehend facts, ideas, and knowledge, as explained above. It may clarify that reading is a combination of word comprehension and intellect and emotional interrelationship with previous experiences in order to interpret the text. Reading comprehension is described as the ability to read a text, analyze it, and comprehend its meaning.

Reading is an essential practice for extending one's knowledge of a language. Reading is the most useful and valued talent, according to Patel[2], speaking and writing are less significant than this ability. Reading is regarded as the most crucial skill among all others. The ability to read is highly valued in terms of social and educational development. Nunan[3], highlighted that reading is commonly viewed of as a static way in which the reader interacts with the text alone. The power to read is the talent that learners will have the most at the end of their language studies. It can help students in learning about a nation and its people, depending on the topics that the readers are interested in. According to Oberholzer[4], understanding what we are reading is significantly more critical to us than knowing how to read mechanically. Reading would be useless without comprehension. It implies that the most important aspect of reading is comprehending the material. Students should not only comprehend the text they read, but also understand it. To comprehend, pupils must thoroughly comprehend all aspects of the text.

The results of a survey conducted by the Program for International Student Assessment and released by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in 2019 showed that Indonesia was ranked 62 out of 70 countries when it comes of literacy levels, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs' library. The researchers wanted to identify the difficulty in reading comprehension since the reading level in Indonesia is still low, especially given the current conditions where students are forced to study at home and do distance learning or online learning. Nonetheless, during an observation at the school, the teacher stated that several pupils had trouble reading. Then, the researchers conducted their research at SMP Muhammadiyah 3 Waru because the school is accredited A and has a long list of academic accomplishments, primarily in the field of English. In addition, SMP Muhammadiyah 3 Waru has special classes for students with good English skills at every grade level. Furthermore, the teacher recommended that the researcher undertake research in grades 9-A, where they had studied narrative text material. Then, the researcher focused on narratives text in reading.

Students in junior high school should ideally be developing English reading skills as well, because reading will provide them with additional knowledge. When students read and comprehend what they read, they can find all types of knowledge. The researcher was interested in learning more about students' difficulties in understanding English reading texts, specifically the reading materials on narrative text that the ninth grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 3 Waru encountered.

## Method

In this research, the researcher used descriptive qualitative research. According to Nassaji[5], Qualitative and descriptive research methods have been a very common procedure for researching many disciplines, including education, psychology, and social sciences. The research descriptive is done to describe systematic about the facts and characteristics of the subject (students' from SMP Muhammadiyah 3 Waru). So that way, this study used this methode to describe the studets' difficulties in reading comprehension without involving numeric data.

In the school year 2020/2021, this study will be conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah 3 Waru. The researcher took the 9-A students because the teacher recommended the researcher to interview them. One class consisted of twenty-nine students, but fifteen students participated in the interview. From the fifteen students, there were five students who had sufficient reading comprehension in narrative text and ten students were having difficulties in reading comprehend a text. Eventually, the researcher analyzed ten students that had difficulties in reading comprehension by interview in Google Meet. In this interview, meeting between two people who exchange information and an idea, so that it can be reduced to a conclusion or meaning in a particular topic[6]. The purpose of the use of semi systemic or semi structured interviews is to find problems more openly and also the researcher adopted from the list of interviews by Qurniawan[7].

The data analysis technique used in this study is data reduction, in which the researcher selects the most important data collected. Then, data display, which is a narration of the data that allows the study to be concluded. The researcher describes the data in the form of narration while analyzing it. After that, researcher might form a conclusion or verify the research's findings[8].



## Findings and Discussion

In this chapter, the researcher found that the difficulties encountered by student difficulties on reading comprehension at the ninth-grade of SMP Muhammadiyah 3 Waru. Here, the data obtained the field in the report based on interview with students (interviewer) on July 27th, 2021 on Google Meet. Based on theory of reading difficulties from Nuttal[9] and Fajar in Hidayati[10], the researcher used those theory to find the problem by students. Then, after analyze the data about the students' difficulties in reading comprehension, the researcher found several difficulties faced by students, namely : students' difficult to understand the meaning of the word, students difficult to understand long sentence in the text and not understand the main idea.

The term "difficult to comprehend" refers to a student's difficulty determining the meaning of a word in the text. As a result, the learner has a difficult time grasping the substance of the reading material. This might be taken as the learner having difficulty reading the material. Her failure to respond to the question regarding the facts from the book demonstrates her problems. When a student does not comprehend a term in the text, she is prone to guessing the answer. This finding can be seen in the following data based on the student's interview:

"I often open and close his dictionary to find the meaning of words that I don't understand from the texts he read, and also often ask my friends to ask the meaning of the words that I don't know". (interviewed with MDH)

It is clear from the quotation above that the pupil has difficulty understanding the term. The student frequently looked up the definitions of terms she didn't understand in the dictionary. And she frequently requested that her friends inquire about a word she didn't understand. When she read the text and responded to the question, she had trouble understanding the term in the text, so she had to open the dictionary repeatedly to look up the definition of the word. The student opened her dictionary every time she took a break from reading the material, and if she couldn't find the definition of a term in the dictionary, she asked a friend. It happened because the student frequently came across a term she didn't recognize. The students' understanding of the term is limited. If a student has difficulty understanding a word, he or she will have difficulty understanding a text.

However, the student will be able to parse the words and grasp each phrase. It has to do with the author's message being communicated to the learner as a reader. If a learner finds it difficult to decode and recognize words, he or she will find it challenging to comprehend the text's substance. Based on the student's interview, other data indicated that the student did not grasp the term in the text:

"I don't understand the meaning, sometimes I just guess, maybe it's because I don't have enough vocabulary, bro, because there are a lot of words that I don't know the meaning of" (interview with BAP)

According to the statement above, the student is unable to comprehend the text because she does not understand the meaning of the word. If the learner has no other option, she may have to guess the answer. Because the student's vocabulary was limited, she came across terms she didn't recognize. When the learner reads a text, he or she encounters problems. When she encountered a difficult term, she paused to look up the definition, and on occasion, she simply disregarded the word. It occurred as a result of the student's failure to develop her vocabulary and her infrequent practice reading English literature. The pupil reads simply to satisfy her teacher's requests. The student did not consider reading English as her need. In general, this study suggests that the students' challenges in reading comprehension revealed that the students had difficulty understanding the words in the text.

The term "difficulties in understanding long sentences" refers to a student's difficulty in comprehending a long phrase due to its complex structure and the large number of words in the text that the learner does not grasp. As a result of this issue, the student is unable to grasp long phrases and is unable to comprehend the main idea provided in the text. This might be taken as the learner having difficulty reading the material. She need a significant amount of time to read and comprehend each sentence. The problems here may be noticed in the student's comprehension of the book and her ability to respond to a question regarding the text's material. This finding can be seen in the following data based on the students' interview:

"I have a hard time understanding the text, sis, especially if the text is long, there are many words that I don't understand, besides that if the text is long it takes a long time to read it". (Interview with AA)

Based on the aforementioned interview, the student stated that she had difficulty understanding the material, particularly when it was long. There were a lot of words she didn't understand yet. Aside from that, the learner need extra time to read and comprehend the material. When a pupil is reading a text she becomes irritable as a result of her lack of comprehension of the student's statements. Some of the text's material is beyond the student's comprehension. The learner will need extra time to figure out what the word means and what the proper response is. She needed to look up the definition of the word in dictionaries. It occurred because the learner took an excessive amount of time to comprehend each statement.

Another issue was that the pupil frequently came across words she didn't comprehend. There are often many words and phrases in sentences, and the learner cannot comprehend a statement word by word. The learner must grasp how to connect one word to another in order for the meaning to be clear and understood. If the text is lengthy, the



learner may find it difficult to comprehend it. The learner will require a significant amount of time to comprehend the material. Another data based on student's interview :

## Difficult to understand the word

"I don't like reading long texts, sis, so I'm lazy and not interested in reading it. You know if we read long texts but don't know what it means and don't know what it means and don't like opening and closing dictionary" (Interview with MDRH)

According to the data above, if the text is lengthy, the learner has trouble understanding it. The student is a slacker when it comes to reading since she has trouble understanding every word in the book, and she is also a slacker when it comes to using the dictionary. The capacity to improve pupils' vocabulary knowledge will not increase if they are too lazy to read and open the dictionary. It may be observed when the student reads the material; she not only reads but also converses with her peers. She opened the dictionary on occasion and conversed with her companions on other occasions. The pupil reads solely in reverent whispers. When she reads, she has no problems, but when the instructor asks, she tends to stay quiet. It occurred as a result of the student's failure to comprehend the material. Long sentences were tough for the student to comprehend since she frequently came across words she didn't understand. Furthermore, the student did not comprehend the goal of reading, as evidenced by her behaviors during the learning process, in which she merely read but did not gain knowledge from the book. Another reason was a lack of vocabulary knowledge; the student was unfamiliar with the text's core structure (sentences, paragraphs, and grammar).

## The Difficulties to Understand Long Sentence.

Because there were many words in the sentence that she could not comprehend, the student had trouble reading long texts or sentences. It was because she didn't grasp the words and didn't have a lot of vocabulary for something she should be good at. The student's understanding of sentences will improve as a result of growing vocabulary and enhancing vocabulary mastery. Each sentence in the book was difficult for the pupil to comprehend. How to connect sentences one by one to acquire all of the text's content. It is due to the student's lack of understanding of the term. In general, this statement suggested that the student's issues with reading comprehension indicated that the student had difficulty understanding extended sentences.

## Not Understand the Main Idea

Not understanding the key idea meant that the student struggled to come up with a sentence that expresses the author's viewpoint on the subject. This might be viewed as the student having difficulty extracting the primary concept from the text when she reads it. Her failure to respond to the question, especially if the material is lengthy, shows her problems. As a result, finding the core concept may be more challenging. The learner may be confused as to what the passage's primary concept was and where it was situated. The student occasionally inquired about the text's answer with her companion. This conclusion may be seen in the data below, which is based on the student's interview:

"I don't understand Sis about the main idea of the text, I have trouble finding the main idea of a text if the text is long, Sis, I'm confused which is the main idea, everything is important, it looks like that" (Interview with MFAF)

The student had difficulty identifying the key concept from the sentence above, especially if the material was lengthy. The pupil was confused as to what the text's major point was. The students' lack of comprehension in determining main ideas, namely, the students' inability to discern between main ideas and supporting ideas, their lack of knowledge of where main ideas are located, and their lack of knowledge of how to determine key ideas. Because the student understands that the main idea is at the beginning of a paragraph, sentence, the student determines the main idea by looking for the first sentence of the paragraph without first reading and comprehending the reading text, even though the main idea is at the beginning of the paragraph. When she has discovered the primary concept, the students must evaluate everything that appears in the text, thus the longer the phrase, the more difficult it will be to sort out the relationships between the various sections of the text. This was also the cause of the student's difficulty in locating the primary concept.

The learner needs analyze anything that appears in the print once she has discovered the primary concept, thus the longer the phrase, the more difficult it will be, and the link between the various sections of the text will be tough to work out. This was also why the learner was having trouble locating the primary topic. Another explanation is that the student was not focused on the reading since she was conversing with her friends while reading.

As a result, she just read but did not enjoy what she read, causing the important elements in the book to be missed. The student's lack of grasp of the primary concept content was also a factor in his or her inability to comprehend the questions and answers. Another data to support the data above based on another student' interview:

"I'm having trouble finding the main idea in a paragraph, sis, every time there's a question to find the main idea,

the answer is not quite right, so I'm still hesitant to answer it" (Interview with AA)

The student was perplexed about the major concept of a text, as seen by the comment above, and she is still bewildered when the teacher asks her to identify the main idea. In conclusion, this study suggested that the students' issues with reading comprehension indicated that they had difficulty understanding the primary point.

The results of the interview, the researchers found several problems faced by students when students were understanding an English reading, more specifically in narrative text material. The researcher used two theories to discuss the results of the researcher. According to Nuttall[9], there are four components of reading comprehension that students must master in order to fully grasp a text: Identifying the main concept, comprehending vocabulary, forming inferences, and obtaining detailed information. These characteristics are regarded as obstacles that students face in comprehending the material. Then according to Fajar[10], there were some students who influenced reading comprehension. Including: Difficulty understanding long sentences, difficulty in using strategic reading and difficulty in concentration.

From the explanation of the two opinions, the researcher used the two theories and combined the results of students' difficulties in reading comprehension, after that, the researchers found three difficulties when students read comprehension of narrative text. The researcher found two difficulties in students' reading comprehension from the four components of reading comprehension that students must master in order to fully grasp a text, Nuttall[9]. Students have difficulty understanding words in narrative text. because students rarely read and were not interested in reading English books, English material at school. In addition, students have difficulty finding the main idea of narrative text because students do not understand the meaning of the reading and do not know the topic concept of the text. Even though students know the main idea at the beginning of the paragraph, students are usually still confused to find it.

Students' difficulty to understand long sentences is one of the theories of Fajar[10]. Researchers found it difficult for students to understand long sentences from narrative texts because students panicked and felt bored when reading the text even though students brought a dictionary but students were still confused about the meaning of a text. Of the three difficulties of students in reading comprehension, the researcher has little in common with the previous researcher, Prihatini[11] that the difficulty in understanding words is because students lack vocabulary.

## Conclusion

Based on data analysis, the researcher discovers that certain students struggle with reading comprehension. And there were three conclusions in this study. Students had difficulties understanding the meaning of words, as students are less interested in reading English text and lack of vocabulary, then the student difficulty to understand the word the text. In addition, Students find it difficult to read long texts because they are bored, and they eventually become lazy reading long texts since they are unfamiliar with the topic. Meanwhile, From students who had difficulties finding ideas, students can't find the idea of a text because they don't understand the abstract of the topic. Then they hesitated to answer the related questions about finding the idea.

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