JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN OVERCOMING THEIR ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES

THESIS



By :

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STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF
KYAI HAJI ACHMAD SIDDIQ JEMBER
FACULTY OF TARBIYAH AND TEACHER TRAINING
2026

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This Thesis Submitted to University
KH Achmad Siddiq Islamic of Jember
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for Bechelor Degree
of Education (S.Pd)
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Has been examined and approved in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements to get Bachelor's degree (S.Pd)
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MOTTO

لَا يُكَلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

"Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear."
(Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 286)[1]

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[1] Departemen Agama RI, Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya (Bandung: CV Penerbit Diponegoro, 2019), QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 286.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicate to those always love, encourage, and guide me in every steps of my journey to complicated this thesis promptly and these are behind it all:

1. For my beloved parents, (Mr. Samsul and Mrs. Nur Hamidah), my first home and the greatest reason I keep fighting. Thank you for your endless prayers, your unconditional love, and all the sacrifices that I will never be able to repay. Every achievement I have today is the result of your love and struggles.
2. For my beloved family, especially my younger brother, grandfather, and grandmother, thank you for always being my place to return to, my place to share stories, and my source of strength whenever I feel exhausted. Thank you for your prayers, care, and love that always accompany every step of my journey.
3. For my beloved husband, (Mr. Kuwu Sangkan Cakra Buana), thank you for always being there through every rise and fall in my life. Thank you for your sincere love, comforting embrace, endless prayers, and the confidence you always give me whenever I begin to doubt myself. Your presence is one of the reasons I was able to complete this journey.
4. For my best friend, (Ramadian Itsni Nadhira), thank you for always being by my side through every story, laughter, tears, and struggle during my college years. Thank you for never leaving and for always being the most comforting place to share everything.
5. And last for myself, thank you for holding on this far. Thank you for staying strong even when you often felt tired, for continuing to move forward even when many things made you want to give up, and for continuing to believe that every process would eventually lead to something beautiful.

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The researcher understands this thesis will not be completed without the help and guidance of other parties. On this occasion, the researcher would like to thank the honourable ones:

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May Allah SWT. Repay all of the kindness of the people who helped me to finish this thesis. I believe that this thesis might have some weakness, but I hope this thesis will be useful for future researchers.

Jember, 9th June 2026

AVITA ZAHIRA KAMILA

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ABSTRACT

Avita Zahira Kamila, 2026: *Junior High School Students' Experiences In Overcoming Their English Reading Comprehension Difficulties*
Key words: Reading Comprehension, Challenges, Reading Strategies, Cognitive, Metacognitive, Qualitative.

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill essential for academic success across various subjects. However, many Indonesian EFL students still struggle with this skill, which may hinder their overall learning progress. Previous studies have extensively investigated the difficulties students encounter in reading comprehension; nevertheless, there were limited research that specifically explored the types of cognitive and metacognitive strategies students actually employed to overcome these challenges. This study addressed this gap by exploring the reading comprehension difficulties of Indonesian EFL students and how they used cognitive and metacognitive strategies to cope with them.

This study was guided by two main research questions: What challenges do students face in improving their reading comprehension skills? And what reading strategies do students use to overcome reading comprehension difficulties? The objectives of this research were to explore the challenges student's face in improving their reading comprehension skills, and to analyze the reading strategies that students use to overcome reading comprehension difficulties.

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach with thematic analysis. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations involving three low-achieving students, three high-achieving students, and one English teacher, who were selected through purposive sampling with their informed consent.

The findings revealed four main challenges: limited vocabulary knowledge, complex text structures, lack of extensive reading habits, and unfamiliarity with various text types. Low-achieving students tended to rely on basic cognitive strategies such as word-for-word translation and showed inconsistent use of metacognitive monitoring. In contrast, high-achieving students utilized more effective techniques such as contextual inference, previewing text content, self-monitoring comprehension, and post-reading evaluation. These differences highlighted the crucial role of strategic proficiency in achieving successful reading comprehension. Pedagogically, the findings suggested that teachers should explicitly introduce, teach, and encourage the use of both cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies as part of regular instruction to better support students' reading comprehension development.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Research

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that plays a crucial role in both academic contexts and everyday life, as it enables individuals to acquire and construct new knowledge and information. Strong reading skills contribute to improved academic achievement, whereas limited reading ability can hinder students' learning processes and development.[2] Students' success in understanding written texts not only affects language subjects but also extends to almost all fields of study such as science, history, social studies, and even mathematics, because most educational resources are in the form of written texts, whether in textbooks, scientific articles, or digital materials. Without these skills, students will find it difficult to engage in the learning process, while reading comprehension is also closely related to higher-order thinking skills, such as analysing, evaluating, and synthesizing information, thus serving as an important bridge to achieving better academic performance, broadening horizons, and improving overall language skills.[3]

Globally, reading in foreign languages, especially English, plays a crucial role in academic studies, professional success, and personal

[2] Trisna Dinillah Harya, "An Analysis of Students' Difficulties on Reading Text in Finding Main Idea at the Tenth Graders of SMK Darul A'mal Metro," Bulletin of Science Education 3, no. 1 (2023): 46, https://doi.org/10.51278/bse.v3i1.484.

[3] Neneng Widya Septia et al., "An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension," EEdJ: English Education Journal 2, no. 1 (2022): 11–22, https://doi.org/10.32923/eedj.v2i1.2519.

development, as stated by Alderson and Urquhart, given that a large amount of scientific, technical, and professional literature is published in that language.[4] Farhadi emphasizes that English is often used as the primary language in science and technology, so in educational programs, English reading skills are continuously improved to support the development of student literacy.

In Indonesian Context, reading comprehension skills play a significant role, in reality, many students still struggle to master it. Findings from various studies and educational reports indicate that Indonesian students' reading literacy levels remain relatively low compared to those of other countries. For instance, according to the Programmer for International Student Assessment, Indonesian students' reading performance is often below the international average.[5][6] Common difficulties include limited vocabulary, a lack of understanding of complex text structures, low interest in reading, and limited exposure to various types of texts. This situation has a direct impact on their ability to understand learning materials, as nearly all school subjects require strong reading skills. Therefore, the issue of low reading comprehension among students, particularly at the junior high school level, deserves serious attention to ensure that the learning process can take place more effectively.[7]

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[4] Anderson, R. C., & Pearson, D. A. Schema-thematic view of basic processes in reading comprehension. In P. D. Pearson, R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, & P. Mosenthal's (Eds.), Handbook of Reading Research. New York: Longman. 1984. p.255-291.

[5] OECD (2019). PISA 2018 Results (Volume I): What Students Know and Can Do.

[6] Kemendikbudristek RI (2019). Hasil PISA 2018: Analisis Kinerja Siswa Indonesia.

[7] Rosya Arumi Zuharo et al., "Implementation Of Literacy Strategies In Overcoming Students Reading Difficulties In Elementary Else (Elementary School Education" 8, No. 1 (2024): 126–34.

Difficulties in reading comprehension have a significant impact on students' academic achievement. Students who are unable to understand texts effectively tend to face obstacles in mastering subjects, since almost all subjects of study require the ability to read and analyze written information.[8] This is supported by research by Snowling et al., which shows that students with low reading comprehension skills experience up to a 40% limitation in their academic achievement in other subject areas.[9] Therefore, this skill serves as the primary foundation determining students' overall learning success.

One of the main obstacles faced by beginner readers is recognizing and understanding words in written text. When the process of decoding words is slow, working memory will focus on word recognition rather than on understanding the text's content, especially during the early stages of reading development. Some sentences are more difficult to comprehend than others. However, research indicates that, compared to vocabulary, grammar has only a limited influence on determining a person's level of reading comprehension.[10]

Additionally, English teachers rarely return students' exercises, making it difficult for them to assess their learning progress. During lessons, teachers mainly provide simple verbal explanations, and the assignments given mostly

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[8] National Reading Panel (US), National Institute of Child Health, & Human Development (US). (2000). Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction: Reports of the subgroups. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health.

[9] Snowling, M. J., Hulme, C., Nash, H. M., & Gooch, D. (2019). The impact of reading comprehension difficulties on academic achievement: Evidence from a longitudinal study. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 60(5), 567–575. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13012

[10] S M A Negeri and Sakra Timur, "English Reading Texts At Second Grade Students ' OF" 4, no. 2 (2024): 60–78.

consist of completing textbook pages as homework due to limited class time.[11] According to Westwood, internal factors such as difficulty understanding long sentences, difficulty in applying reading strategies, and difficulty in maintaining concentration often hinder students' reading comprehension.[12]

Additionally, students face various challenges in reading comprehension, such as difficulty in recognizing the meaning of certain vocabulary used in the text, difficulty in understanding complex grammatical structures in sentences, difficulty in the absence of extensive reading, and difficulty with a particular type of text.[13] When students encounter unfamiliar words, their comprehension is hindered as they struggle to grasp the intended meaning or connect the information within the text cohesively.[14] As a result, the learning process becomes ineffective, and students are often only able to read without truly understanding the content being presented. This indicates that language barriers and a lack of reading experience are the primary factors hindering the thinking process, causing students to fail to fully process the information they receive. Therefore, basic language skills and reading frequency play a crucial role, as they are key to developing a deep understanding of various subject materials.

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[11] Egi Putra and Khidayatul Munawwaroh, "The Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension at The Second Semester of English Department at Batanghari University," JELT: Journal of English Language Teaching 5, no. 1 (2021): 86, https://doi.org/10.33087/jelt.v5i1.78.

[12] Westwood, P. (2020). What teachers need to know about reading and writing difficulties.

[13] Koda, K. (2005). Insights into second language reading: A cross-linguistic approach. Cambridge University Press.

[14] Muchasanah Nur Balqis, "Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension," English LAnguage Study and TEaching 3, no. 1 (2022): 18–24, https://doi.org/10.32672/elaste.v3i1.4734.

These reading comprehension difficulties can prevent students from achieving optimal academic performance, as they often lead to lower scores on reading tests and hinder the ability to analyze and synthesize information from texts. According to Cooper, the causes of these difficulties can be divided into two categories: internal factors, such as physical condition, psychological state, and fatigue, and external factors, including family, school, and community environment.[15] In general, reading comprehension difficulties can be defined as challenges in understanding or accomplishing reading tasks, requiring effort, skill, and perseverance to overcome. These difficulties are often reflected in the mistakes or errors students make during reading assessments, such as failing to answer comprehension questions accurately. In practice, many high school students face challenges in understanding reading texts, which negatively affects their reading test results and overall literacy development.[16]

A significant gap exists between the crucial importance of reading comprehension skills and the reality that many students still struggle to acquire them. Reading comprehension is widely recognized as a key foundation for academic success and for mastering various fields of knowledge. However, numerous studies and international assessments reveal that this skill remains weak among Indonesian students, particularly at the junior high school level. Many students face difficulties related to limited vocabulary, complex text

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[15] Amaliyah, S., & Fajar, D. M. (2024). Analysis of Factors Causing Students Learning Difficulties in Learning Science. Science Education and Application Journal, 6(1), 61-74.

[16] Septia et al., "An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension."

structures, and unfamiliarity with various text types, which hinder their understanding and learning progress.

While previous studies have extensively investigated the factors and sources of students' reading difficulties, limited attention has been given to the specific reading strategies students actually use to overcome these challenges, especially cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Furthermore, there is still a scarcity of research that compares and contrasts how low-achieving and high-achieving students differ in their selection and application of such strategies. This means that although existing literature has identified what problems students face, it has not sufficiently explained how students cope with those problems and whether there are distinct patterns in strategy use between different levels of achievers. This gap highlights the need for a deeper investigation into students' actual experiences and strategies, which can provide more complete insights to improve reading instruction.

The urgency of this research lies in the pressing need to identify specific student challenges, such as limited vocabulary, complex text structures, and a lack of inference strategies, and to address them through the teaching of effective strategies, such as previewing, self-monitoring, and contextual inference. Thus, teachers can design appropriate teaching methods, including exercises in the five aspects of reading comprehension, such as identifying the main idea, locating specific information, drawing conclusions, identifying references, and understanding word meanings, to enhance students' reading skills independently and sustainably.

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B. Research Questions

The following problems can be formulated and compiled in this research based on the backdrop previously described:

1. What challenges do students face in improving their reading comprehension skills?
2. What reading strategies do students use to overcome reading comprehension difficulties?

C. Research Objectives

The research objectives of the provided research questions are as follows:

1. To explore the challenges student's face in improving their reading comprehension skills.
2. To analyze the reading strategies that students use to overcome reading comprehension difficulties.

D. Research Significances

This research is expected to provide valuable contributions, which are divided into two parts, as follows:

1. Theoretical significance

This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the field of language education, particularly in the study of reading comprehension. The findings are anticipated to enrich the existing body of knowledge regarding students' strategies, especially cognitive and metacognitive strategies, in overcoming reading difficulties. Furthermore,

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this study may serve as a reference for future researchers in exploring the relationship between reading comprehension difficulties and the effectiveness of learning strategies at the junior high school level.

2. Practical Significance

a. For Teacher

This research is expected to assist teachers in teaching students to understand English reading texts. By identifying the difficulties students face in comprehension, teachers are expected to find effective techniques to enhance students' understanding of texts.

b. Future Research

This study provides valuable insights for the researcher by expanding their understanding of the various challenges students encounter in reading comprehension. Through analyzing students' experiences, the researcher can identify effective strategies and techniques to help learners overcome these difficulties. Additionally, this study contributes to the researcher's knowledge in the field of language education, supporting the development of more effective teaching methods and interventions

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E. Scope of the Research

This study was conducted at a private Islamic junior high school in Indonesia, focusing on eighth-grade students who have significant challenges in understanding English reading. Participants include three students identified by their English teachers as having the lowest performance, along with teachers

who provide additional insight. The study was analyse difficulties related to limited vocabulary, complex text structures, lack of extensive reading experience, and challenges with different types of texts. Reading comprehension was measured through five main indicators: literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, evaluative comprehension, vocabulary comprehension, and text structure awareness.

To overcome students' reading comprehension difficulties, this study also explored the implementation of learning strategies used by students, which are categorized into two types: cognitive and metacognitive. Cognitive strategies involve direct engagement with the text, including activities such as identifying main ideas, guessing the meaning of words from context, rereading sections for clarity, taking brief notes to retain important information, and using dictionaries or reference materials to clarify unfamiliar terms. Meanwhile, metacognitive strategies focus on managing and regulating the learning process itself, including planning reading goals and approaches before starting the text, monitoring comprehension during reading by checking for student confusion, and evaluating overall comprehension after reading to assess whether goals have been achieved and identify areas that need further attention.

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F. Definition of Key Term

The definition of key terms outlines the essential concepts that serve as the researcher’s focus within the study. Its purpose is to prevent any misinterpretation and ensure that the terms are understood in accordance with

the researcher's intended meaning[17]. To avoid ambiguity and ensure clarity, several key terms used in this study are defined as follows:

1. **Reading Comprehension Difficulties**

   Reading comprehension difficulties refer to the challenges experienced by eighth-grade junior high school students in understanding English reading texts within the context of this study. They include difficulties in mastering vocabulary, recognizing text structure, identifying main ideas, connecting information, and relating content to prior knowledge, which hinder their overall reading comprehension.

2. **Students' Strategies on reading comprehension**

   Students' strategies in reading comprehension refer to the experiences, efforts, and actions used by eighth-grade students at Islamic junior high school in Indonesia to overcome reading comprehension difficulties and enhance their understanding of English texts within the context of this study. They are divided into two categories. Cognitive Strategies, direct techniques used to process text content, such as guessing word meaning from context, translating, identifying main ideas, rereading, and linking information to prior knowledge. Metacognitive Strategies, techniques to manage the reading process, including planning before reading, monitoring understanding while reading, and evaluating comprehension after reading.

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[17] Tim Penyusun, Buku Pedoman Karya Ilmiah, Jember: IAIN Jember Press, 2021, 46.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of related literature that consists of relevant previous research and theoretical framework.

A. Previous research

The first study was conducted by Nicolás Matus, Cristian Rusu, and Sandra Cano.[18] This study aimed to clarify the concept of student experience in higher education, which lacked a standardized definition, and examine its dimensions and evaluation methods. The researchers analyzed 65 articles published between 2011 and 2021, identifying that student experience covers four main aspects: academic, social, administrative, and emotional dimensions. The findings highlighted that understanding students' experiences is essential to improve the overall quality of education. These results provide a broad theoretical foundation for recognizing the importance of exploring students' learning journeys.

While the previous research offers valuable insight into the general concept of student experience, it was conducted exclusively in the context of higher education and did not specifically focus on reading comprehension skills. Unlike this study, which investigates how students deal with difficulties in understanding English texts, that study only provides a general framework

[18] Nicolás Matus, Cristian Rusu, and Sandra Cano, "Student EXperience: A Systematic Literature Review," Applied Sciences (Switzerland) 11, no. 20 (2021), https://doi.org/10.3390/app11209543.

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without examining specific learning challenges or solutions. Furthermore, it relied on secondary data from literature reviews rather than primary field data, making its findings more theoretical and less specific to the classroom context. Therefore, it serves as a supporting reference for the concept of student experience but does not address the focus of this research.

The second study was conducted by Hersagita Anissa Hayati and Nina Puspitaloka.[19] This study aimed to identify the reading comprehension difficulties encountered by students and the strategies they used to overcome them during online learning. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the researchers collected data through observation, interviews, and documentation involving six junior high school students. The findings revealed that students faced difficulties caused by internal factors, such as limited vocabulary and background knowledge, as well as external factors, including unstable internet connection. The study also found that students primarily used the internet and digital resources as their main coping strategies.

While the previous research shares similarities with this study in focusing on junior high school students and exploring both difficulties and coping efforts, it differs significantly in its context and scope. Unlike the current study, which is carried out in regular face-to-face classroom settings, that research was conducted during the emergency period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, it only identified general strategies without classifying them into specific

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[19] Hersagita Anissa Hayati and Nina Puspitaloka, "An Analysis of Students' Reading Comprehension Difficulties during Covid-19 Pandemic with Online Classes in Junior High School," JET (Journal of English Teaching) 8, no. 2 (2022): 293–300, https://doi.org/10.33541/jet.v8i2.3823.

cognitive and metacognitive categories, nor did it compare the differences in strategy use between low-achieving and high-achieving students. Therefore, it provides a relevant reference but does not fully explain the specific focus of this research.

The third study was conducted by Lixiang Yan et al.[20] This study aimed to investigate students' overall learning experiences, challenges, and coping approaches during the implementation of online learning. Using a large-scale quantitative survey, the researchers gathered data from students across the province to understand their learning conditions. The findings indicated that while online learning offered flexibility and access to digital materials, it also presented challenges such as limited interaction, low motivation, and reduced learning engagement. Students mainly used internet resources and digital tools to assist their learning process.

Although previous study provides useful insight into how students respond to learning difficulties, it focuses only on general learning experiences and is limited to the context of online instruction. Unlike this research, which specifically examines reading comprehension skills and the conscious use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, previous study does not narrow its focus to a specific language skill. Additionally, it does not distinguish between different levels of student achievement in relation to strategy use. Thus, it offers

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[20] Lixiang Yan et al., "Students' Experience of Online Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Province-Wide Survey Study," British Journal of Educational Technology 52, no. 5 (2021): 2038–57, https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13102.

a general perspective but does not cover the specific variables investigated in this study.

The fourth study was conducted by Agustina Ramadhianti and Sugianti Somba.[21] This study aimed to identify the main difficulties faced by EFL learners in understanding English reading texts. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through questionnaires involving 98 university students from an English education program. The findings showed that students encountered difficulties in identifying main ideas, understanding vocabulary, connecting ideas with prior knowledge, recognizing text structure, and making inferences. The study emphasized that overcoming these challenges requires the application of appropriate reading strategies.

While that research confirms the types of reading difficulties common among EFL learners, it differs from the present study in terms of participants and focus. Unlike this study, which involves junior high school students and explores how students apply specific strategies to overcome their problems, the previous study focused only on university students and limited its scope to identifying difficulties without examining the strategies used in detail. It also did not classify strategies into cognitive and metacognitive types or compare their use between different achievement levels. Consequently, it supports the background of this research but leaves a gap that the current study intends to fill.

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[21] Agustina Ramadhianti and Sugianti Somba, "Journal of English Language Teaching and Literature (JELTL) 1" 6, no. 1 (2023): 1–11.

The fifth study was conducted by Lydia Kusumahwati, Widya Caterine Perdhani, and Peptia Asrining Tyas.[22] This study aimed to investigate the reading comprehension challenges perceived by eighth-grade students. Using a quantitative method with questionnaires, the researchers involved 171 students from several junior high schools. The findings revealed that the main difficulties included limited vocabulary, complex grammatical structures, and insufficient background knowledge, which prevented students from fully understanding the text content.

Although previous study was highly relevant as it confirms that reading difficulties are prevalent among junior high school students, it has a clear limitation compared to this research. While it successfully identified what difficulties students face, it did not explore how students attempt to overcome these difficulties. Unlike this study, which specifically investigates and compares the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies between low-achieving and high-achieving students, that research only focused on identifying problems without looking for solutions. Therefore, it provides a strong basis for the problem but highlights the need for further investigation, which is exactly the purpose of this study.

The differences and similarities between current research and previous research

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[22] Lidya Kusumahwati, Widya Caterine Perdhani, and Peptia Asrining Tyas, "Exploring EFL Students' Perceptions on Reading Comprehension Difficulties in Indonesian Junior High Students Universitas Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling* 4, no. 6 (2022): 8241.

NO	Author and Title	Similarities	Differences
1.	Nicolás Matus, Cristian Rusu and Sandra Cano "*Student Experience: A Systematic Literature Review"*	a. Both studies aim to provide solutions and help improve the teaching and learning process.	a. However the difference between these two studies lies in their different research focuses. The previous study focused on comprehensively understanding the concept of student experience, while this study will focus on identifying the challenges and strategies faced by students when reading comprehension
2.	Hersagita Anissa Hayati and Nina Puspitaloka "An Analysis of Students' Reading Comprehension Difficulties During Covid-19 Pandemic with Online Classes in Junior High School*"*	a. Both research ers Focus on Reading Comprehension Difficulties b. Both use qualitative research.	a. However the previous research was conducted online during COVID-19, while this research will be conducted offline learning.
3.	Lixiang Yan, Qua nlong Guan, Guanliang Chen,	a. Both studies focus on students' difficulties	a. However the previous research was conducted online, while this research

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NO	Author and Title	Similarities	Differences
	Alexander Whitelock-Wainwright, Gang xin Wen, Dragan Gašević "Students' Experience of Online Learning During The COVID-19 Pandemic: A Province-Wide Survey Study"	in reading comprehension. b. Both studies appl y triangulation methods through interviews, observations, and document analysis.	will be conducted offline learning.
	Agustina Ramadhianti and Sugianti Somba "Reading C omprehension Difficulties in Indo nesian Efl Stu dents"	a. Both studies examine the types of difficulties faced by students. b. Both studies emphasize the importance of reading strategies. c. Both use qualitative research.	a. However the previous study was conducted at the higher education level (EFL university students), while this study will be conducted at a junior high school.
	Lydia Kusumahwati, Widya Caterine Perdhani, Peptia Asrining Tyas entitled	a. Both studies examine eighth-grade junior	a. However the previous study mainly emphasizes how students perceive their

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NO	Author and Title	Similarities	Differences
	"Exploring EFL Students' Perceptions on Reading Comprehension Difficulties in Indonesian Junior High Students"	high school students. b. Both studies highlight similar factors, like vocabulary and text structure, affecting reading comprehension.	reading difficulties. b. The previous research only looks at the problems, not the solutions. c. Previous studies used a quantitative approach, while this study will use a descriptive qualitative approach

This study shares similarities with previous research in that it also focuses on identifying reading comprehension difficulties and the strategies used to address them. However, it differs significantly in several key aspects. First, while many prior studies were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic and centered on online learning contexts, this research is carried out in the setting of regular face-to-face instruction. Second, regarding methodology, some studies employed quantitative designs, whereas this study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach; moreover, earlier qualitative research often relied mainly on questionnaires, while this study uses in-depth interviews and classroom observations to obtain richer data. Most importantly, although existing studies have extensively documented the types of reading difficulties students face, limited attention has been given to the specific strategies they use to overcome these challenges, particularly the application of cognitive and metacognitive strategies and few have compared how these strategies differ

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between low-achieving and high-achieving students. Therefore, this study fills this gap by not only identifying students' reading comprehension difficulties but also exploring and comparing the cognitive and metacognitive strategies they employ to improve their understanding.

B. Theoretical framework

1. Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is one of the most fundamental skills in language learning. It goes beyond the technical ability of decoding words and sentences; rather, it is a complex process that requires active interaction between the reader, the text, and the socio-cultural context. As defined by Snow, reading comprehension is "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language." This highlights that comprehension is not a passive process but a dynamic cognitive activity where readers connect new information to their prior knowledge.[23] The core components of reading comprehension include vocabulary, grammar, text structure, and critical thinking. Cain and Oakhill emphasize that vocabulary limitations remain one of the greatest barriers to comprehension, as vocabulary serves as the bridge between words and meaning. Additionally, knowledge of sentence structures and discourse-level organization enables readers to identify main ideas and supporting details. Without mastery of these components,

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[23] Reese Butterfuss, Jasmine Kim, and Panayiota Kendeou, "Overview of Models and Theories of Reading," Oxford Research Encyclopedia, Education, no. February (2020): 1–24, https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.865.

reading comprehension remains shallow and incomplete.

Several theoretical models have explained how reading comprehension occurs. One of the most influential is Kintsch's *Construction-Integration Model*, which posits that readers actively construct meaning and integrate it with prior knowledge. Another is the *Simple View of Reading* which argues that reading comprehension is the product of decoding and language comprehension. Both components are necessary and complementary for successful comprehension.[24]

Beyond linguistic and cognitive factors, cognitive and metacognitive strategies also play an essential role. Cognitive strategies include guessing word meaning, summarizing, and identifying main ideas, while metacognitive strategies involve planning, monitoring, and evaluating comprehension. Found that students who consistently apply metacognitive strategies outperform those who rely solely on decoding. Moreover, text characteristics such as length, cohesion, and conceptual complexity strongly influence comprehension outcomes.[25]

In educational contexts, reading comprehension is crucial across all subject areas. Whether in science, social studies, or mathematics, students rely heavily on comprehension skills to succeed. The OECD's PISA 2022 results indicate that poor reading proficiency directly correlates with low academic achievement on a broader scale. Thus, reading

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[24] Promote Reading, "Rethinking How To," 2021, 26–34.

[25] Yuanke Sun et al., "The Relationship Between Reading Strategy and Reading Comprehension: A Meta-Analysis," Frontiers in Psychology 12, no. August (2021): 1–11, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.635289.

comprehension is not only vital in English language learning but also a foundational skill for academic success in general.

2. Components of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a complex skill that goes beyond merely recognizing words; it also involves understanding, connecting, and evaluating the meaning of written texts. To achieve optimal reading comprehension, there are several key components that are interrelated. These components include linguistic, cognitive, metacognitive, and contextual aspects, each of which significantly contributes to a reader's success in comprehending texts.

a. Vocabulary Knowledge.

Vocabulary serves as the foundation of reading because it functions as a bridge between words and meaning. Without sufficient vocabulary mastery, readers will struggle to connect words in the text with the concepts or ideas the author intends to convey. Cain and Oakhill emphasize that limited vocabulary may hinder text comprehension since every word carries important information for meaning construction. Therefore, the richer a reader's vocabulary, the greater their chances of thoroughly understanding the content of a text.[26]

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[26] Teaching Channel et al., "Today Is a Great Day to Learn Something New!," n.d.

b. Grammar and Syntax.

Understanding how words are arranged into clauses and sentences allows readers to interpret the relationships among ideas in a text. Complex sentence structures, such as compound or passive constructions, often create difficulties for students who are not yet familiar with them. By mastering syntactic aspects, readers are better able to grasp causal relationships, comparisons, and emphasis conveyed by the author. This shows that syntactic skills are an essential element in achieving complete reading comprehension.

c. Knowledge of Text Structure and Discourse

Each type of text-narrative, descriptive, expository, or argumentative-has a specific organizational pattern that readers need to recognize. For example, narrative texts generally consist of orientation, complication, and resolution, while expository texts tend to follow cause-and-effect or comparison structures. By understanding these structures, readers can more easily identify main ideas, supporting details, and the author's purpose. Furthermore, discourse knowledge, including cohesion and coherence, helps readers connect ideas across the text, leading to more comprehensive understanding.

d. Background Knowledge

According to schema theory, reading comprehension is greatly influenced by the reader's ability to connect new information with

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prior experiences and knowledge. A reader with prior knowledge or experiences related to the topic will more easily understand and interpret the text compared to someone without such knowledge. Thus, background knowledge functions as a foundation for constructing meaning from the text.

e. Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies involve direct activities used to process the text, such as guessing word meanings from context, summarizing, identifying main ideas, and making inferences. Meanwhile, metacognitive strategies focus more on awareness and control of the thinking process, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating comprehension while reading. McNamara and Magliano affirm that students who regularly use metacognitive strategies tend to achieve higher comprehension levels compared to those who rely solely on cognitive strategies.[27]

f. Critical And Analytical Thinking

Reading is not only about understanding literal meanings but also requires readers to evaluate the author's arguments, distinguish between fact and opinion, and draw logical conclusions. Critical thinking is particularly important when engaging with expository and argumentative texts, which often present complex information.

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[27] Education Research Information Center, "Optional ERIC Coversheet-Only for Use with U.S. Department of Education Grantee Submissions," n.d.

Through critical thinking, readers can assess the credibility of a text and relate it to broader contexts. In addition to internal factors, external factors such as text characteristics and the learning environment also influence reading comprehension. Texts that are lengthy, have low cohesion, or contain complex ideas are more difficult to understand. Similarly, motivation, reading interest, and support from teachers and family play important roles in determining how well readers comprehend texts.

In conclusion, the components of reading comprehension consist of vocabulary knowledge, grammar and syntax, text structure, background knowledge, cognitive and metacognitive strategies, and critical thinking, all of which are influenced by external factors. The dynamic interaction among these components makes reading comprehension a complex skill. Weakness in any one component can hinder the overall comprehension process. Therefore, in the context of language learning, it is important for educators to develop all of these aspects in balance so that students can achieve optimal reading comprehension.

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3. Level of Reading Comprehension

Level of reading comprehension refers to the stages that indicate how far a reader is able to understand a text, starting from merely grasping literal information to being able to critically evaluate the content. Barrett classified reading comprehension into four main levels: literal

comprehension, which focuses on information directly stated in the text; inferential comprehension, which involves drawing conclusions from implied information; evaluative comprehension, which assesses the quality and accuracy of the information; and appreciative comprehension, which emphasizes emotional and aesthetic responses to the reading. Furthermore, Burns, Roe, and Ross divided levels of reading comprehension into three categories: literal, interpretative, and critical. Literal comprehension relates to mastery of explicit facts in the text, interpretative comprehension requires the reader's ability to interpret the author's intent and draw conclusions, while critical comprehension demands that the reader evaluate the text based on logic, relevance, and personal experience.[28]

Moreover, Smith emphasized that reading is a process of constructing meaning, in which readers not only receive information but also build understanding through interpretation, evaluation, and connections with their life experiences. Heilman, Blair, and Rupley added that reading comprehension includes three important levels:[29]

a. Literal comprehension (answering the question of what happened),
b. Inferential comprehension (answering why and how something happened), and

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[28] Cristina de-la-Peña and María Jesús Luque-Rojas, "Levels of Reading Comprehension in Higher Education: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," Frontiers in Psychology 12, no. August (2021), https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.712901.

[29] Pawadee Srisang, John Everatt, and Ac Th, "LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network Lower and Higher Level Comprehension Skills of Undergraduate EFL Learners and Their Reading Comprehension" 0672, no. June (2021).

c. Critical comprehension (assessing the truth, accuracy, and value of the text). Thus, the concept of levels of reading comprehension affirms that reading is not merely a passive activity, but an active thinking process that develops from recognizing basic information toward critical analysis and in-depth evaluation.

4. Reading Comprehension Difficulties

a. Common types

Common types of reading comprehension difficulties are obstacles experienced by readers in understanding, interpreting, and drawing meaning from written text. These difficulties are not only related to a lack of technical reading skills but also involve limited vocabulary, weaknesses in making inferences, low background knowledge, and cognitive issues such as working memory capacity. Reading comprehension difficulties arise when readers are unable to connect textual information with prior knowledge, which restricts their ability to interpret meaning,[30] and vocabulary knowledge together with working memory capacity plays a crucial role in determining reading comprehension success, especially among second language learners.[31] Thus, reading comprehension difficulties can be understood as a multidimensional condition that includes

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[30] Rahayu, S., Lestari, A., & Widodo, H. (2023). Reading comprehension difficulties and the role of prior knowledge.

[31] Peng, X. (2024). Vocabulary knowledge, working memory capacity, and reading comprehension among second language learners.

linguistic, cognitive, and affective aspects that collectively influence a reader's success in comprehending texts.

1) Vocabulary

Vocabulary mastery plays a central role in reading comprehension. Students with limited vocabulary knowledge often struggle to understand the meaning of words and phrases, which consequently obstructs their ability to grasp the overall meaning of the text. Cain and Oakhill emphasize that insufficient vocabulary not only hinders literal understanding but also reduces students' ability to make inferences.[32] Moreover, Peng highlights that vocabulary knowledge is strongly related to working memory capacity, both of which are crucial for effective comprehension.[33]

2) Text complicated structure

Another common difficulty is the inability to comprehend complex sentence structures. Texts containing compound, passive, or embedded clauses often confuse students, especially those with limited syntactic knowledge. Long and grammatically complex sentences require higher levels of cognitive processing, which can overload students' working memory,[34] causing them to focus more on decoding individual words rather than constructing meaning from the passage.

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[32] Cain, K. & Oakhill, J. V. (1999a). Inference making and its relation to comprehensIOn failure. Reading and Writing. An Interdisciplinary Journal, 11, 489-503.

[33] Skills That, Support Text, and Its Development, "Making Sense of Text :," 2009, 11–14.

[34] Westwood, P. (2020). What teachers need to know about reading and writing difficulties.

3) Absence of extensive reading

The lack of extensive reading habits is also a significant barrier. Extensive reading provides students with exposure to varied vocabulary, sentence structures, and text types, which in turn enhances their reading fluency and comprehension. McNamara and Magliano argue that students who frequently engage in extensive reading activities are better at applying both cognitive and metacognitive strategies while reading.[35] In contrast, students with limited reading practice tend to rely solely on surface-level decoding and fail to develop deeper comprehension skills.[36]

4) Type of text

Finally, the type of text also influences the level of difficulty students encounter. Different genres such as narrative, descriptive, expository, or argumentative texts require different strategies to comprehend. For instance, expository texts often involve cause-and-effect or comparison structures that demand higher-order thinking skills. The complexity and unfamiliarity of certain text genres can reduce students' ability to identify main ideas and supporting details, thereby weakening their overall

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[35] McNamara, D. S., & Magliano, J. P. (2009). Toward a comprehensive model of comprehension. In B. H. Ross (Ed.), The psychology of learning and motivation (Vol. 51, pp. 297–384). Elsevier Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0079-7421(09)51009-2

[36] John Z. Strong, "Investigating a Text Structure Intervention for Reading and Writing in Grades 4 and 5," Reading Research Quarterly 55, no. 4 (2020): 545–51, https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.356.

comprehension.[37]

b. Factors contributing

Reading comprehension difficulties are influenced by various interrelated factors:

1) **Linguistic factors**, which include limited vocabulary, weak grammatical knowledge, and difficulties in basic reading skills (decoding).
2) **Cognitive factors**, such as restricted working memory capacity, difficulties in making inferences, low critical thinking skills, and lack of metacognitive awareness in monitoring comprehension.
3) **Background knowledge** or prior knowledge, where insufficient relevant knowledge prevents readers from connecting new information with their existing schema.
4) **Affective factors**, including low motivation, reading anxiety, negative attitudes toward texts, and a lack of reading interest. In addition,
5) **External factors** also play an important role, such as the quality of teaching, instructional methods, text complexity, reading media, and the learning environment. Thus, reading comprehension difficulties are not caused by a single factor but are instead the result of a multidimensional interaction of

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[37] Graesser, A. C., McNamara, D. S., & Kulikowich, J. M. (2020). Text comprehension and the role of genre complexity in learning.

linguistic, cognitive, affective, and contextual aspects.

5. Students' Experiences and Perspectives

In the context of contemporary educational research, students' experiences and perspectives are understood as the ways in which learners make meaning of the learning process, both in academic aspects such as teaching, assessment, and academic support, and in non-academic aspects such as well-being, social relationships, access to technology, and identity formation. This concept is closely related to the idea of student voice, which views students' perspectives not merely as perception data but as an essential component that must be structurally included in improving learning,[38] Various studies after 2020 highlight that students' learning experiences are shaped by pedagogical, cognitive, socio-emotional, technological, and agency-related dimensions.[39] For instance, the quality of instructional design, institutional support, and opportunities for students to express their needs are decisive factors in shaping learning experiences,[40] consistent with findings that students experienced diverse learning challenges and benefits during the pandemic, including flexibility, reduced social interaction, and decreased motivation.[41]

Furthermore, recent literature describes student experience in

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[38] Holquist, S. (2023). Student voice as a foundation for educational improvement.

[39] Schaefer, L., Brown, M., & Thomas, K. (2024). Students' perspectives in socio-emotional and technological learning contexts.

[40] Meng, X., Zhang, F., & Liu, H. (2024). Instructional design, institutional support, and student agency in contemporary learning environments.

[41] Abdullah, R., Rahman, S., & Yusuf, M. (2023). Students' varied learning experiences during the pandemic era.

higher education as analogous to customer experience, referring to the interaction between students and institutional services, systems, and learning processes, all of which influence academic outcomes.[42] Factors such as technological support, clarity of instructional communication, and meaningful interaction with lecturers and peers are key to creating quality learning experiences.[43] Additionally, a measurement instrument was developed to evaluate student voice practices so students' perspectives can be mapped systematically, beyond conventional satisfaction surveys.[44] Methodologically, research on students' experiences and perspectives often uses mixed-method designs combining surveys, interviews, and digital learning analytics to generate richer and more comprehensive findings. Thus, the study of students' experiences and perspectives highlights the importance of involving students as partners in learning and demonstrates that learning experiences are multidimensional, shaped by both internal and external factors.

6. Cognitive Reading Strategy

Cognitive strategies refer to the steps or operations used in learning or problem-solving, which require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials.[45] Cognitive strategies are the various

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[42] Matus, C., et al. (2021). Student experience as customer experience in higher education systems.

[43] Peng, X. (2024). Technological support, communication clarity, and student engagement in modern learning.

[44] Conner, J., et al. (2025). Measuring student voice practices: A comprehensive instrument for educational institutions.

[45] O'Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990). Learning strategies in second language acquisition. Cambridge University Press.

rehearsal, elaboration, and organizational strategies, such as analyzing and combining activities and choosing between main and trivial information.[46] Cognitive strategies enable students to make progress and to build knowledge. Cognitive strategies are mental steps or operations that learners use to process both linguistic and sociolinguistic content.[47] Cognitive strategies operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning.[48] They help students to understand and produce the new language by repeating, summarizing, reasoning deductively, predicting, analyzing, using context clues, note-taking, and practicing with the specific aspects of the target language such as sentence structure and unknown vocabulary. The advantage of cognitive strategies in reading becomes the consideration of why the strategy is chosen. Several previous studies have also revealed that the use of cognitive learning strategies in classroom instruction and learning is fundamental to successful learning.[49]

In learning, learners need to be provided with appropriate ways of instruction to use cognitive strategies as efficiently and effectively as possible. Rubin identified six main cognitive learning strategies contributing directly to language learning: clarification/verification,

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[46] Mayer, R. E. (1998). Cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational aspects of problem-solving. Instructional Science, 26, 49-63. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1003088013286

[47] Wenden, A. (1991). *Learner strategies for learner autonomy.* Prentice-Hall.

[48] O'Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990). Learning strategies in second language acquisition. Cambridge University Press.

[49] Ratna, A. (2014). The use of cognitive reading strategies to enhance EFL students' reading comprehension. *International Journal of Education, 2*(1), 1-11. https://airccse.com/ije/papers/2114ije01.pdf

guessing/inductive inference, deductive reasoning, practice, memorization, and monitoring.[50] The cognitive strategies mentioned before are also in line with those identified by O'Malley and Chamot, including resourcing, repetition, grouping, deduction, imagery, getting an idea quickly, elaboration, and inferencing, note-taking, and summarizing.[51]

a. Resourcing refers to a way of using target language reference materials such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, or textbook (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990).
b. Repetition means imitating a language model, including overt practice and silent rehearsal. Repetition means repeating a chunk of language (a word or phrase) in the course of performing a language task. Oxford (1990) states that in reading, the strategy of rereading passage more than once to understand the material completely. The repetition strategy can be used by the students as they want to remember important points. For example, the students reread a sentence or reread a text to remedy failures.
c. Grouping means classifying words, terminology, or concepts according to their attributes or meaning. Grouping strategy in reading involves classifying or reclassifying what is read into meaningful groups, thus reducing the number of unrelated elements. For example,

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[50] Wenden, A., & Rubin, J. (1987). *Learner strategies in language learning*. Prentice-Hall.
[51] O'Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990). Learning strategies in second language acquisition. Cambridge University Press.

classifying the words according to their grammatical categories.

d. Note-taking means writing down keywords and concepts in abbreviated verbal, graphic, or numerical form while listening or reading. Note-taking makes students become active participants in their learning, helps them organize important concepts, remember information, and becomes one of their study aids.

e. Summarizing means making a mental, oral, or written summary of new information gained through listening or reading. The process of summarizing enables learners to grasp the original text better. The knowledge gained by summarizing makes it possible for learners to analyze and critique the original text.

f. The strategy of getting the idea quickly involves skimming and scanning strategy. Skimming involves searching for the main ideas the speaker wants to get across, while scanning means searching for specific details or interest to the learner. Skimming is also usually defined as quick, superficial reading or a text in order to get the gist of it, whereas scanning is looking for specific information in the text and ignoring the rest.

g. Inferencing means using available information to guess the meaning of new items, predict outcomes, or fill in the missing information. This strategy can be used as learners attempt to comprehend the text. For example, the strategy of using the title to predict the content of the text and paying attention to words or phrases that show how text is

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organized.

h. Deduction strategy means applying rules to understand or produce a second language or making up rules based on language analysis. This strategy is a top-down strategy leading from general to specific. For example, reading the first line of every paragraph to understand the whole text.

i. Imagery means using visual images (either mental or actual) to understand or remember new information. This is a good strategy for remembering what has been read in the new language to create a mental image of it. An example of this strategy is looking at an illustration/picture of the events in mind.

j. Elaboration means relating new information to prior knowledge, relating different parts of new information to each other, or making meaningful personal associations with the new information. Elaboration refers to additional processing of the text by the reader, which may increase comprehension. It involves forming a connection between the text and the reader's background knowledge of the subject.

1) Indicators of Cognitive Reading Strategies

a) Word-Level Strategies

These strategies focus on decoding and interpreting meaning at the lexical and sentence level, addressing the fundamental challenge of unfamiliar vocabulary. They

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involve using context clues, analyzing word parts, applying grammatical knowledge, and making logical guesses to infer meaning without immediate reliance on external aids.[52] As noted by Grabe, skilled readers routinely use these strategies to maintain reading flow and build semantic networks.[53]

b) Translating and Using Reference Tools

These are support strategies employed when word-level inference alone is insufficient. Translating involves rendering English words, phrases, or sentences into the learner's first language to bridge linguistic gaps and confirm understanding.[54] Using dictionaries, glossaries, or textbooks, known as resourcing, provides accurate definitions and usage examples, though researchers emphasize that this should complement rather than replace contextual guessing to avoid disrupting global comprehension.[55]

c) Text Processing Strategies

These strategies operate at the paragraph and whole-text level, helping learners organize ideas, identify structure, and navigate content efficiently. They include rereading

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[52] Hudson, T. (2007). Teaching second language reading. Oxford University Press.

[53] Grabe, W. (2009). Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice. Cambridge University Press.

[54] Alhaisoni, E. (2017). Translation as a cognitive strategy in EFL reading comprehension. International Journal of English Language Teaching, 5(1), 1–12.

[55] Anderson, N. J. (2005). L2 learning strategies: An overview. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning (pp. 757–772). Lawrence Erlbaum.

complex sections, skimming to grasp the main gist, scanning for specific details, grouping related information, and recognizing rhetorical patterns.[56] According to Singhal, such strategies enable readers to create a mental framework that connects individual sentences into a coherent representation of the text.[57]

d) Information Processing Strategies

These represent deeper-level cognitive engagement, involving active restructuring and retention of information. They require learners to select, organize, and integrate textual content by writing down key terms, paraphrasing, and condensing extended passages into concise summaries.[58] Summarizing and note-taking force the reader to distinguish essential from peripheral details, reinforcing memory and promoting higher-order comprehension.[59]

7. Metacognitive Reading Strategy

Reading as an ability includes primary interest and passion, imagination and ingenuity. This requires vocabulary expert and prior experience with books. In reading primarily, students should be able to become informed of the extraordinary metacognitive strategy that is most

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[56] Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2013). Teaching and researching reading (2nd ed.). Routledge.
[57] Singhal, M. (2001). Reading proficiency, reading strategies, metacognitive awareness, and L2 readers. The Reading Matrix, 1(1), 1–23.
[58] Hudson, T. (2007). Teaching second language reading. Oxford University Press.
[59] Carrell, P. L. (1998). Can reading strategies instruction improve L2 reading comprehension? Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 20(2), 197–221.

suitable for them. Metacognitive requires within self-control that includes self regulated thinking. It is important because it contributes to strategies and practice on how to complete a task, track the fulfillment of oneself, reflect and self evaluate the outcomes of the completion undertaking.[60]

Metacognitive techniques are higher abilities for analytical thinking that allow readers to be conscious of whether or not they understand a reading text. Learners define available resources through the use of these techniques, determine which of these resources are essential for the particular role they perform, and set goal for learning them.

For the purpose of this study, metacognitive reading strategies are systematically categorized into three main indicators, adapted from the frameworks of O'Malley and Chamot, Oxford, and Anderson, to provide clear operational definitions:

a. **Indicators of Metacognitive Reading Strategies**

1) Planning Strategies

Planning refers to the preparatory actions taken before or at the beginning of reading to set a clear purpose and establish a mental framework. It involves activating prior knowledge, deciding what to look for, and determining how to approach the text.[61] Specific actions include: Previewing the title, headings,

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[60] Kartika Septianingrum, Siti Mariam, and Siti Tarwiyah, A Portrait of Learner‟s Autonomy Through Metacognitive Strategy on Reading Comprehension, Vision:Journal For Language and Foreign Language Learning Vol.7 No.1,2018, page.68

[61] O'Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990). Learning strategies in second language acquisition. Cambridge University Press.

subheadings, pictures, or introduction; setting reading goals; predicting content based on text features; and deciding how much time to allocate to the task.[62]

2) Monitoring Strategies

Monitoring occurs during the reading process and involves ongoing self-checking to ensure comprehension is taking place. It represents the reader's ability to notice when understanding breaks down and to take immediate action to resolve the problem.[63]Specific actions include: Checking understanding while reading, questioning oneself about the meaning of sentences or paragraphs, rereading difficult sections; identifying confusing words or ideas, and adjusting reading speed or approach when comprehension is lost.[64]

3) Evaluating Strategies

Evaluating takes place after reading and involves reflecting on the overall success of the reading process, assessing how well the goals were achieved, and consolidating the information learned.[65] Specific actions include: Summarizing the

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[62] Singhal, M. (2001). Reading proficiency, reading strategies, metacognitive awareness, and L2 readers. The Reading Matrix, 1(1), 1–23.

[63] Grabe, W. (2009). Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice. Cambridge University Press.

[64] Grabe, W. (2009). Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice. Cambridge University Press.

[65] Pressley, M. (2002). Metacognition and self-regulated comprehension. In A. E. Farstrup & S. J. Samuels (Eds.), What research has to say about reading instruction (3rd ed., pp. 291–316). International Reading Association.

main ideas; reflecting on whether the text was fully understood; judging the effectiveness of the strategies used; and connecting the overall message to personal knowledge or experience.[66]

According to Bishop et al (2005, p.207-208), metacognitive strategies are as follows:[67]

a. Imagine, using a variety of senses This strategy enables readers to visualize the scenes in the texts and refer to their senses to predict the features of substances.
b. Make connections**,** readers connect their background with the information from the text**.**
c. Analyze text structure. This strategy involves readers to discover the genre and also use other specific features in text such as linking devices, table of contents, and subheadings.
d. Recognize words and understand sentences. It refers to the familiarity with the lexical and grammatical knowledge and contextual cues to understand the sentences.
e. Explore inferences**,** readers are expected to recognize cause and effect relationship by using this strategy.
f. Ask question readers**,** readers question themselves for instance on the author's message, or its relationship with the real life.
g. Determine important ideas and themes**,** the introductory and

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[66] Carrell, P. L., Gajdusek, L., & Wise, T. (1998). Metacognition and EFL/ESL reading. Instructional Science, 26(1–2), 97–112.

[67] Ceyhun Yukselir, An Investigating into The Reading Strategy Use of EFL Pre-Class Students, Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences(158),2014,page.67-68

concluding parts are the most important parts that readers need to pay attention in order to determine important ideas and themes.

h. Evaluate, summarize, and synthesize**.** This strategy contains the importance of pausing while or after reading to construct meaning.

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CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

A. Approach and Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative design. According to Cresswell, qualitative research is a process of inquiry to understand based on different methodological traditions of inquiry that explore social or human problems.[68] A qualitative approach is used because the research aims to explore students' real experiences in facing and overcoming reading comprehension difficulties, which requires naturalistic data and an in-depth understanding. In addition, it enables the researcher to answer the research objectives by identifying the types of difficulties students experience, such as vocabulary problems, complex text structures, absence of extensive reading, and text-type challenges, and by describing the cognitive and metacognitive strategies applied by students during reading activities. This design also allows me to provide a clear picture of how students at a private Islamic junior high school deal with reading difficulties and how they try to manage or overcome them in a real classroom setting.

B. Research Setting

This study was conducted at a private Islamic junior high school located in East Java. The selection of this location was based on several key reasons: First, eighth-grade students at this school still frequently struggle with reading

[68] Yusuf, A. Muni. Metode penelitian. 1 st ed. Jakarta: Kencana, 2021

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comprehension, making the application of cognitive and metacognitive strategies relevant for addressing this issue. Second, no previous research has explored the use of these strategies at this school. Third, the researcher has obtained official permission from the school.

The subject under study was English as a required course in the Merdeka Curriculum, with a focus on reading comprehension learning objectives such as understanding main ideas, supporting details, inferences, and contextual vocabulary. This aligns with the learning outcomes for eighth-grade junior high school students.

The lessons were conducted in person in the classroom, with each session lasting 2 x 40 minutes, twice a week. The teaching method used by the teacher is communicative language teaching, which combines direct instruction and group discussion. The teacher typically presents a reading text first, followed by comprehension exercises and group discussions. In this study, the teacher also integrated cognitive strategies such as summarizing and questioning, as well as metacognitive strategies such as self-monitoring and planning, to help students become more independent in overcoming reading comprehension difficulties under the teacher's guidance.

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C. Research Participants

The participants in this study consisted of six eighth-grade students and an English teacher. The students were selected through purposive sampling based on the English teacher's recommendations, which included three students with the lowest reading comprehension scores and three students with

higher scores among their peers. This selection was appropriate because low-achieving students exhibited more pronounced reading comprehension difficulties, thereby providing clear data on the types of challenges, while high-achieving students demonstrated effective strategies and subtle difficulties that might otherwise go undetected. By including both groups, a comprehensive comparison of reading behaviors, patterns of difficulty, and the effectiveness of strategies across all proficiency levels could be conducted. English teachers provided additional insights into students' reading habits, classroom practices, and learning contexts. This diverse selection of participants facilitated a deeper understanding of reading comprehension challenges and the strategies used to address them across various ability levels.

Before the study began, the researcher obtained informed consent from all participants via a written consent form. Participants were provided with detailed information about the study's objectives and procedures, including interviews and observations. Participation was voluntary, without coercion, and participants were free to choose whether or not to participate. Participants had the right to withdraw at any time during the study, without any consequences for their academic performance. To protect participants' identities, the researcher used pseudonyms such as Student MI, BA, DA, KR, VN, AR, and Teacher SW.

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D. Research Instruments

The data collection instruments in this study consisted of semi-structured interviews designed to explore students' reading comprehension

difficulties and their use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. There are also observation sheets that aim to explore more in-depth information about students' reading comprehension difficulties and their use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Data in this study were collected through these two instruments to meet the needs of this study.

1. Semi-Structured Interview guideline

   The semi-structured interview guideline serves as the primary instrument to obtain detailed, in-depth information about students' experiences, perceptions, and self-reported strategies. Unlike a rigid questionnaire, this guideline provides a list of core topics and open-ended questions, allowing the researcher to explore responses further through follow-up questions as needed.

   The data obtained through interviews include:

   a. Exploring the challenges students face in improving their reading comprehension skills.
   b. Analyzing the strategies students use to overcome reading comprehension difficulties.

   Based on the data obtained above, the researcher formulated several questions for data collection during the interviews, such as:

   1) When reading English texts, do you often encounter difficulties because you don't know the meaning of certain words?
   2) Do you find it difficult when you encounter texts with complex sentence or paragraph structures?

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3) When you encounter an unfamiliar word, do you try to guess its meaning based on the context of the sentence or paragraph?

4) Before you start reading a text, do you usually read the title, subtitles, or look at the pictures to plan what you are going to learn?

2. Observation Sheet

An observation sheet is a tool designed to systematically record data during the learning process or student reading activities. This instrument is used to observe and document student reading behavior, the types of difficulties that arise during reading, and the strategies that students actually apply in real situations in the classroom.

The observation sheet contains structured items, such as indicators of reading comprehension difficulties, including limited vocabulary, complex text structures, lack of extensive reading experience, and challenges with different types of texts, as well as signs of cognitive and metacognitive strategy use, for example, students taking important notes, rereading certain parts, and evaluating whether the text has been understood.

The sheet is structured in checklist format, allowing the researcher to mark the presence or absence of each behavior, as well as add brief field notes for further description. It was developed to ensure consistency in recording and to provide objective evidence of students' strategy application, thereby enhancing the validity of the findings.

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E. Data Collection Method

In order to obtain accurate and comprehensive data regarding students' experiences in facing and overcoming reading comprehension difficulties, the researcher employs several complementary data collection techniques. These methods are selected to gather various perspectives from teachers, students, teaching materials, and the actual classroom environment. The researcher employs the following data collection techniques:

1. Semi-structured Interview

Interviews are the main method of data collection in qualitative research, which involves asking participants open-ended questions and recording their responses. In this study, semi-structured interviews will be used to explore the reading comprehension difficulties experienced by students, the strategies they use to overcome them, and teachers' views on these issues and the learning approaches applied in the classroom. The subjects to be interviewed are six 8th-grade students and one English teacher.

All Each interview session will be conducted face-to-face, which helps build rapport, encourages honest responses, and allows the researcher to observe non-verbal cues that may enrich the interpretation of the data. The duration of each interview will last approximately 15 to 25 minutes, adjusted to maintain the participants' focus and comfort while still allowing sufficient time to gather detailed information. Regarding the language used, interviews with students will be conducted in Indonesian to ensure they

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fully understand the questions and can express their ideas clearly without facing language barriers. Meanwhile, interviews with the English teacher will be conducted using a mix of Indonesian and English, as this combination allows the teacher to use specific academic or instructional terms in English while explaining their views more fluently in Indonesian.

Before starting, the researcher will explain the purpose of the study and request written consent to record the conversation. The recordings will be used solely to ensure data accuracy and will facilitate the transcription and analysis process, while maintaining strict confidentiality of all participants' identities. The interview schedule will be arranged according to the most convenient time for the participants, either during school breaks or after learning activities have finished.

2. Observation

The process of gathering information by using one's sense of sight to observe a given scenario is called observation. Since direct observation requires researchers to be physically present in the field or research setting, they conduct observations to gain a firsthand understanding of student behavior, classroom dynamics, and the reading instruction process taking place, as well as to collect data for other qualitative research methods.

Non-participant observation was used in this study because the researcher observed how students encountered difficulties in reading comprehension and how they overcame them, as well as the teacher's role in helping them resolve these issues. According to Creswell, non-

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participant observation is useful for noticing unusual details during the observation.[69] In this case, the researcher simply sat in the back row of the classroom, paying close attention to all activities taking place in the classroom, and took notes to collect data, focusing on students' difficulties in reading comprehension and the strategies they used to overcome them.

The indicators being measured in the checklist are:

a. Student behavior during reading activities
b. Students use cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies to overcome reading comprehension difficulties.

The observation will be conducted on February 11, 2026, and will last for the full duration of the English lesson, which is 80 minutes. During this period, the researcher will systematically record observations using an observation checklist and field notes, documenting specific instances of difficulties encountered and the strategies employed by the students as they occur.

F. Data Analysis

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Data analysis in this study uses a qualitative approach with the thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis is understood as an approach to processing data by finding certain patterns or developing themes from the data collected by researchers.[70] In accordance with this, Maguire and Delahunt explain that the main purpose of thematic analysis is to identify themes that are considered important or

[69] Yusuf, A. Muni. Metode penelitian. 1 st ed. Jakarta: Kencana, 2021

[70] Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (dalam Heriyanto, H.). (2018). *Thematic analysis sebagai metode analisis data untuk penelitian kualitatif*. Jurnal Kualitatif, 1(2), 1–15.

relevant in the data and to utilize these themes to explain research findings or describe a particular issue.[71]

The thematic analysis in this study will refer to research questions related to students' experiences in facing reading comprehension difficulties and the strategies they use to overcome them, which include the types of reading difficulties experienced by students, cognitive strategies, and metacognitive strategies that arise during the reading process. This study employs several stages in its data analysis process.

1. Understanding data

   The first step in conducting thematic analysis is to understand the data that has been obtained. In the context of this study, data was obtained through semi-structured interviews that explored students' experiences in dealing with reading comprehension difficulties and the strategies they used to overcome them. The interview transcripts are a "treasure trove" for researchers because they contain students' direct narratives about vocabulary barriers, text structure, lack of reading experience, and how they use cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The main objective of this data understanding stage is for researchers to recognize the data content in detail and begin to find indications related to the research questions, namely: (1) what difficulties students experience in reading comprehension, and (2) what strategies they use to overcome these difficulties.

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[71] Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). *Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars*. All Ireland Journal of Higher Education, 9(3), 1–14.

2. Coding

The second stage is coding, which is the process of labeling pieces of data that are relevant to the research focus. Coding is done by determining the main idea of each student's statement. In this study, codes were given to parts of the transcript that showed the types of difficulties and strategies used by students, for example, “I often don't know the meaning of certain words.” “I am confused by long sentences.” “I reread the difficult parts.” “I translate them one by one.” Coding can be done in vivo (using the students' original words) or interpretively (taking the implied meaning). After all transcripts were coded, the researchers reviewed all codes to ensure that they were relevant and answered the research questions. Codes with similar meanings were grouped together. For example, “Reading comprehension difficulties” “Students' strategies”. The coding stage was considered complete when all data pieces had been coded and grouped according to similar meanings.

3. Finding Themes

In the next stage, researchers begin to shift from codes to themes. Themes are meaningful patterns that emerge in the data and are directly related to the research question. Researchers review groups of codes to see similarities in meaning, relevance, and connection to student experiences. In this study, several codes related to vocabulary limitations, difficulty understanding sentences, and challenges in reading long texts were combined into initial themes such as Sources of Reading Difficulties.

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Meanwhile, codes related to strategies such as translating, guessing meaning, rereading, and refocusing could form themes such as Cognitive Strategies Used by Students and Metacognitive Approaches to Understanding Text. Themes were determined by looking at recurring patterns throughout the interviews. Initial or tentative themes were re-examined by matching them to the original data to ensure consistency and relevance. The final themes that emerged were a comprehensive picture of the students' experiences, for example, “I often don’t know the meaning of certain words.” “I am confused by long sentences.” “I reread difficult parts.” “I translate one word at a time.” Coding can be done in vivo (using the students’ original words) or interpretively (taking implied meanings). After all transcripts have been coded, the researcher reviews all codes to ensure that they are relevant and answer the research questions. Codes with similar meanings are grouped together. For example: “Reading comprehension difficulties” “Students' strategies” The coding stage is considered complete when all data segments have been coded and grouped according to similar meanings.

4. Reviewing Themes

The phase of reviewing themes in thematic analysis involves a critical and iterative evaluation to ensure that the identified themes align with the data and address the research questions.[72] Researchers assess

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[72] V. Braun, V. Clarke, Using Thematic Analysis In Psychology, Qual. Res. Psychol. 3(2) (@))^) 77-101, https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

internal coherence within each theme and clear distinctions between themes, refine their boundaries, and develop a thematic map to illustrate relationships between elements. Reflexivity is essential to avoid bias and maintain methodological rigor. A key challenge in this stage is determining when to stop refining themes, which can be resolved by using clear criteria such as relevance to research objectives and alignment with the theoretical framework. Themes are not seen as emerging naturally from the data but are actively constructed by the researcher. The final outcome is a set of well-developed, interconnected themes that collectively present a coherent and meaningful account of the data.[73]

G. Validity of Data

In this study, the researcher applies content validity by implementing source triangulation. Source triangulation is chosen to improve the accuracy and trustworthiness of the collected data.

1. Triangulation Technique

Triangulation is a technique for testing the credibility of data by examining data obtained from the same source using different techniques. In this study, triangulation was carried out by combining two data collection methods, namely classroom observation and interviews, to ensure the accuracy and reliability of information related to reading comprehension difficulties and the strategies used by students.

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[73] S.K. Ahmed, Sample size for saturation in qualitative research: Debates, definitions, and strategies, J. Med Surg. Public Heal 5 (2025) 100171, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glmedi.2024.100171.

First, the researcher will collect information through direct observation during English language learning activities in the classroom. Observations will be made to record all aspects related to the students' reading process, such as their behaviour when encountering difficult texts, how they deal with unfamiliar words, and their interactions with teachers and peers during reading activities. After that, the researcher will use semi-structured interview techniques with students and teachers to collect the same information, namely exploring their direct experiences related to the difficulties they face and the steps they take to overcome them.

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CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A. FINDINGS

This study aimed to discuss two main research questions, namely: 1. What challenges do students face in improving their reading comprehension skills? And 2. What reading strategies do students use to overcome reading comprehension difficulties? This chapter aims to answer these questions. The research findings are presented systematically according to their relevance to the research questions. Data were collected through interviews and observations of three low-achieving students, three high-achieving students, and one English teacher. Each participant was willing to take the time to answer every question and participate in the research process. The data presentation is organized to facilitate the analysis and understanding of the research findings.

To assist the researcher in presenting the data, coding was performed for each participant as follows:

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Tabel 4. 1
Participant List

No	Pseudonym	Explanation
1.	MI	Low-achievement student
2.	BA	Low-achievement student
3.	DA	Low-achievement student
4.	KR	High-achieving Student
5.	VN	High-achieving Student
6.	AR	High-achieving Student
7.	SW	English Teacher

1. The Challenges Students Face in Improving Their Reading Comprehension Skills.

Based on the data generated from the first research question, there were four indicators: limited vocabulary, text complicated structure, absence of extensive reading, and various types of texts that challenge comprehension.

a. Limited Vocabulary

Based on interviews with low-achieving students, vocabulary emerged as the most fundamental challenge in reading comprehension. These students often get stuck on unfamiliar words, particularly technical terms, which force them to frequently consult a dictionary and slow down their reading process.

> *"I often have trouble because I don't know the meaning of many words, especially technical terms." (BA)*[74]

> *"I use a dictionary quite often, and sometimes that slows down my reading." (MI)*[75]

These findings indicated that limited vocabulary causes concentration difficulties and frustration for low-achieving students, resulting in a complete halt in text comprehension when key words are unfamiliar.

In contrast, interviews with high-achieving students revealed that vocabulary difficulties are considered trivial. They were rarely distracted by unfamiliar words and preferred to infer meaning from

[74] BA, Interviewed by author, February 10, 2026
[75] MI, Interviewed by author, February 10, 2026

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context or idioms, without frequently consulting a dictionary to maintain the flow of reading.

> *"I don't know the meaning of some words, but I can still understand the context." (VN)*[76]

> *"Not very often. If there are words I don't know, I can usually guess their meaning from the context." (AR)*[77]

In addition, the English teacher confirmed this difference, emphasizing that low-achieving students rely heavily on vocabulary knowledge, while high-achieving students are able to manage with contextual strategies.

> *"For low students, vocabulary is a huge barrier. If they don't know the words, they get stuck immediately. High students also find new words, but they can handle it by guessing from context." (SW)*[78]

The findings from the above interviews were further supported by classroom observations using a checklist, which revealed contrasting behaviors during reading tasks.



Picture 4. 1
Students have difficulty understanding vocabulary

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[76] VN, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026
[77] AR, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026
[78] SW, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026

> "Low-achieving students repeatedly stopped to look up words in a dictionary when encountering unfamiliar terms, showing frustration and significant disruptions in concentration. In contrast, high-achieving students read fluently, only occasionally slowing down to infer context without excessive disruption."[79]

Overall, these interview and observation results demonstrate that vocabulary is the primary barrier for low-achieving students, while high-achieving students effectively overcome it through contextual understanding, as supported by classroom observation data.

b. Text complicated structure

Based on interviews with low-achieving students, difficulty in handling complex sentences emerged as the main challenge, particularly due to long or complicated sentence structures that caused them to lose focus and struggle to grasp the main idea. These students often forgot the subject in the middle of a sentence, disrupting their ability to organize the text.

> *"Yes, long sentences make it hard for me to grasp the main idea. Sometimes in the middle of a sentence, I forget what the subject is." (BA)*[80]

In contrast, interviews with high-achieving students revealed that long sentences with many clauses posed only minor difficulties. They were able to analyze the text by focusing on keywords and connecting words to understand the relationships between sentences.

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[79] Classroom observation, collected by author, February 11, 2026
[80] BA, Interviewed by author, February 10, 2026

High-achieving students stated:

> *"Sometimes it's a bit difficult, but I can still grasp the main idea by focusing on the core of the sentence." (KR)*[81]

The English teacher confirmed this difference, noting that low-performing students almost always get confused by long or complex texts, while high-performing students can follow along, though they may need more time to grasp the details.

> *"Low-performing students almost always get confused when the text is long or complex. High-performing students can follow along, but sometimes need more time to understand the details." (SW)*[82]

The findings from the interviews above are further supported by classroom observations using a checklist, which captured behavioral contrasts during reading tasks.



Picture 4. 2
The students have difficulty understanding long sentences

> "Low-achieving students often show confusion and stop repeatedly while reading long sentences, losing track of the main idea. In contrast, high-achieving students read carefully, marking keywords and connectors to maintain comprehension, even if at a slightly slower pace."[83]

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[81] KR, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026
[82] SW, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026
[83] Classroom observation, collected by author, February 11, 2026

c. Absence of Extensive Reading

Based on interviews with low-achieving students, the lack of a habit of reading English texts outside of school assignments is the main factor undermining their comprehension skills. They are rarely exposed to reading materials, so they feel slower and weaker compared to their peers.

> *"I rarely read English texts outside of textbooks. Because I rarely read, it's harder for me to understand the texts in class." (MI)*[84]

Conversely, interviews with high-achieving students revealed that good reading habits outside of school, such as reading articles, stories, or social media captions, make them more comfortable when encountering texts in class.

> "*Quite often, not only from textbooks but also from articles, stories, or even captions on social media." (AR)*[85]

The English teacher confirmed a strong correlation between reading habits outside the classroom and comprehension skills, emphasizing that low-achieving students have almost no such habits, while high-achieving students frequently engage in them.

> *"Mostly only high-achieving students have the habit of reading outside of class. Low-achieving students have almost none. This lack of exposure makes them much slower and more confused." (SW)*[86]

The findings from the interviews with the three groups of

[84] MI, Interviewed by author, February 10, 2026
[85] AR, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026
[86] SW, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026

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respondents mentioned above are further supported by the results of classroom observations using a checklist, which captured differences in confidence and speed during reading tasks.

> "Low-achieving students appeared hesitant and slow in processing the text, often requiring extra help due to a lack of prior experience. In contrast, high-achieving students demonstrated high confidence, read fluently, and quickly integrated knowledge from outside-class reading."[87]

d. Various Types of Text

Based on interviews with low-achieving students, the level of difficulty varies depending on the type of text, with narrative texts considered easier due to their clear plot, while expository texts such as reports, news articles, and academic essays are the most challenging because of their formal language. They also struggle with authentic texts that use formal language, such as textbooks. A low-achieving student stated:

> *"Narrative texts are easier because they're in the form of a story. Expository texts are harder because the language is formal and serious." (BA)*[88]

Conversely, in interviews with high-achieving students, they also agreed that narrative texts are easier, but were able to recognize the difference in difficulty levels, identifying authentic texts as the most difficult due to their unstructured, natural language.

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[87] Classroom observation, collected by author, February 11, 2026
[88] BA, Interviewed by author, February 10, 2026

"Yes, authentic texts are more challenging because the language is more natural and sometimes not like what we learn in books." (AR)[89]

The English teacher confirmed this difference, explaining that low-achieving students find almost all texts difficult, while high-achieving students can distinguish between them and are more comfortable with narratives, even though they struggle with academic texts.

"Low-achieving students tend to find almost all texts difficult, especially informational ones. High-achieving students know the difference; they are okay with narratives but struggle with expository or report texts." (SW)[90]

The findings from the interviews with the three groups of respondents mentioned above are further supported by classroom observations.



Picture 4. 3
The students have difficulty understanding types of texts

"Low-achieving students showed significant confusion with all types of texts, often losing sight of the overall meaning. In contrast, high-achieving students handled narrative texts with ease but struggled with expository or report texts."[91]

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[89] AR, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026
[90] SW, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026
[91] Classroom observation, collected by author, February 11, 2026

2. The Strategies that Students Use to Overcome Reading Comprehension Difficulties.

The second research question examined the strategies applied by students to solve their reading problems. The findings showed that students used both Cognitive and Metacognitive strategies, with varying effectiveness.

a. Cognitive Reading Strategy

Based on interviews with low-achieving students, the cognitive strategies they use tend to be more basic and dependent, such as rereading difficult passages slowly and repeatedly to understand the text. Although they try to guess the meaning, their primary approach is word-for-word translation, which often results in distorted understanding because they focus on individual words rather than the overall context.

> *"I usually reread the difficult parts slowly to understand them better."(MI)*[92]

In contrast, interviews with high-achieving students revealed that their cognitive strategies were more varied and effective, with guessing the meaning from context being the dominant approach before consulting a dictionary. They also identified the main idea through the topic sentence and reread the text for accuracy and detail.

> *"Yes, I try to guess the meaning based on the context of the sentence before opening the dictionary." (KR)*[93]

[92] MI, Interviewed by author, February 10, 2026
[93] KR, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026

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"I read it over and over again until I can conclude the main idea." (VN)[94]

The English teacher confirmed this difference, noting that low-performing students rely on word-for-word translation, while high-performing students used a variety of strategies such as guessing, rereading, and checking the context first.

"Low students usually translate word by word. High students vary their strategies; they guess, reread, and check context first."(SW)[95]

In addition to the interview results from the seven participants mentioned above, this study is further supported by the classroom observations;



Picture 4. 4
The students use cognitive reading strategies

"Low-achieving students often pause to translate word by word or read slowly and repeatedly, indicating a high degree of dependency. In contrast, high-achieving students quickly infer meaning from context, identify main ideas, and reread strategically for confirmation, resulting in more efficient text processing." [96]

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[94] VN, Interviewed by author, February 10, 2026
[95] SW, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026
[96] Classroom observation, collected by author, February 11, 2026

b. Metacognitive Reading Strategy

Based on interviews with low-achieving students, the used of metacognitive strategies, such as planning, self-monitoring, and evaluation, was inconsistent. They occasionally glanced at the title or illustrations, but often began reading immediately without proper planning, with limited self-monitoring, frequently unaware that they did not understand the text, and engaging in post-reading evaluation only sometimes.

"Sometimes I check if I understand, but not always." (MI)[97]

"Sometimes I evaluate, but not all the time." (DA)[98]

In contrast, interviews with high-achieving students revealed a strong awareness of the use of metacognitive strategies. They engage in previewing, such as looking at the title, subtitles, and images before reading. They practice self-monitoring during reading to check their understanding and conduct a post-reading evaluation by summarizing the content to ensure accuracy.

"Yes, I look at the title, subtitles, or pictures first to get an overview." (KR)[99]

"Yes, I often check myself to see if I still understand the content or not." (AR)[100]

"Yes, I evaluate my understanding. I usually worry about getting the answer wrong, so I always double-check." (VN)[101]

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[97] MI, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026
[98] DA, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026
[99] KR, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026
[100] AR, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026
[101] VN, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026

The English teacher confirmed these key differences, emphasizing that high-achieving students are aware when they do not understand and are able to summarize, while low-achieving students often read without realizing their lack of understanding unless guided.

> *"High students are more aware; they know when they don't understand. Low students sometimes just read without realizing they haven't grasped the meaning. High students can summarize, while low students rarely do that unless guided."(SW)*[102]

The following observations reinforced the findings of the interview above. The observation states that:



Picture 4. 5
The students use metacognitive reading strategies

"Low-achieving students rarely engage in previewing or self-monitoring; they often continue reading even when confused, without self-assessment. In contrast, high-achieving students actively examine the title and illustrations before beginning to read, occasionally pause to check their understanding, and summarize after finishing, resulting in a more focused learning process."[103]

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[102] SW, Interviewed by author, February 11, 2026
[103] Classroom observation, collected by author, February 11, 2026

B. DISCUSSIONS

1. The Challenges Students Face in Improving Their Reading Comprehension Skills.

Based on the research findings, students face four main obstacles to improving their reading comprehension skills: limited vocabulary, complex text structure, lack of extensive reading experience, and various types of texts that challenge comprehension. These obstacles are not only linguistic in nature but also cognitive and experiential, collectively limiting students' ability to understand, interpret, and derive meaning from texts.

Research findings indicated that vocabulary mastery is the most fundamental challenge and a major obstacle, particularly for low-achieving students. The data show that students with limited abilities often get stuck when encountering unfamiliar words, especially technical terms, and rely heavily on dictionaries. This behavior disrupts reading fluency and causes frustration, leading them to fail to grasp the overall meaning of the text. In contrast, high-achieving students view vocabulary difficulties as a minor issue. They have the ability to infer meaning from context or phrases without having to constantly consult a dictionary, thereby maintaining their reading fluency. This finding aligns with the views of Cain and Oakhill, who emphasize that limited vocabulary not only hinders literal comprehension but also reduces students' ability to draw

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conclusions.[104] Furthermore, Peng supports this by stating that vocabulary mastery is closely linked to working memory capacity. Students with limited vocabularies face significant difficulties because their cognitive resources are exhausted simply by translating word for word, rather than processing the meaning.[105] On the other hand, high-achieving students' ability to utilize contextual cues reinforces the findings of Ali et al., who state that strong vocabulary mastery is the most dominant factor distinguishing successful readers from those who struggle.[106]

Furthermore, students also face difficulties stemming from complex text structures and grammatical patterns. Low-achieving students tend to lose focus and forget the subject of the sentence when reading long sentences with many clauses, leading to confusion and an inability to grasp the main idea. Conversely, high-achieving students demonstrate better analytical skills by focusing on keywords and conjunctions to understand the relationships between ideas, although they sometimes require more time to process complex details. This aligns with Westwood's view that long and grammatically complex sentences require a higher level of cognitive processing, which can strain students' working memory.[107] For low-achieving students, such structures overload their working memory,

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[104] Cain, K. & Oakhill, J. V. (1999a). Inference making and its relation to comprehensIOn failure. Reading and Writing. An Interdisciplinary Journal, 11, 489-503.

[105] Peng, X. (2024). Vocabulary knowledge, working memory capacity, and reading comprehension among second language learners.

[106] Ali, A., Gul, N., & Syed, S. U. H. (2022). An Investigation into the Reading Comprehension Problems Faced by the Pakistani Students at University Level. Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research, 5, 134-148.

[107] Westwood, P. (2020). What teachers need to know about reading and writing difficulties.

making it difficult for them to organize information logically. Meanwhile, high-achieving students' ability to navigate these structures indicates that they have developed better syntactic awareness, which allows them to effectively parse the meaning of sentences.

In addition to linguistic factors, students' reading comprehension is also influenced by their limited experience and exposure to reading activities. Research findings clearly showed that low-achieving students rarely engage in reading activities beyond required school assignments. This lack of exposure to reading materials makes them feel slower and less confident compared to their peers. Conversely, high-achieving students actively read a variety of materials such as articles, stories, and social media content, which significantly increases their familiarity with the language. This supports the theory proposed by McNamara and Magliano, who argue that extensive reading helps students become more proficient in applying comprehension strategies.[108] Students with limited practice tend to be able to decode only at the surface level of words, whereas those who enjoy reading develop deeper cognitive abilities. These findings are also consistent with the research by Muliawanti et al., which confirms that consistent reading habits outside the classroom directly contribute to better academic achievement and comprehension.[109]

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[108] McNamara, D. S., & Magliano, J. P. (2009). Toward a comprehensive model of comprehension. In B. H. Ross (Ed.), The psychology of learning and motivation (Vol. 51, pp. 297–384). Elsevier Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0079-7421(09)51009-2

[109] Muliawanti, S. F., Amalian, A. R., Nurasiah, I., Hayati, E., & Taslim, T. (2022). Analisis Kemampuan Membaca Pemahaman Siswa. Jurnal Cakrawala Pendas, 8(3).

Finally, the level of reading difficulty varies greatly depending on the type or genre of text. Both groups of students agreed that narrative texts are easier to understand because they have a clear storyline. However, expository texts and authentic texts are considered far more challenging due to their formal language, dense information, and different organizational patterns. Low-achieving students tend to struggle with nearly all text types, whereas high-achieving students can distinguish between genres and experience greater difficulty specifically with informative or academic texts. This finding is supported by Graesser's view that readers will find it easier to understand a text if they are already familiar with its specific genre and structure.[110] Additionally, Moort explains that authentic and non-fiction materials demand higher cognitive skills because the presentation of information is not as predictable as in simplified instructional materials found in textbooks.[111] Therefore, understanding the structure of various text types is crucial so that students can adapt their reading strategies to meet specific needs.

2. The Strategies that Students Use to Overcome Reading Comprehension Difficulties.

Regarding the strategies used by students, the findings indicated that there were significant differences in the use of cognitive strategies

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[110] Graesser, A. C., McNamara, D. S., & Kulikowich, J. M. (2020). Text comprehension and the role of genre complexity in learning.

[111] Moort, S. (2025). Reading Comprehension in an Online World: Challenges, Opportunities, and Implications for Education. The Reading Teacher, 78(4).

between the two groups. High-achieving students tend to use more effective techniques such as inferring meaning from context, identifying main ideas, and rereading strategically. This aligns with the classification by O'Malley and Chamot, who state that cognitive strategies involve mental processing or direct manipulation of learning material to enhance understanding. They argue that successful learners do not merely memorize but also actively analyze texts.[112] This view is supported by Ali & Amir, whose research demonstrates that inferring from context is one of the most effective strategies that helps students overcome vocabulary limitations without relying too heavily on dictionaries.[113]

In contrast, low-performing students largely rely on basic strategies such as word-for-word translation and repetitive reading without proper comprehension. As observed in the data, this approach often leads to misinterpretations because they focus on individual words rather than the overall context. This aligns with Cohen, who explains that inefficient strategies such as literal translation can hinder comprehension because they ignore syntactic and semantic relationships within the text.[114] Al-Bulushi et al. also indicate that excessive reliance on support strategies such as translation indicates a lower level of reading ability compared to

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[112] O'Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990). Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition. Cambridge University Press.

[113] Ali, S. M., & Amir, R. (2024). Effectiveness of contextual guessing strategy on reading comprehension in Indonesian EFL pre-university students. Journal of English Language Teaching and Literature.

[114] Cohen, A. D. (2014). Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language. Routledge.

those who use problem-solving strategies.[115]

Moreover, these differences become even more apparent in the use of metacognitive strategies. High-achieving students demonstrate strong metacognitive awareness by planning before reading, monitoring their understanding during the process, and evaluating after reading. This aligns with Flavell's concept of metacognition, defined as thinking about thinking. Flavell argues that learners who are aware of their own cognitive processes can control and enhance their learning more effectively.[116] In this context, students who practice previewing and self-monitoring are able to set goals and track their own progress. This perspective is supported by Thu & Vien, whose research findings reveal that metacognitive strategies have a positive and significant impact on students' reading performance.[117]

In contrast, low-achieving students lack this consistency; they often read without a clear plan or self-monitoring, which makes their learning less efficient. They tend to keep reading even when confused, without realizing that they have not yet understood the meaning. This view is supported by Zhao and Liu, who found that students with low metacognitive awareness tend to achieve lower scores because they do not know how to manage their learning process.[118] Additionally, learning

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[115] Al-Bulushi, M. S., Al-Habsi, S., & Al-Mahrooqi, R. (2025). Is there a Relationship between Reading Difficulties and Reading Strategies? International Journal of Language and Linguistics.

[116] Flavell, J. H. (1979). Metacognition and cognitive monitoring. American Psychologist.

[117] Thu, N. T., & Vien, L. T. (2022). The Impact of Metacognitive Strategies on Reading Comprehension Performance of EFL Students. Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Research.

[118] Zhao, H., & Liu, J. (2023). The influence of reading strategies on comprehension performance. Reading Research Quarterly.

activities selected by teachers, such as summarizing and asking questions, greatly help students in applying these strategies. This aligns with Astutik et al., who emphasize the importance of teaching students how to use metacognitive steps to become independent learners.[119]

In conclusion, the ability to use reading strategies effectively is the key differentiator between successful and less successful readers. While high-achieving students apply a combination of cognitive and metacognitive strategies with ease, low-achieving students still struggle with basic approaches and lack consistency. Therefore, English teachers need to explicitly teach these strategies in the classroom, guiding students not only on what to read but also on how to read effectively, so that they can overcome difficulties and improve their comprehension skills independently.

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[119] Astutik, D., Solihati, N., & Mulyati, Y. (2024). Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension in EFL Classrooms. Jurnal Aplikasi Linguistik dan Pengajaran Bahasa.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. CONCLUSION

This study concluded that students faced four main challenges in improving their reading skills: limited vocabulary as the most fundamental barrier for low-achieving students; complex text structures such as long sentences; a lack of extensive reading habits outside of school; and variations in text types, where narrative texts are easier to understand than expository and authentic texts. Low-achieving students are often hindered by their reliance on dictionaries and word-for-word translations, while high-achieving students are able to overcome this through contextual inference.

Furthermore, the strategies students use to overcome reading comprehension difficulties showed differences: high-achieving students employ cognitive strategies such as inferring meaning from context, identifying main ideas, and strategic rereading, as well as metacognitive strategies such as previewing, self-monitoring, and effective evaluation, whereas low-achieving students are limited to basic approaches such as translation and repetitive reading without self-monitoring.

Although this study provides valuable insights, it has certain limitations. Since the study was conducted with a relatively small number of participants from a single school, the results may not be fully generalizable to all contexts or larger populations. Additionally, data collection focused on specific aspects of reading comprehension. Future studies are recommended to

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involve a larger number of participants and explore other variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

B. SUGGESTION

Based on the conclusions of this study, the researcher provides the following suggestions:

English teachers are advised to explicitly integrate the teaching of cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies, such as exercises in inferring meaning from context, previewing texts through titles, subtitles, and images, and self-monitoring through techniques like summarizing and asking questions. Additionally, teachers can encourage extensive reading habits through reading clubs or independent reading assignments based on diverse genres, while providing support such as glossaries to build the vocabulary of low-achieving students. This approach will help reduce reliance on word-for-word translation and improve overall comprehension.

For students, particularly those with lower academic performance, are encouraged to develop the habit of reading extensively outside of class such as reading simple articles, short stories, or social media captions in English to expand their vocabulary and exposure to text structures. Students also need to practice independent strategies such as guessing the meaning from context before consulting a dictionary, strategically rereading for main ideas, and conducting self-assessment after reading by summarizing the text's content. With this consistency, students can transform challenges, such as complex structures and diverse text types into opportunities for developing reading

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comprehension skills.

For future researchers, it is recommended to expand the study with a larger and more diverse sample for example, from various grade levels or cultural backgrounds and to use a mixed-methods approach that combines standardized reading comprehension tests with qualitative data. Further research could also explore specific interventions, such as semester-long training programs in cognitive or metacognitive strategies, to measure long-term impacts on EFL students. This would enrich our understanding of contextual factors, such as the influence of reading apps on reading challenges and strategies.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Declarations of Authenticity

STATEMENTS OF AUTHENTICITY

This undersigned below:

Name : Avita Zahira Kamila

SRN : 212101060039

Major : English Education Program

Faculty : Faculty of Education Teacher Training

Institution : State Islamic University of Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember

Stated that the thesis entitled "JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN OVERCOMING THEIR ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES" is truly my original work. It does not incorporate any material previously written by another person except those indicated in quotation and references Do the fact; I am only person who is responsible for the thesis if there is any objection or claim from other.

Jember, 29 May 2026
Author



Avita Zahira Kamila
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Appendix 2: Matrix of The Research

MATRIX

Title	Variable	Indicator	Data source	Research method	Research question
Junior high school students' experiences in overcoming their English reading comprehension difficulties	1. Student's strategies 2. Reading comprehension difficulties	a. Students' strategies on reading comprehension: 1. Cognitive strategies 2. Metacognitive strategies b. Reading comprehension difficulties: 1. Vocabulary 2. Text complicated structure 3. Absence of extensive reading. 4. Type of text	1. Interview a. One English Teacher and 6 students from 8 grade of Raudlatul Hasaniyah junior high school 2. Observation	1. Qualitative approach 2. Research Design: a. Descriptive qualitative 3. Data collection method: a. Interview b. Observation c. Documentation 4. Data Analysis Method: a. Thematic analysis 5. Validity of data (Triangulation) a. Method Triangulation technique	1. What challenges do students face in improving their reading comprehension skills? 2. What strategies do students use to overcome reading comprehension difficulties?

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Appendix 3: Blueprint of Interview

Blueprint of Interview

A. Semi-Structured Interview

- For students

No	Research Questions	Indicators	Questions
	What challenges do students face in improving their reading comprehension skills?	1. limited vocabulary	When reading English texts, do you often encounter difficulties because you don't know the meaning of certain words?
			How often do you need to use a dictionary while reading, and does this slow down your understanding?
			Are there specific types of words (idioms) that you find hardest to understand?
		2. complex text structure	Do you find it difficult when you encounter texts with complex sentence or paragraph structures?
			Do long sentences with many clauses make it hard for you to follow the main idea?
			How do you handle texts that jump between ideas or use unfamiliar organizational patterns?
		3. lack of extensive reading experience	How often do you read English texts outside of your textbooks?
			Does a lack of time or opportunity to read make it more difficult for you to understand texts in class?
			Compared to your friends who read more, do you feel your reading comprehension is weaker?
		4. various types of texts that challenge comprehension	What types of English texts do you find most difficult to understand?

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			Are narrative texts easier or harder than expository texts (like essays or reports) for you?
			Do you struggle more with authentic texts (real-world materials) compared to textbook exercises?
	What reading strategies do students use to overcome reading comprehension difficulties?	5. Cognitive Strategies	When you encounter an unfamiliar word, do you try to guess its meaning based on the context of the sentence or paragraph?
			How do you find the main idea in a text or paragraph?
			If you do not understand a certain part of the text, do you reread it?
		6. Metacognitive Strategies	Before you start reading a text, do you usually read the title, subtitles, or look at the pictures to plan what you are going to learn?
			While reading, do you often check yourself to see if you understand the content of the text you are reading?
			What do you do if you feel you don't understand?
			After you finish reading, do you evaluate yourself on how well you understand the text?

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- For English Teacher

No	Research Questions	Indicators	Questions
1.	What challenges do students face in improving their reading	1. limited vocabulary,	What reading comprehension difficulties do you most often encounter in 8th-grade students?
			Is limited vocabulary a major problem for them?

	comprehension skills?		How does students' limited vocabulary affect their overall reading comprehension performance?
		2. complex text structure	Do students have difficulty with complex text structures, such as texts with unusual information organization or long and complex sentences?
			How often do you see students getting confused by paragraph organization or sentence complexity?
			What strategies do students lack when facing complex text structures?
		3. lack of extensive reading experience	Based on your observations, how many students have the habit of reading English texts outside of classroom learning activities?
			Does lack of reading practice outside class affect students' comprehension in classroom activities? How do you know?
			Which students struggle most due to limited reading exposure, and why? Low motivation? No access?
		4. various types of texts that challenge comprehension	What types of English texts are the most difficult for students to understand? Narrative, descriptive, procedural?
			Are there differences in difficulty levels between different types of texts?
			Do authentic texts (newspapers, websites) pose more challenges than textbook texts? Specific examples?
2.	What reading strategies do students use to overcome reading	5. Cognitive Strategies	What strategies do you often see students use when encountering unfamiliar words? For example, guessing the meaning based on context or using a dictionary.

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	comprehension difficulties?		Are students able to identify the main ideas in a text?
			When they do not understand the text, do students usually reread it?
			What is the typical sequence of strategies students use when encountering a difficult text? (For example: infer from context - consult a dictionary - reread?)
			Do students combine multiple cognitive strategies at the same time, and how do they manage them? (underline + summarize)
		6. Metacognitive Strategies	Do students have a habit of planning their reading before they start?
			Are students able to monitor their own comprehension while reading?
			After reading, do students evaluate their comprehension, such as by summarizing or explaining the content of the text to their friends?
			Do you provide guidance to students on the use of reading learning strategies?

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Appendix 4 : Blueprint of Observation Checklist

Observation Checklist

Research questions	Indicator	Example	Answer		Notes
			Yes	No	
What challenges do students face in improving their reading comprehension skills?	Student behavior during reading activities • Limited vocabulary • Complex text structures • Lack of extensive reading experience • Challenges with different types of texts	The students have difficulty understanding some vocabulary during reading comprehension. Students struggle to comprehend texts with many clauses or passive voices, making them overwhelmed. Students read slowly and miss connections between ideas due to a lack of regular practice. Students have difficulty distinguishin			

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		g between genres such as poetry, short stories, or essays.			
What reading strategies do students use to overcome reading comprehension difficulties?	**Cognitive Strategies** • Identifying main ideas and supporting details	Student underlines the topic sentence and circles key supporting details			
	• Using context clues to infer word meanings	Student guesses the unknown word's meaning from surrounding sentences			
	• Summarizing paragraphs in own words	Student writes 1-2 sentence summary after each paragraph.			
	• Visualizing or creating mental images	The student describes a mental picture of a story scene verbally			
	Metacognitive Strategies • self-checking understanding	Student pauses, says "I don't understand this part," and re-reads			

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	• previewing text	Student skims headings/images first, predicts content			

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Appendix 5 : Field Note Observation

Observasion
Date : 10 February 2026
Class : VIII

The researcher arrived at the school and observed the eighth-grade class at 7:30 a.m., as scheduled and agreed upon with the teacher. In the classroom, the researcher sat at the back of the room and recorded the students' activities during the narrative text reading task using an observation checklist. The teacher began the lesson with a prayer and roll call, then explained the learning objectives: to understand the content of the narrative text and to identify the orientation, complication, and resolution. The teacher distributed the narrative text titled "The Legend of Malin Kundang" to the students and asked them to read it individually for 10 minutes.

During the reading process, three low-achieving students (MI, BA, DA) frequently paused to consult a dictionary when encountering difficult words such as "cursed" or "turned into stone," showed signs of losing concentration, and read slowly, particularly in the "complication" section with its complex sentence structures and lengthy dialogues. They appeared confused when trying to identify the plot and repeatedly needed the teacher's assistance. In contrast, three high-achieving students (KR, VN, AR) read fluently, slowing down only occasionally to infer meaning from context, for example, linking the word "disobedient" to a child's disrespectful attitude toward their mother, marking keywords like "once upon a time" and "moral of the story," and summarizing the resolution quickly without significant disruption. The teacher used a mix of English and Indonesian for explanations, and students generally responded in simple English.

After reading, the teacher distributed comprehension questions such as "What is the complication?" and "What lesson can we learn?", and asked students to discuss their answers in small groups. Low-achieving students struggled to summarize the plot and often misinterpreted the moral lesson, while high-achieving students actively shared their inferences and self-evaluations, such as "I'll double-

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check to make sure I got the complication right." The teacher provided feedback and assigned homework to find other examples of narrative texts, such as local legends. The lesson concluded with a summary of the material by one of the students and closing remarks. This observation confirmed differences in reading behavior among student groups, particularly in dealing with difficult vocabulary, complex narrative structures, and the story comprehension strategies they employed.

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Appendix 6: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

A. Personal Identity

Name :

Class :

I hereby declare my willingness to participate as respondent in this study, and affirm that the data I provide is acccurate and thruthful information regarding myself.

Probolinggo, ……. 2026

( )

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Appendix 7: Hasil Analisis Data

HASIL ANALISIS DATA

No	Understanding Data	Coding	Finding Themes	Reviewing Themes
1	**a.** Low achievers: often face obstacles and rely heavily on dictionaries **b.** High achievers: can guess word meanings; less disturbed by unfamiliar terms **c.** Teacher: notes differences in challenges between student groups	Difficulties in understanding vocabulary, idioms, and their impact on reading comprehension	Reading Comprehension Difficulties (Limited vocabulary)	Directly addresses the research question concerning what causes reading difficulties
2	**a.** Low achievers: easily confused; struggle to identify main ideas. **b.** High achievers: find narrative texts easier; face	Difficulties with long sentences, complex structures, and different text types	Reading Comprehension Difficulties (complex structures and different text types)	Highlights to the characteristics and structure of texts

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	more challenges with expository and authentic texts			
3	**a.** High achievers: read frequently and are more familiar with English texts **b.** Low achievers: rarely read outside class; comprehension develops more slowly **c.** Teacher: confirms reading exposure directly affects reading ability	Reading habits outside the classroom and their influence on comprehension	Reading Comprehension Difficulties (absence of extensive reading)	Reading Habits and Language Exposure
4	**a.** Low achievers: translate word-for-word, rely on re-reading **b.** High achievers: guess	Guessing meaning from context, identifying main ideas, and re-reading, using dictionaries,	Use of Cognitive Strategies	The differences in strategy use between student groups

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	meanings from context, identify main ideas, use titles/headings			
5	**a.** High achievers: aware when they do not understand; able to summarize content **b.** Low achievers: less aware of comprehension gaps; require guidance **c.** Teacher: notes differences in how quickly students adopt and apply strategies	Monitoring comprehension during reading, evaluating understanding after reading, and previewing/planning before reading	Use of Metacognitive Strategies	Describes how students manage and control their reading process

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Appendix 8: Research Permission Letter

KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI KIAI HAJI ACHMAD SIDDIQ JEMBER
FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN ILMU KEGURUAN
Jl. Mataram No. 01 Mangli. Telp.(0331) 428104 Fax. (0331) 427005 Kode Pos: 68136
Website:www.http://ftik.uinkhas-jember.ac.id Email: tarbiyah.iainjember@gmail.com

Nomor : B-16628/In.20/3.a/PP.009/04/2026
Sifat : Biasa
Perihal : **Permohonan Ijin Penelitian**

Yth. Kepala MTS Raudlatul Hasaniyah
Jl. Gondosuli, RT01 RW01, Dusun Krajan, Sambirampak Kidul, Kec. Kotaanyar, Kab. Probolir

Dalam rangka menyelesaikan tugas Skripsi pada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan, maka mohon diijinkan mahasiswa berikut :

NIM	:	212101060039
Nama	:	AVITA ZAHIRA KAMILA
Semester	:	Semester sepuluh
Program Studi	:	TADRIS BAHASA INGGRIS

untuk mengadakan Penelitian/Riset mengenai "ANALYSING JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS EXPERIENCES IN OVERCOMING THEIR ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES" selama 2 (dua) hari di lingkungan lembaga wewenang Bapak/Ibu Istiqamatuzzahrah,S.Pd

Demikian atas perkenan dan kerjasamanya disampaikan terima kasih.

Jember, 30 April 2026
an. Dekan,
Wakil Dekan Bidang Akademik,

KHOTIBUL UMAM

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Appendix 9: Research Finishing Letter

YAYASAN PENDIDIKAN RAUDLATUL HASANIYAH
MTS RAUDLATUL HASANIYAH
Jl. Gondosuli, Desa Sambirampak Kidul, Kec. Kotaanyar, Kab. Probolinggo, Jawa Timur.

SURAT KETERANGAN PENELITIAN
Nomor: 160/Mts.10.14.01/02/2026

Yang bertanda tangan dibawah ini:

Nama : Istiqamatuzzahrah,S.Pd.
Jabatan : Kepala Sekolah.
Unit Kerja : MTS Raudlatul Hasaniyah

Dengan ini menerangkan bahwa :

Nama : Avita Zahira Kamila
NIM : 212101060039
Prodi : Tadris Bahasa Inggris.

Benar benar telah selesai melakukan penelitian di Yayasan MTS RAUDLATUL HASANIYAH Kab. Probolinggo dengan judul "ANALYSING JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN OVERCOMING THEIR ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES"
Demikian surat keterangan ini dibuat dengan sesungguhnya dan sebenar-benarnya untuk dapat dipergunakan sebagaimana mestinya.

Probolinggo, 20 Februari 2026
Kepala Sekolah

(Istiqamatuzzahrah,S.Pd.)

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Appendix 10: Journal of Research Activities

JURNAL KEGIATAN PENELITIAN

Nama peneliti : Avita Zahira Kamila

Judul penelitian : Junior High School Students' Experiences in Overcoming Their English Reading Comprehension Difficulties

Lokasi Penelitian : MTS Raudlatul Hasaniyah

No	Hari/Tanggal	Jenis Kegiatan	TTD
1	07 Febuari 2026	Permohonan Izin Penelitian Kepada Kepala Sekolah.	
2	10 Febuari 2026	Observasi dan Interview Low Students	
3	11 Febuari 2026	Interview High Students dan English Teacher.	
4	20 Febuari 2026	Permohonan Surat Selesai Penelitian	

Kotaanyar, 20 Febuari 2026

Mengetahui

Kepala Sekolah

(Istiqammatuzzahrah,S.Pd)

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Appendix 11: Documentation









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Appendix 12: Curriculum Vitae

Curriculum Vitae



1. Personal Information
    1. Name : Avita Zahira Kamila
    2. SRN : 212101060039
    3. Place date of birt : 3 June 2003
    4. Gender : Female
    5. Addres : Sambirampak Kidul-Kotaanyar-Probolinggo
    6. Faculty : Education and Teacher Training
    7. Major : English Education Program
    8. E-mail : Avitazahira8@gmail.com

1. Education Background
    a. Elementary school : MI Raudlatul Hasaniyah
    b. Junior High School : MTS Darullughah Wal Karomah
    c. Senior High School : MAN 1 Probolinggo

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