

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that underpins students' academic success and lifelong learning, especially at the senior high school level where students are expected to engage with increasingly complex texts and ideas. According to Snowling and Hulme (2021), reading involves not only decoding words but also attributing meaning to text, which requires the integration of cognitive, linguistic, and emotional skills. As students' progress through their education, the ability to comprehend reading materials becomes essential for building vocabulary, developing critical thinking, and enhancing problem-solving abilities, all of which are necessary for academic achievement and professional growth.

Despite the recognized importance of reading comprehension, Indonesian students, particularly at the high school level, continue to face significant challenges in mastering this skill. National and international assessments have consistently shown that Indonesian students' reading proficiency remains below the global average, with many struggling to understand main ideas, make inferences, and interpret detailed information in English texts. Research by Kurniawan (2020) highlights that students' difficulties in reading comprehension stem from both internal and external factors, such as limited vocabulary, lack of motivation, insufficient language knowledge, and the influence of the first language. Similarly, Bucay et al. (2022) emphasize that without effective reading

strategies, students are disadvantaged when confronted with complex texts, hindering their ability to extract meaning and engage deeply with the content.

At the classroom level, specific difficulties encountered by students include challenges in understanding grammatical complexity, limited vocabulary, unfamiliarity with reading strategies, and low concentration during reading activities. For example, a qualitative study by Martini et al. (2025) found that students often struggle with understanding the meaning of words, long sentences, main ideas, and making inferences, all of which are critical components of reading comprehension. These findings are echoed in studies conducted in various Indonesian schools, where students' lack of exposure to English texts and limited practice outside the classroom further exacerbate their difficulties.

Based on classroom observations conducted during a two month teaching practicum (PPL) at SMA Negeri 11 Kota Jambi, the researcher found that many eleventh-grade students exhibited low levels of reading comprehension. The students frequently relied solely on translating individual words rather than grasping the overall meaning of the text. They also demonstrated limited vocabulary and struggled with complex grammatical structures, which often led to confusion and disengagement during reading activities. These classroom observations align with the findings of Susanti (2018), who reported that students' confusion with grammar and unfamiliar vocabulary significantly hindered their reading comprehension. Moreover, the lack of effective reading strategies, such as skimming and scanning, further limited students' ability to process and understand texts efficiently.

The challenges identified at SMA Negeri 11 Kota Jambi reflect broader trends observed in Indonesian secondary schools, where students' reading comprehension is hampered by a combination of linguistic, cognitive, and motivational factors. Addressing these issues is crucial for improving students' academic outcomes and preparing them for future educational and professional demands. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the specific difficulties faced by eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 11 Kota Jambi in comprehending English reading texts, with the goal of providing insights and recommendations for enhancing reading instruction and support.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

1. Many eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 11 Kota Jambi have difficulty understanding the main ideas and details in English reading texts
2. Students frequently encounter challenges with limited vocabulary and complex grammatical structures, which hinder their ability to interpret and analyze reading materials effectively.
3. Students experience difficulties in making inferences from English reading texts, especially when the information is implicitly stated.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

The researcher only focuses on analyzing students' difficulties in comprehending English reading texts based on four comprehension aspects: determining main idea, understanding vocabulary, making inference, and detail information among eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 11 Kota Jambi.

1.4 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background and identification of problems outlined above, this research addresses the following research question: "What are the students' difficulties in comprehending reading text at eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 11 Kota Jambi?"

1.5 Objective of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the objective of this research is: To analyze the students' difficulties in comprehending reading text at eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 11 Kota Jambi.

1.6 Significance of the Research

The significances of this study are as follows:

1. Theoretical Significance

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge in English language teaching and learning, particularly in the area of reading comprehension difficulties among Indonesian senior high school students. The findings will provide empirical evidence to support and expand current theories about reading comprehension challenges faced by learners. Additionally, this study will add to the literature on reading comprehension analysis in the Indonesian educational context, offering insights that can be used by future researchers to conduct similar investigations in different settings. The research will also contribute to understanding the specific patterns of reading difficulties among eleventh-grade students, which can inform theoretical frameworks for reading comprehension instruction in Indonesian secondary schools.

2. Practical Significance

- a. For Teachers: The findings will provide English teachers with valuable insights into common reading comprehension difficulties faced by their students, allowing them to design more effective teaching strategies and interventions. Teachers can use this information to adapt their instructional methods and provide more targeted support to help students overcome specific reading challenges.
- b. For Students: This research will help eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 11 Kota Jambi identify and understand their specific difficulties in reading comprehension, enabling them to develop better awareness of their learning challenges and work toward improving their reading skills with more targeted strategies.
- c. For Future Researchers: This study will serve as a reference and foundation for other researchers interested in investigating reading comprehension difficulties in similar educational contexts, providing a framework for conducting comparable studies in different schools or regions.
- d. For School Administration: The research results will assist the school administration at SMA Negeri 11 Kota Jambi in making informed decisions about curriculum development, teacher training programs, and resource allocation to better support reading comprehension instruction and improve overall English language learning outcomes.

1.7 Definition of the Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation in this research, the researcher provides definitions of the key terms used in this study as follows:

1. Students' Difficulties

Students' difficulties in this research refer to the incorrect responses or errors made by eleventh-grade students when answering reading comprehension questions in English reading texts, particularly in determining main idea, understanding vocabulary, making inference, and detail information.

2. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension in this research refers to students' ability to answer questions related to the content of English reading texts correctly, as measured through a reading comprehension test focusing on main ideas, detailed information, inference, and vocabulary

3. Reading Text

Reading text refers to English descriptive texts used as the material in the reading comprehension test administered to eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 11 Kota Jambi.