

An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Understanding English Reading Comprehension on Narrative Text for Eighth Grade at SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang

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Abstract

This study examines the challenges faced by eighth-grade students at SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang in comprehending English narrative texts, a crucial component of reading comprehension. The research addresses two main questions: what specific difficulties students face, and what factors contribute to these challenges. Using a descriptive qualitative method, the study involved 23 students through tests and questionnaires. The tests consisted of multiple-choice, short-answer, and true/false questions, while the questionnaire gathered students' perceptions of their reading difficulties. The findings reveal that students struggle with four key aspects of reading comprehension: identifying main ideas, understanding vocabulary, making inferences, and recognizing detailed information. The most significant challenge was answering short-answer questions, which indicated a gap in understanding detailed content and vocabulary. Additionally, the study identified three primary factors contributing to these difficulties: the students' backgrounds, including low motivation and fear of English; teaching techniques that were not well-aligned with students' needs; and unsupportive learning environments. These findings highlight the need for improved teaching strategies and supportive environments to enhance students' reading comprehension skills.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication organized in the form of units, such as words, groups of words, clauses, and sentences that are expressed both orally and in writing. (Wiratno & Santosa, 2014) Language is defined as a tool of communication among members of society in the form of sound symbols produced by human speech organs. (Noermanzah, 2017) explain that language is a message conveyed through expression as a means of communication in specific situations during various activities. It means that communication is the transmission of information and ideas from one person to another. Through language, humans can share ideas, thoughts, experiences, and emotions in both spoken and written forms. Without language, it would be difficult for people to connect, form relationships, exchange information, and participate in various social interactions and academic or professional settings.

Since Indonesia gained independence, English has been incorporated into the national education curriculum. This policy is well-founded, aiming to enhance the quality of human resources and address the fact that many academic resources are available only in English. The goal behind this

emphasis on English language education is to equip learners with the skills necessary for both spoken and written communication. As stated by Ratmaningsih & Anggraini (2019), the objective of English language learning in Indonesia is to enable learners to effectively communicate with native speakers. Additionally, English functions as a second language in many countries, acting as a bridge for communication in trade and education. Mastery of English is essential, as it serves as an international language that facilitates interactions among people from diverse linguistic backgrounds. English proficiency, therefore, becomes a fundamental requirement for students who aim to compete globally, access higher education resources, and actively engage in international communication, both academically and professionally.

The four fundamental language skills are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Damanik, (2022) Listening and reading are categorized as receptive skills, as they involve understanding and interpreting language rather than producing it. Learners engage with these skills by receiving information, which is why they are sometimes referred to as passive skills. (Masduqi, 2016) This research focuses specifically on reading skills, which are crucial as receptive skills. Reading is not merely a passive activity, but it involves active engagement with the text, where the reader attempts to decode and understand the meaning conveyed by the writer. Reading comprehension, therefore, is a fundamental aspect of language learning and plays a significant role in shaping students' academic achievements.

Reading is one of the four essential language skills. It involves the process of comprehending the meaning of written texts. This skill is cognitive in nature and reflects an individual's ability to extract knowledge and understanding from written material. (Nispa et al., 2023) Thus, reading is a process through which students obtain information, ideas, knowledge, and facts from texts, all of which are necessary for academic success. However, not all students excel in text comprehension; some may read well but struggle to grasp the meaning and purpose behind the text. Understanding texts is especially challenging for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students since English is not their first language (Mayaneta et al., 2024). These challenges often stem from issues like limited vocabulary, which makes it hard for students to understand unfamiliar words in written texts. (Alimin et al., 2023) Reading is an essential activity aimed at uncovering various pieces of information and developing comprehension. Strong reading skills are crucial for students, not only during their time as learners but also for their future success. Currently, mastering reading is especially important, as it supports the development of other language abilities. (Masrurroh, 2022) Therefore, effective reading comprehension instruction is essential for students, as it helps them to decode written material more efficiently and accurately.

As stated by Kasim and Raisha in (Rianti et al., 2023), reading comprehension involves understanding written texts by connecting the content with the reader's existing knowledge, allowing them to gain information from the text. So, the readers must be able to interpret, understand, and select actual information from the text. Moreover, understanding the writer's message successfully can indirectly create a transformative impact for the readers (Syukriyah & Hidayah, 2024). This shows that reading is not only about recognizing written symbols, but also about making connections, drawing inferences, and reflecting on the content to extract meaningful messages.

Students in junior high school are expected to learn various text types, including descriptive, recount, narrative, and procedural texts. In Indonesia, the goal of teaching reading at the junior high school level is to equip students with knowledge about different text structures, enabling them to understand both explicit and implicit meanings while identifying key information. A crucial aspect of reading instruction is helping students comprehend and interpret narrative texts, especially in identifying the moral values conveyed within them. Understanding the moral lessons and underlying messages in narrative texts allows students to connect with the stories more deeply and reflect on real-life applications of the values presented.

narrative text is a fictional story created to amuse or entertain readers or listeners. The term "narrative" generally refers to: (1) a spoken or written account of related events; (2) the narrative portion of a literary work, distinct from the dialogue; and (3) the skill or craft of telling stories. To sum up, narrative text presents a story, either in written or spoken form, that consists of a sequence of events linked to one another. (Sarwani, 2015) Narratives typically involve events that unfold in chronological order and are conveyed through various media. (A.S. Hornby, 1995) further defines According to Monika in (Sri Mardhani et al., 2022) a narrative text is a type of text that presents an imaginative or fictional story with the purpose of entertaining the reader. From that statement, it is concluded that narrative text is a fantasy story or myth, not a fact, that has the purpose to amuse the readers.

There are two essential things in reading narrative text: identifying moral value and main idea. As (Carrasquillo, 2004, p.74) states, an important factor in constructing meaning is identifying the essential information of the text. It means that to know the meaning of a narrative text, students should understand the specific information. This is why moral value is significant in reading texts because narrative texts always present moral values for students so that they can gain new experiences and knowledge in life. Developing the ability to identify these components allows students to extract deeper meanings from the text and become more critical and reflective readers.

Based on the problems, the researcher wants to know deeply about students' difficulties in understanding English reading on narrative texts faced by the eighth graders of SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang. Narrative text will be selected as the text to analyze students' difficulties because the text is in accordance with the basic competencies in the eighth-grade curriculum for the second semester. Another reason is that narrative text relates to the process of the occurrence of phenomena that exist in the past. So, it is very important for students to understand the text.

Many students struggle with reading comprehension. Reading comprehension difficulties can be reduced or even overcome when readers apply appropriate reading strategies. Based on research findings, students use three main strategies to understand texts: predicting word meanings, using dictionaries and contextual clues, and applying skimming and scanning techniques. All students attempt to grasp the content by inferring word meanings. These findings align with the results of a study conducted by (Lenchuk, 2020).

The researcher takes SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang as the object of research because SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang is one of the schools that use the Merdeka curriculum in their studies. There are some aspects to pay attention to about teaching English in SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang, especially about the teaching of reading. The considerable challenges identified are students' disinterest and difficulty in understanding English narrative texts. Initial observations and feedback from the school's English teachers indicate that many students face difficulties in grasping the structure, plot, and moral values within these texts. This issue is further intensified by a general lack of interest in reading, which adversely affects the overall learning process.

The researcher conducts this research based on previous studies from several journals. The first research is conducted by (Adauwiyah et al., 2023) titled "An Analysis of Students' Difficulty in Understanding English Reading on Descriptive Text," which aims to identify students' challenges in comprehending descriptive texts among eighth-grade students at MTS Al-Jihad. This descriptive qualitative study utilized tests and questionnaires to gather data from a sample of 33 students. The second research, authored by (Fauzia et al., 2023), is titled "An Analysis on Students' Reading Comprehension Difficulties in Narrative Text at SMA Muhammadiyah Bangkinang." This research investigates the specific challenges students face with reading comprehension in narrative texts, including difficulties in identifying details, translating unfamiliar words, finding main ideas, and making inferences. A qualitative research design was employed, focusing on tenth-grade students from SMA Muhammadiyah Bangkinang.

The last research was from (Syukriyah, 2024) , entitled *An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Comprehending Recount Text of the Tenth Graders of MA Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang*. By utilizing ten types of reading tests for 26 tenth graders, she found out that the level of students' difficulties in understanding reading Recount Text were belong to "Fair" category. The finding also revealed that the most difficult test faced by the students in reading recount text was "Free Recall Test".

While these previous studies analyze students' difficulties in understanding different text types, this research differs in its focus on narrative texts and its targeted population of eighth graders at SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang. The research will employ tests and questionnaires to identify the specific challenges faced by students in comprehending narrative texts. Therefore, the researcher has chosen the title "An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Understanding English Reading Comprehension on Narrative Text for Eighth Grade at SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang."

METHOD

This research used descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative research is a method used to gain an understanding of social phenomena or human behavior from various perspectives. This type of research aims to describe, analyze, and explore the meanings embedded within social, cultural, and individual contexts. Abdussamad in (Adil et al, 2023,p.145) According to (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) Qualitative research is a method used to explore and understand the meanings that individuals or groups assign to a social or human issue. This approach involves developing questions and procedures as the study progresses, with data typically gathered in the natural setting of the participants. The analysis is conducted inductively, identifying patterns and themes from specific details, and the researcher interprets the significance of the data. The resulting report is often structured flexibly. Researchers who use this approach value an inductive process, emphasize individual perspectives, and aim to capture the complexity of the situation. From the above understanding, the use of qualitative descriptive design was a suitable method to analyze students' difficulties in understanding narrative text of the eighth grade of SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang in academic year 2024-2025.

The research was conducted at eighth grade students of SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang in academic year 2024-2025. It was located at Melirang Street No.29 Bungah, Gresik. This research focused on the eighth graders. A participant referred to someone who participated in or became involved in a specific activity or event. To gather data, the researcher followed several steps and utilized various instruments with the participants of the study. The participants of this research included the population and sample of eighth-grade students at SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang.

A population refers to all elements involved in a study, consisting of both objects and subjects that share defined traits and characteristics.(Asrulla et al., 2023) The researcher determined the population that included the entire target. The population of this research was conducted on the eighth grade in SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang. According to (Djamba & Neuman, 2002) a small set of cases a researcher selected from a large pool and generalized to the population. That meant the sample was taken from the population. The researcher chose class 8 as a sample because grade 8 was at an important stage in their literacy development. At this age, reading comprehension skills, especially narrative texts, were instrumental in shaping their interest and reading habits. The class consisted of 24 students, consisting of fifteen males and nine females. In the process of collecting the data, the researcher used test and questionnaire as the data collection techniques.

According to (Adom,2020) Tests are important for checking how well students understand the material and how effective the teaching is. They help to see if students have learned the knowledge and skills they were supposed to. Nasrudin in (Melindawati, 2023) stated that the test technique was a data collection technique that was carried out by giving a series of questions or tasks and other tools

to the subject whose data was needed. The test used by researchers was by giving 20 questions that had to be done by students, including 10 multiple choice questions, 5 short answer questions, and 5 true or false questions. According to (Sugiyono, 2021) , a questionnaire was a tool used to gather information about the feelings, beliefs, experiences, perceptions, or attitudes of a group of individuals. As a data collecting instrument, it could be structured or unstructured. The researcher chose student's answer from questionnaire as the main instrument to collect the data because the questionnaire could be the representative for the research to collect the data fast. This questionnaire was addressed to grade 8 students at SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang to find out the perceptions of respondents (students) about difficulties in reading comprehension of narrative text.

RESULT

The researcher conducted the research for two weeks from February 4 to February 10, 2025 by giving test and distributing the questionnaire using paper in the classroom. The test was given to know the students' difficulties in comprehending narrative text. The researcher gave three types of reading tests at different times. Those are Multiple-choice test, short answer test and true or false test. It required 20 minutes to administer each test. The reading test consisted of 10 items for multiple choice questions, 5 questions in short-answer test, researcher calculated the score and analyzed the result of each test as described below.

Finding from Test

The first instrument was test. The researcher gave three types of tests based on an interview with an English teacher in the eighth graders related to reading comprehension. The data was taken from 24 students in 8 at SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang. Initially, there were 24 students registered in the class. However, one student dropped out during the data collection process, leaving a total of 23 students who participated in the research.

In this research, reading test was used to evaluate students' reading comprehension and how the result of the scores that they comprehend. The English teacher made 72 as minimum standard (KKM) in English lesson especially in reading.

Multiple Choice Test

Multiple-choice is a common test type in reading comprehension, allowing examiners to control answers through options (a, b, c, d) (Brown, 2004:194). On February 4, 2025, eighth graders of SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang took a multiple-choice test based on the narrative text "Banyuwangi," consisting of 10 questions. Many students struggled with detailed information. While most questions had high correct response rates (e.g., questions 1, 2, and 6 had 91%–96% correct answers), others revealed difficulties—question 5 had only 26% correct answers. Several questions showed 17%–39% of students answered incorrectly. These results indicate varying levels of understanding and highlight challenges in comprehending specific details within narrative texts. Further breakdown is shown in the diagram below. More details can be seen from the diagram below:

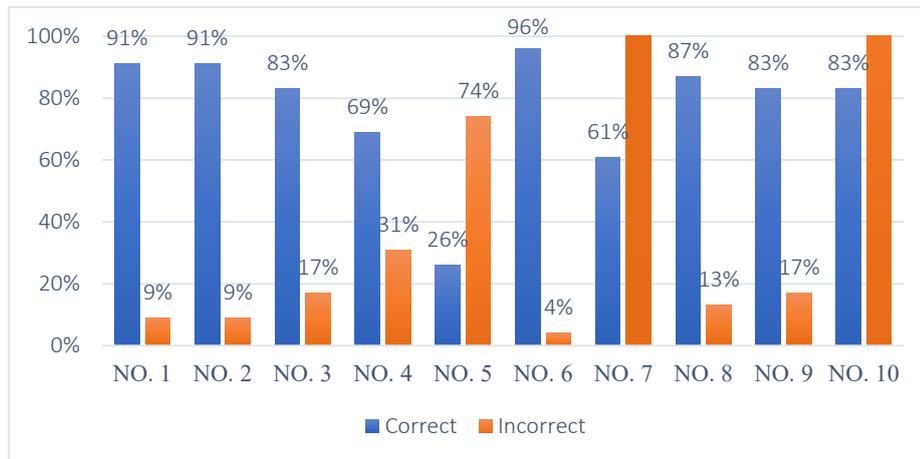


Chart 1. Percentage of Multiple-Choice Test

From the multiple choice test the researcher get information that the highest score in multiple choice test was 100. All of 23 students, there were three students who got score of 100, nine students who got score 90, two students who got score 80, four students who got score 70, two students who got score 60, two students who got score 50, and one student who got the lowest score, that score was 10. The students average score was 78. 14 students passed the minimum completeness criteria while 9 students failed to achieve minimum completeness criteria. More details can be seen from the diagram below:



Chart 2. Percentage of Multiple-Choice Score

Short Answer Test

Short answer test is one of test. In this test the students have difficulties in the main idea. From question number one, there were 18 students (78%) got correct answer and 5 students (22%) got incorrect answer. From question number two, there were 17 students (74%) got correct answer and 6 students (26%) got incorrect answer. From question number three there were 8 students (35%) got correct answer and 15 students (65%) got incorrect answer. From question number four there were 4 students (17%) got correct answer and 19 students (83%) got incorrect answer, and the last question number five, there were 2 students (9%) got correct answer and 21 students (91%) got incorrect answer. More details can be seen from the diagram below:

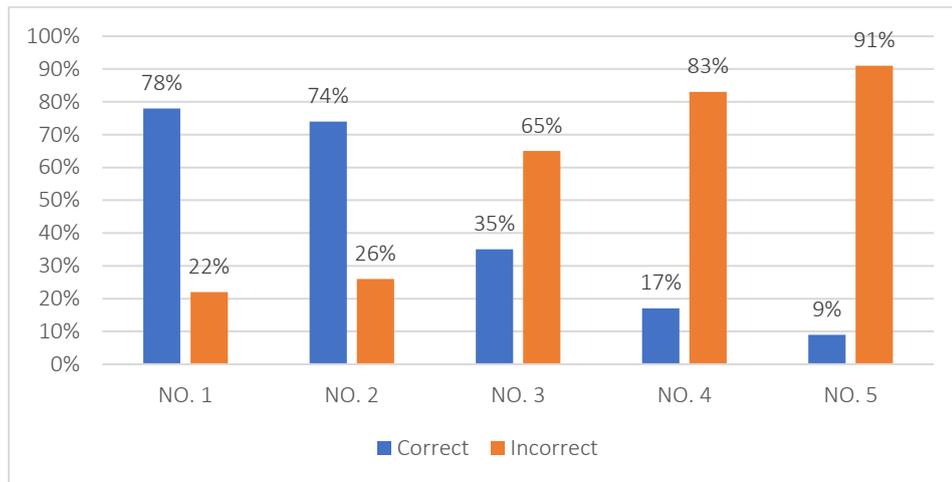


Chart 3. Percentage of Short Answer Test

Short answer test is one of test. In this test the students have difficulties in the main idea. The highest score was 100. All of 23 students, there Were two students who got score of 100, there were one student who got score of 80, there were one student who got a score of 60, there were thirteen students who got score of 40, and six students who got the lowest score was 20. The average score was 45. However, 3 students had reached the minimum completeness criteria. So, there were 20 students who were still failed to achieve the minimum completeness criteria. More details can be seen from the diagram below:

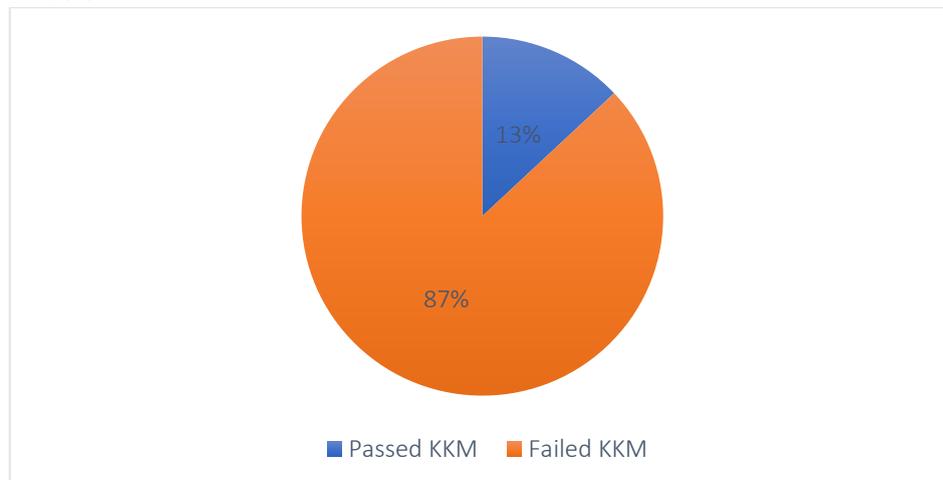


Chart 4. Percentage of Short Answer Score

True or False Test

The last test is true or false test. The students had difficulties in the content of text. From question number one, there were 22 students (96%) got correct answer and 1 students (4%) got incorrect answer. From question number two, there were 21 students (91%) got correct answer and 2 students (9%) got incorrect answer. From question number three, there were 20 students (87%) got correct answer and 3 students (13%) got incorrect answer. From question number four, there were 22 students (96%) got correct answer and 1 students (4%) got incorrect answer, and the last question number five there were 19 students (83%) got correct answer and 4 students (17%) got incorrect answer. More details can be seen from the diagram below:

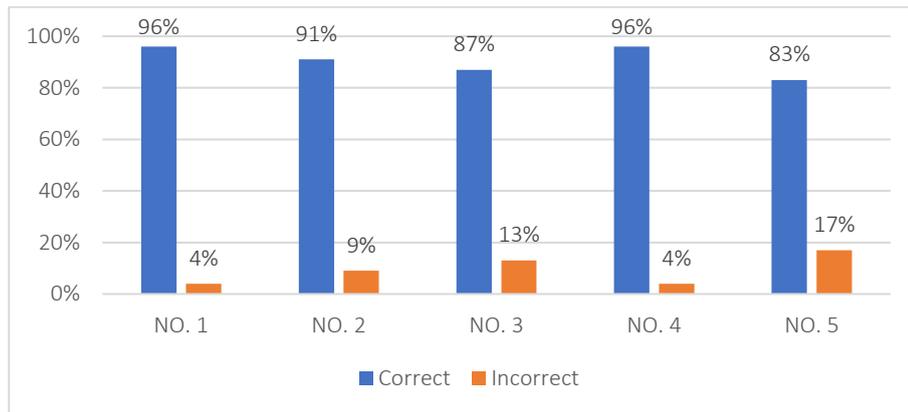


Chart 5. Percentage of True or False Test

In this research that 78 % of students can achieve the minimum completeness criteria value. The highest score was 100. All of 23 students, there were eighteen students who got score of 100, there were three students who got score of 80, there were one student who got score of 60, and there were one student who got the lowest score, that score was 0. The average score was 91. However, 21 students had reached the minimum completeness criteria. So, there were 2 students who were still failed to achieve the minimum completeness criteria. More details can be seen from the diagram below:

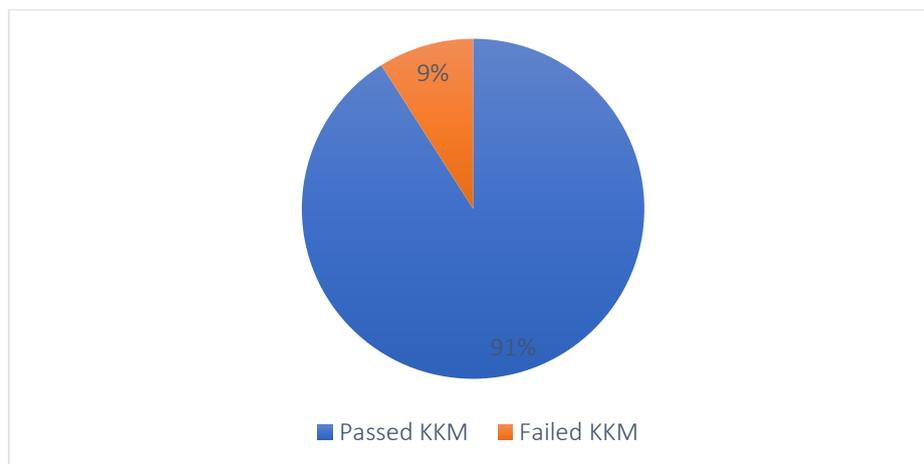


Chart 6. Percentage of True or False Score

From the diagram above, it can be concluded the average highest score of 23 students 8 At SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang was % and the lowest score Was % with the formula as follow

$$\frac{(T_1 + T_2 + T_3)}{3} = \text{Average Score}$$

T : Kind of test

From the average score, the researcher explained in detail in the form of a percentage using pie diagram. Below is the percentage of overall students 'score in reading test which has been done by researcher with minimum completeness criteria. From the data, 43% of students achieved the

minimum completeness criteria and 57% of students failed the minimum completeness criteria. So, it can be said that their ability in reading comprehension was still categorized as low.

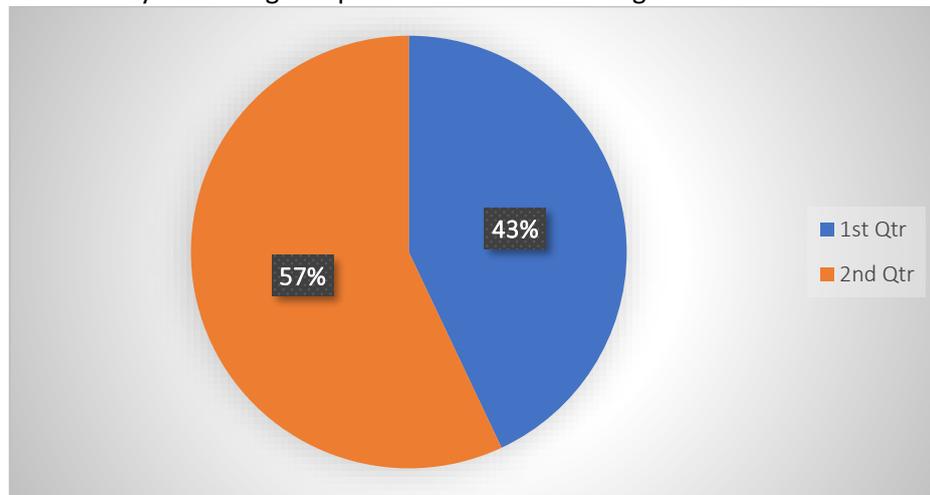


Chart 7. The Finding Students Score

Finding from Questionnaire

The research was focused in the difficulties faced by the students in reading comprehension. The researcher used questionnaire for one of the ways to collect the data, the questionnaire was given to the students of class 8. It was contained fifteen open-close ended questionnaires. In open-close ended questionnaire, it includes two types of questions, number one until number seven ask about the students' favorite in overcoming English or the behavior in reading skill. Then, for number eight until number fifteen ask about difficulties in test.

The finding of the questionnaire was explained in detail in the form of a percentage using a chart with the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total students answer}}{\text{Total number of students}} \times 100 =$$

Multiple Choice Questionnaire

The finding of multiple-choice questionnaire is 35% of students felt happy in English lesson, 65% of students sometimes felt happy, because English is hard. 13% of students consider one of the felt difficult, 13% of students sometimes difficult skill, 74% of students felt easy. 100% of students understood the material. 83% of students understood with the direction and teacher guidance, 13% of students sometime understood, and 4% of students also did not understand 78% of students felt multiple choice test is the one of the preferred types of tests, 18% of students sometimes felt preferred the test, and 4% of students not preferred. 39% of students answer the favorite when doing on multiple choice test is looking for the main subject of the reading, 43% of students explain the meaning of certain words, 18% of students reading is continued by answering questions about the content of the reading. 56% of students answered that the multiple-choice test made them like to read and understood the text, 30% of students sometimes like reading but depend on how much reading the text. And 14% of students did not like reading

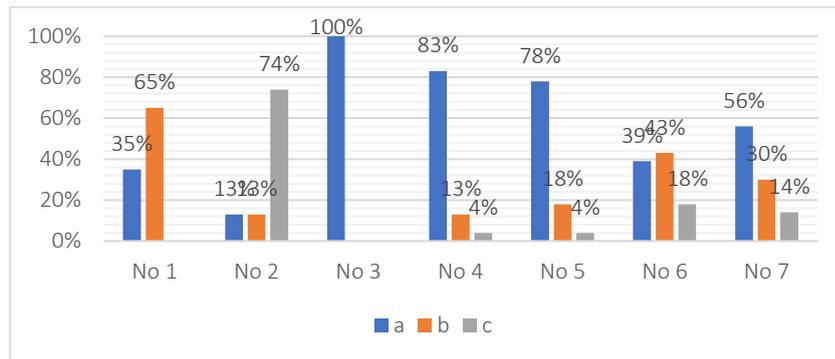


Chart 8. The percentage of questionnaire

And the finding of the number eight until number fifteen were about difficulties in test, and for doing multiple choice test 22% of students' ability level was still beginner, 43% of students was medium, 35% of students was advanced. 26% of students felt difficulty doing on narrative text of the kind of multiple-choice test, 52% of students sometimes felt difficulty and 22% of students do not experience any difficulties. 17% of students often difficulty when doing multiple choice test in the narrative text, 61% of students quite often difficulty when doing multiple choice test in the narrative text, and 22% of students do not experience any difficulties when doing multiple choice text. 35% of students' difficulty understanding the English reading, as they consider English is a difficult language understandable, 43% of students sometimes felt difficulty and 22% of students can understand English reading. 52% of students felt difficulty got information from the text on multiple choice test, 48% of students felt sometimes difficulty got information from the text on multiple choice test. 100% of students answered that vocabulary made it difficult for them to understand the text in multiple choice test. 17% of students look up difficult vocabulary in the dictionary when hind it difficult to doing the test, 52% asked the teacher, and 31% be quiet answer the question. 13% of students felt bored when doing on the multiple-choice questions given, 35% of students sometimes felt bored, and 52% of students were not bored. It is showed in the diagram.

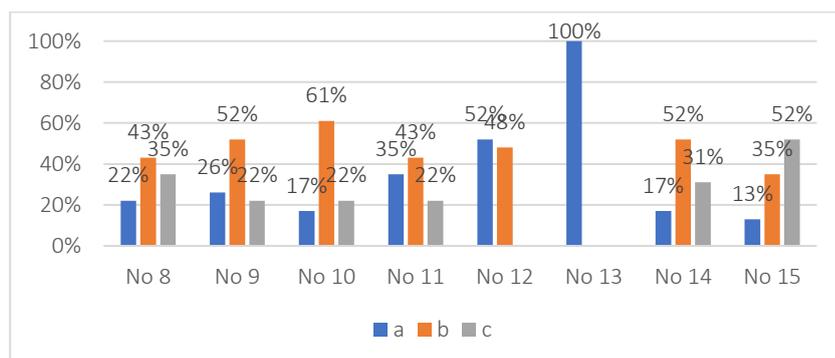


Chart 9. The percentage of questionnaire

Short Answer Questionnaire

The finding of short answer questionnaire is 35% of students felt happy in English lesson, 65% of students sometimes felt happy, because English is hard. 13% of students consider one of the difficult skills, 13% of students sometimes felt difficult, 74% of students tell easy. 53% of students understood the material, 36% of students answered sometimes felt understand the material, and 11% of students did not understand the material. 83% of students understood with the direction and teacher guidance, 13% of students sometime understood, and 4% of students also did not understand. 35% of students

felt short answer test is the one of the preferred types of tests, 39% of students sometimes felt preferred the test, and 26% of students not preferred. 26% of students answer the favorite when doing on short answer test was looking for the main subject of the reading, 30% of students explained the meaning of certain words, and 44% of students reading was continued by answering questions about the content of the reading. 35% of students answered that the short answer test made them like to read and understood the text, 48% of students sometimes liked reading the text, and 17% of students did not like reading.

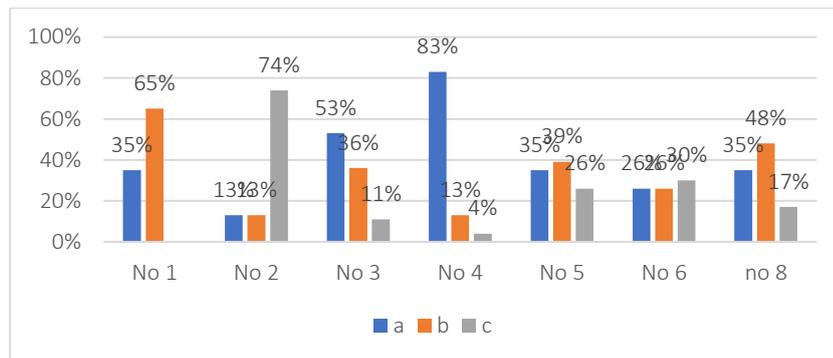


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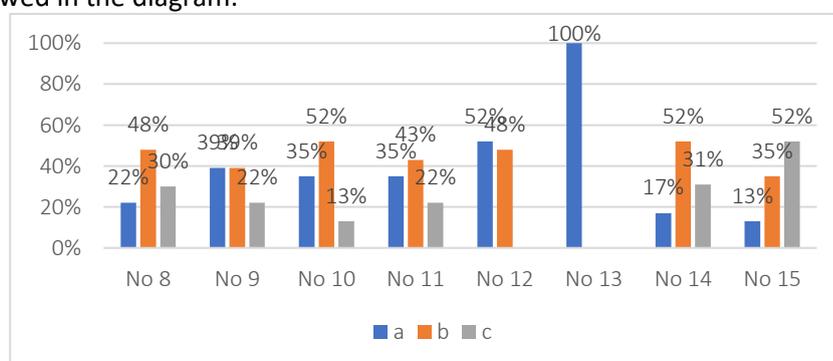


Chart 11. The percentage of questionnaire

True or False Questionnaire

The finding of True or False questionnaire is 35% of students felt happy in English lesson, 65% of students sometimes felt happy because English is hard. 13% of students consider one of the difficult skills, 13% of students sometimes felt difficult, 74% of students fell easy. 53% of students understand the material, 36% of students answer sometimes felt understand the material, and 11% of students did not understand the material. 83% of students understood with the direction and teacher guidance, 13% of students sometime understood, and 4% of students also did not understand. 75% of students felt True or false test is the one of the preferred types of tests, 25% of students sometimes felt preferred the test. 35% of students answer the favorite when doing on true or false test was looking for the main subject of the reading, 39% of students explained the meaning of certain words, and 26% of students reading was continued by answering questions about the content of the reading. 57% of students answered that the true or false test made them like to read and understood the text, 30% of students sometimes liked reading the text, and 13% of students did not like reading.

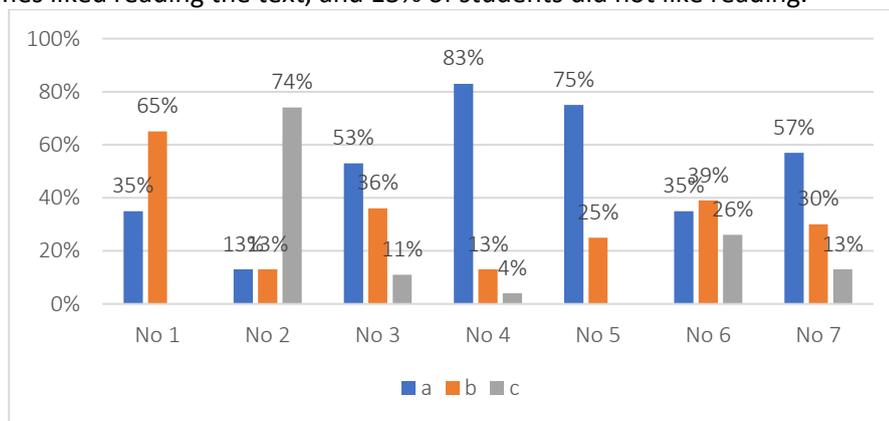


Chart 12. The percentage of questionnaire

The findings from numbers eight to fifteen reveal that 13% of students were at the beginner level in doing true or false tests, 52% were at medium, and 35% were advanced. While 13% always found them difficult, 57% sometimes did, and 30% had no difficulty. For multiple-choice tests, 26% often had difficulty, 48% quite often, and 26% had none. In general, 35% found English reading hard, 43% sometimes did, and 22% understood well. All students agreed that vocabulary was the main difficulty. When struggling, 22% used dictionaries, 61% asked teachers, and 17% stayed quiet. Some also experienced boredom during the tests. This shown in this diagram

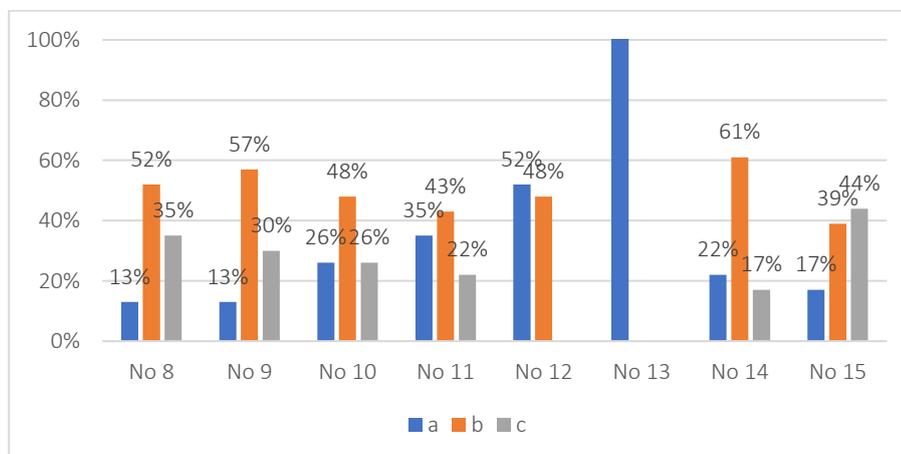


Chart 13. The percentage of questionnaire

DISCUSSION

This research provided an in-depth analysis of the difficulties faced by eighth-grade students at SMP Ma'arif Miftahul Ulum Melirang in comprehending narrative texts. The analysis was based on test results, which aimed to assess the students' ability to understand and interpret written English. According to Alderson (2000, p.203), there is no single best method for assessing reading comprehension; instead, he proposes twelve different techniques. After consulting with a ninth-grade English teacher at the school, the researcher selected four techniques that were considered most appropriate for the students' proficiency level: multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, true or false questions, and vocabulary-based tasks.

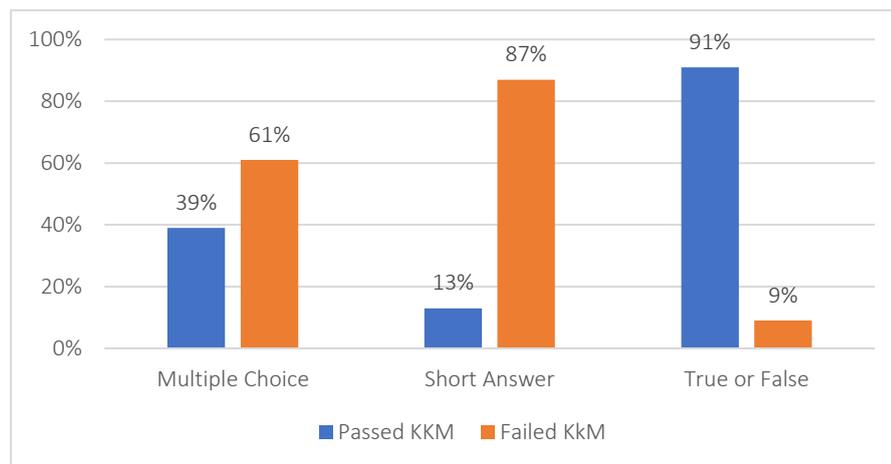


Chart 8. The percentage of Students Difficulties in Test

The test results revealed that students experienced significant challenges in reading comprehension, with the most notable difficulty occurring in the short-answer section. This type of question requires a detailed and thorough understanding of the text, which proved to be a major obstacle for many students. Their performance was also poor in the multiple-choice and true or false sections, which demand the ability to infer meaning and grasp the overall content of the narrative. One of the major underlying issues identified was students' limited vocabulary. A weak vocabulary hindered their ability to comprehend passages fully and affected their overall performance across all question types.

Nuttal in Larasati (2019, p.13) outlines four essential aspects of reading comprehension: determining the main idea, understanding vocabulary, making inferences, and identifying detailed information. The students in this study struggled with all four aspects. First, identifying the main idea of a passage was particularly challenging. Many students were confused because the main idea could appear at the beginning, middle, or end of a paragraph, making it difficult for them to locate and recognize it accurately. This uncertainty often led to misinterpretations of the text's central message.

Second, vocabulary limitations posed a substantial barrier. The students often depended heavily on dictionaries to understand unfamiliar words, interrupting the flow of reading and reducing comprehension efficiency. Few had developed strategies to infer word meanings from context, a skill that could have enhanced their understanding without constant reliance on external tools.

Third, the ability to make inferences—interpreting implied meanings by connecting textual clues with prior knowledge—was another weak area. Many students found it difficult to draw logical conclusions based on the information provided in the narrative. Inference requires both cognitive flexibility and familiarity with a range of text types, both of which appeared to be underdeveloped in this group.

Fourth, when it came to identifying detailed information explicitly stated in the text, students

frequently missed key facts. This type of comprehension involves scanning for specific data and understanding literal meanings, which requires practice and attention to detail—skills that many students had not yet mastered.

To further investigate the root causes of these difficulties, the researcher analyzed the responses from student questionnaires and applied Westwood's (2001, p.16) theory. Westwood identifies three contributing factors to reading comprehension problems: learner background, teaching techniques, and the learning environment.

In terms of learner background, the data revealed that many of the 23 eighth-grade students lacked interest and motivation in reading English. They often approached the subject with anxiety and a preconceived notion that English was inherently difficult. This negative mindset served as an internal barrier to learning. Teaching techniques also contributed to the problem, although the research did not detail specific methods used. It can be inferred, however, that the techniques may not have been sufficiently engaging or tailored to meet the students' diverse learning needs. Lastly, the learning environment played a crucial role. Students from families or communities that fostered reading habits benefited from indirect support, which positively influenced their comprehension abilities. In contrast, those who lacked such support at home found it more difficult to improve their reading skills.

In conclusion, the research confirms that students' struggles in comprehending narrative texts are influenced by both internal factors—such as limited vocabulary and low motivation—and external factors, including teaching methods and home environments. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach involving improved instructional strategies, vocabulary development, and a supportive reading culture both at school and at home.

CONCLUSION

The researcher identified four main aspects that became obstacles for students in comprehending narrative texts: identifying the main idea, understanding vocabulary, making inferences, and recognizing detailed information. In terms of identifying the main idea, students often felt confused about determining what the main idea of a passage was and where it was located within the text. Regarding vocabulary, many students struggled to understand the meaning of the passage without frequently stopping to look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary. When it came to making inferences, students were expected to draw logical conclusions from the statements and clues within the text, but many found this challenging. Lastly, in understanding detailed information, students were required to locate specific facts or details directly stated in the text, a task that demands scanning skills—not all students were familiar with or capable of applying this strategy effectively.

In addition to these difficulties, the researcher also found three main factors that contributed to students' struggles in reading comprehension: learners' background, teaching technique, and learning environment. The learners' background, such as a lack of interest or low motivation in reading English texts, greatly affected their ability to comprehend the material. Teaching techniques that did not match the students' needs or learning styles further hindered their understanding. Lastly, the learners' environment had a significant influence; students who lived in settings that did not encourage reading habits were less likely to develop strong reading comprehension skills.

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