

Exploring The Challenges Faced BY Teachers In Teaching English Reading Skills To Grade VIII Student At SMPN 14 Kaur

Elsa Dia Santika¹, Syamsul Rizal², Hanura Febriani³

^{1,2,3}Tadris Bahasa Inggris , UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu

elsadiasantika004@gmail.com, syamsulrizal@mail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id ,
hanurafebriani@mail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the challenges faced by English teachers in teaching reading skills to Grade VIII students at SMPN 14 Kaur. Specifically, it identified the strategies used by the teacher, the challenges encountered during the implementation of those strategies, and the solutions applied to overcome them. This study employed a qualitative case study design. The participants consisted of one English teacher and eight Grade VIII students. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, questionnaires, open-ended questions, and documentation. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data triangulation was used to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. The findings showed that the teacher used reading aloud, question-and-answer sessions, vocabulary explanation, translation, and rewards to develop students' reading skills. The main challenges were students' limited vocabulary, low interest in reading, pronunciation difficulties, limited instructional time, and different reading abilities. To overcome these challenges, the teacher simplified the learning materials, explained vocabulary before reading activities, encouraged students to use dictionaries, provided additional guidance, and motivated students through praise and rewards. The study concluded that appropriate teaching strategies and continuous support are important for improving students' reading skills.

Keywords: *teaching reading strategies, reading skills, teacher challenges, qualitative study.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi tantangan yang dihadapi oleh guru Bahasa Inggris dalam mengajarkan keterampilan membaca kepada siswa kelas VIII di SMPN 14 Kaur. Secara spesifik, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi strategi yang digunakan oleh guru, tantangan yang dihadapi selama implementasi strategi tersebut, dan solusi yang diterapkan untuk mengatasinya. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif. Partisipan terdiri dari satu guru Bahasa Inggris dan delapan siswa kelas VIII. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi kelas, kuesioner, pertanyaan terbuka, dan dokumentasi. Data dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman, termasuk reduksi data, tampilan data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Triangulasi data digunakan untuk memastikan keandalan temuan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa guru menggunakan metode membaca nyaring, sesi tanya jawab, penjelasan kosakata, penerjemahan, dan penghargaan untuk mengembangkan keterampilan membaca siswa. Tantangan utama adalah kosakata siswa yang terbatas, minat membaca yang rendah, kesulitan pengucapan, waktu pembelajaran yang terbatas, dan kemampuan membaca yang berbeda. Untuk mengatasi tantangan ini, guru menyederhanakan materi pembelajaran, menjelaskan kosakata sebelum kegiatan membaca, mendorong siswa untuk menggunakan kamus, memberikan bimbingan tambahan, dan memotivasi siswa melalui pujian dan penghargaan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa strategi pengajaran yang tepat dan dukungan berkelanjutan penting untuk meningkatkan kemampuan membaca siswa.

Kata kunci: *strategi pengajaran membaca, kemampuan membaca, tantangan guru, studi kualitatif.*

A.Introduction

Reading is one of the essential language skills in English language learning, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Through reading, students obtain

information, develop vocabulary, understand different types of texts, and improve their ability to interpret written language. Reading also contributes to students' academic development by encouraging them to

identify main ideas, understand supporting details, analyze information, and construct meaning from written texts. Therefore, developing students' reading skills is an important objective in English education, especially at the junior high school level.

Despite its importance, learning to read English texts remains challenging for many Indonesian students. Students frequently experience difficulties because of limited vocabulary, inadequate background knowledge, insufficient reading experience, and a lack of effective reading strategies. These difficulties may prevent students from identifying main ideas, understanding supporting information, and comprehending the overall meaning of a text. Kusumawardani et al. (2022) found that Indonesian junior high school students commonly experience reading difficulties related to limited vocabulary, lack of prior knowledge, and low motivation. In addition, the PISA 2022 results showed that Indonesia's reading performance remained considerably below the OECD average, indicating the continuing need to strengthen

students' reading abilities (OECD, 2023).

In EFL contexts, students' reading difficulties are also related to limited exposure to English. Indonesian students generally have few opportunities to use English outside the classroom, resulting in limited exposure to English vocabulary, pronunciation, sentence structures, and written texts. Khafidhoh and Abdullah (2022) reported that students experienced difficulties in understanding English texts because of limited vocabulary, inadequate reading strategies, and weak prior knowledge. These difficulties also create challenges for teachers, who must select appropriate materials, explain unfamiliar vocabulary, provide reading guidance, encourage participation, and adapt teaching strategies to students' different levels of ability.

These challenges may become more complex in rural EFL contexts because schools may have limited instructional resources, technology, English reading materials, and opportunities for students to interact with English. Aprilia et al. (2025) found that limited

English exposure, insufficient reading materials, and infrequent reading activities can affect students' reading comprehension. Therefore, teachers need to be creative and flexible in adapting reading instruction. Strategies such as vocabulary instruction, reading aloud, guided reading, question-and-answer activities, group discussions, and the use of appropriate learning materials can support students' reading development (Novita & Sirait, 2023).

Although previous studies have examined students' reading difficulties and various teaching strategies, limited research has specifically explored the challenges experienced by teachers while implementing reading strategies in rural junior high schools. This gap is particularly relevant to SMPN 14 Kaur, a rural junior high school in Bengkulu, Indonesia, where Grade VIII students experience difficulties with unfamiliar vocabulary, word-by-word reading, pronunciation, and understanding the main ideas of English texts. Therefore, this study investigates the strategies used by the English teacher, the challenges encountered in implementing those strategies, and the solutions applied

to overcome them. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the relationship between teaching strategies, teacher challenges, and practical solutions in a specific rural Indonesian EFL context, while also considering students' experiences and classroom observations. The study is expected to provide context-specific insights into the realities of teaching English reading skills in rural junior high schools.

B. Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore the strategies used by an English teacher in teaching reading skills, the challenges encountered during the teaching process, and the solutions implemented to overcome those challenges. The study was conducted at SMPN 14 Kaur, located in Kaur Regency, Bengkulu Province, Indonesia. The participants consisted of one English teacher and eight Grade VIII students selected through purposive sampling. The English teacher was selected as the main participant because she was directly involved in teaching English reading skills, while the students were selected as supporting participants to

provide additional information about their experiences and difficulties in learning English reading skills.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, questionnaires, open-ended questions, and documentation. The interviews explored the teacher's teaching strategies, challenges, and solutions, while classroom observations examined the actual implementation of reading instruction, including teaching activities, student participation, learning materials, and classroom conditions. Questionnaires and open-ended questions were used to obtain additional information about students' perceptions and experiences. Documentation was used to support the data obtained from the other instruments.

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consisted of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data reduction, the researcher selected, organized, and categorized the data according to the three research questions: teaching strategies, challenges, and solutions. The findings were then presented descriptively to identify

patterns and relationships among the data. To ensure the credibility of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from teacher interviews, student interviews, classroom observations, and documentation..

C.Result And Discusion

The findings of this study revealed that the English teacher at SMPN 14 Kaur implemented several strategies to develop Grade VIII students' reading skills. These strategies included lesson preparation, appropriate material selection, pre-teaching vocabulary, reading aloud, question-and-answer activities, guided reading, group discussions, and positive reinforcement. The strategies were adapted to students' abilities and classroom conditions. The findings were obtained through interviews, classroom observations, questionnaires, open-ended questions, and documentation, enabling the researcher to compare information from different data sources.

The first finding showed that lesson preparation and appropriate material selection were important aspects of reading instruction. Before teaching,

the teacher prepared the learning materials and considered the students' English proficiency levels. Reading texts from the textbook were adjusted when they were considered too difficult. This was necessary because students had different levels of reading ability and vocabulary knowledge. The teacher also provided explanations and examples to help students understand the texts. Appropriate material selection helped students engage more effectively with reading activities because the materials were adjusted to their linguistic abilities and learning needs.

Vocabulary instruction was another important strategy. Before and during reading activities, the teacher explained unfamiliar words and helped students understand their meanings. Many students had limited English vocabulary and relied heavily on dictionaries, but they still experienced difficulties understanding words in context. Therefore, vocabulary assistance helped students understand difficult expressions and the general meaning of the text.

The teacher also frequently used reading aloud activities. Students read English texts individually or

together while the teacher monitored and corrected their pronunciation. This activity provided opportunities to practice pronunciation, intonation, and fluency while allowing the teacher to identify students' reading difficulties. Although some students initially felt shy or lacked confidence, continuous practice and encouragement gradually increased their willingness to participate. Thus, reading aloud supported both students' reading development and confidence.

Question-and-answer activities and guided reading were also used to support students' understanding. After reading, the teacher asked questions about the main ideas and specific information in the text. When students experienced difficulties, the teacher provided explanations and guided them in identifying important information. These activities encouraged students to focus on the meaning of the text rather than translating every word individually.

In addition, group discussions were used to promote collaborative learning. Students discussed difficult vocabulary, answered questions, and exchanged ideas with their classmates. This strategy was useful

because students had different levels of reading ability, allowing those who understood the material more easily to help their classmates. The teacher also used positive reinforcement, such as praise, encouragement, appreciation, and additional points, to motivate students to participate. This helped reduce students' fear of making mistakes and encouraged greater confidence in reading activities.

Despite using various strategies, the teacher faced several challenges. The most significant was students' limited vocabulary, which affected their ability to understand sentences, identify main ideas, and comprehend the overall meaning of texts. Many students also relied on word-by-word translation. Another challenge was low motivation and interest in reading English texts. Unfamiliar vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and long reading passages sometimes caused students to lose concentration and become reluctant to participate.

Pronunciation difficulties and lack of confidence also created challenges. Some students pronounced English words according to Indonesian pronunciation patterns and were afraid of making mistakes

when reading aloud. In addition, differences in students' reading abilities made it difficult for the teacher to apply the same instructional approach to all students. Some students understood simple texts quickly, while others required repeated explanations and individual guidance. Limited instructional time and learning resources were additional challenges that restricted the implementation of varied reading activities.

To overcome these challenges, the teacher provided vocabulary assistance, simplified or adjusted reading materials, and encouraged continuous reading aloud practice. The teacher also provided direct and individual guidance to students who needed additional support. Collaborative learning enabled students to help one another, while positive reinforcement through praise, encouragement, and additional points helped maintain students' motivation. The teacher also maximized the available learning resources.

Overall, the findings indicate that teaching English reading skills in a rural EFL context requires teachers to be flexible and adaptive. The teacher at SMPN 14 Kaur combined various

strategies according to students' needs and classroom conditions. The findings demonstrate that effective reading instruction requires not only appropriate teaching strategies but also continuous teacher support, classroom adaptation, and practical solutions to address students' diverse linguistic, motivational, and learning needs.

D. Conclusion

This study investigated the strategies used by an English teacher to develop Grade VIII students' reading skills, the challenges encountered during the implementation of those strategies, and the solutions applied at SMPN 14 Kaur, Bengkulu, Indonesia. The findings indicate that the teacher implemented various strategies, including lesson preparation, appropriate material selection, vocabulary instruction, reading aloud, question-and-answer activities, guided reading, group discussions, and positive reinforcement. These strategies were adapted to students' different levels of reading ability and learning needs.

The teacher encountered several challenges in teaching English reading skills, including

students' limited vocabulary, low motivation and interest in reading, pronunciation difficulties, lack of confidence, differences in reading abilities, limited instructional time, and restricted learning resources. These challenges affected students' participation and their ability to understand English reading texts effectively.

To overcome these challenges, the teacher provided vocabulary assistance, adjusted and simplified reading materials, encouraged continuous reading aloud practice, provided direct guidance, promoted collaborative learning, maximized available learning resources, and used positive reinforcement to motivate students.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that effective English reading instruction in a rural EFL context requires teachers to be adaptive, supportive, and responsive to students' diverse linguistic, cognitive, and affective needs. The study highlights the important role of teacher flexibility and creativity in addressing classroom challenges and

supporting students' development of English reading skills.

REFERENCE

Books:

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Sugiyono. (2021). *Metode penelitian kualitatif*. Alfabeta.

Journal :

Fauzi, M. I., & Yuliawati, L. (2023). The effects of perception on school environment and vocabulary mastery towards students' reading comprehension. *Journal of English Language Learning*, 7(1), 274–281. <https://doi.org/10.31949/jell.v7i1.5394>

Hidayat, R., Ilma, R., & Saputra, E. (2024). Teachers' challenges in teaching reading comprehension at Islamic Junior High School. *DIDASCEIN: Journal of English Education*, 5(1), 1–9.

Ikhsanudin, I., & Lestari, R. (2023). Challenges and creativities in encouraging students to read in English language lessons: In-depth interview with junior high school

teachers. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning (JETLE)*, 5(1), 94–106. <https://doi.org/10.18860/jetle.v5i1.24157>

Junita, T., Mukhrizal, & Elfrida. (2023). Teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension at senior high schools. *Wacana: Jurnal Penelitian Bahasa, Sastra dan Pengajaran*, 21(2), 110–126. <https://doi.org/10.33369/jwacana.v21i2.29572>

Khafidhoh, K., & Abdullah, N. N. H. (2022). Junior high school students' difficulties in reading English texts. *Ahmad Dahlan Journal of English Studies*, 9(2), 78–90. <https://doi.org/10.26555/adjes.v9i2.213>

Kusumawardani, R., Santosa, R., & Roschsantiningsih, D. (2018). Problems encountered in teaching reading for junior high school students. *Aplinesia: Journal of Applied Linguistics Indonesia*, 2(1), 19–33. <https://doi.org/10.30595/aplinesia.v2i1.12062>

Medranda-Morales, N., Palacios Mieses, V. D., & Villalba Guevara, M. (2023). Reading comprehension: An essential process for the development of critical thinking. *Education Sciences*, 13(11). <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13111068>

Novita, D., & Sirait, S. M. (2023). Teacher strategies in teaching reading comprehension of eighth-grade students. *Journal of Education, Teaching, and Learning*, 8(2), 123–132.

Nurfajriani, W., Ilhami, M. W., Mahendra, A., & Sirodj, R. A. (2024). Data triangulation in qualitative research analysis. *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan*, 10(17), 826–833.

Poth, C. N., & Searle, M. (2021). Media review: 30 essential skills for the qualitative researcher (2nd ed.). *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 15(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/15586898211028107>

Ramirez-Avila, M. R., & Barreiro, J. P. (2021). The effect of summarizing narrative texts to improve reading

comprehension. *Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, 6(2).

<https://doi.org/10.18196/ftl.v6i2.11707>

Saputri, Y. E., & Sukarno. (2024). Teacher's challenges and strategies in teaching English in rural areas. *Formosa Journal of Sustainable Research*, 3(9), 2011–2018. <https://doi.org/10.55927/fjsr.v3i9.11494>

Siregar, F., Lestari, R., & Rusli, M. (2025). Development of English reading materials to improve reading comprehension for Grade Eleven students at SMAN 2 Rantau Selatan. *Journal of Language*, 7(1), 148–158. <https://doi.org/10.30743/jol.v7i1.11229>