



ABSTRACT

Exploring Students' Difficulties in Comprehending Reading Materials Used in Their Class

(A Case Study at SMP Negeri 6 Pekanbaru Riau)

The purpose of this research is to explore students' difficulties in comprehending reading materials. Specifically, this research attempts to answer the question "What problems do the students face in comprehending reading material used in their class".

In this research, data were gathered by way of classroom observations and interviews. There were nine students and two English teachers chosen purposively as participants involved in this research. Classroom observations were the main technique used by the researcher to collect data needed. Student interviews and teacher interviews were used to support the data from classroom observations.

The data obtained from classroom observations and interviews were then analyzed qualitatively by grouping them into categories based on the errors made by students in comprehending reading materials.

The major findings of the research are that most respondents being observed and interviewed were faced with four problems: (1) they were not able to arrange grammatically correct English sentences, (2) they were unable to locate the main ideas in paragraphs, (3) they could not comprehend vocabulary items, meanings, synonyms and references, and (4) they could not answer the questions correctly based on the reading texts.

As students have many problems in comprehending reading materials, it is suggested that English teachers apply better techniques or methods of teaching reading in order for students to comprehend the reading texts well. It is also suggested that the school management select qualified teachers to be the English teachers for Junior High Schools, especially in SMP Negeri 6 Pekanbaru Riau. The school should also provide school facilities, such as teaching aids, dictionaries, and handbooks. In addition, the school should encourage and facilitate the teachers to develop their professionalism as English teachers for examples, by sending them to English seminars and recommending them to join MGMP (Council of English Teachers).