

AN ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS OF STUDENT'S DIFFICULTIES IN READING COMPREHENSION AT VIII (G) GRADE AT SMP N 30 SEMARANG

Yustika Ratri Ningrum^{1*)}, T Sri Suwarti²⁾, Ajeng Setyorini³⁾

^{1,2,3} Universitas PGRI Semarang

Address

email: ratriningrumyustika@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Reading take a very important role in contributing students background knowledge to speak and to write. However, many students still have difficulties in understanding the words, comprehending the reading text, making inference, determining main idea, and locating reference. The objective of this research is to find out students' difficulties in comprehending reading text and what strategies used to overcome the difficulties. This research was a qualitative research and used descriptive method to expose the data which was collected by questionnaire and analyzed using Likert scale. The sample was the third year students of SMPN 30 Semarang. The questionnaire consisted of 15 statements related to their opinion on difficulties in comprehending reading text. Other 20 statements related to their strategies in overcoming the difficulties namely metacognitive and cognitive. The data revealed that 75% of the students had strong and 5,6% students had very strong comprehension. This meant that the students had good or very good reading comprehension ability but some students still got difficulties. Besides, there were 2, 8% of the students had weak comprehension and 16, 6% had average level of comprehension or had a bit of difficulties. In using the two strategies, the students had Average criterion (55,5%). They mostly tended to use metacognitive strategies (78%) in reading comprehension.

Keywords: *Reading Comprehension, Students Difficulties*

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Introduction

Reading comprehension is the ability to cook text, know the meaning, and make what the reader knows. The individual's ability to know the text is determined by their skills and ability to understand the information. Reading comprehension is one of the abilities that ought to be mastered with the aid of college students of Junior High School because the goal of coaching studying comprehension is that the scholars are anticipated so that you can apprehend

the means of the textual content.

Reading comprehension has a significant element or scope to study, such as the process of reading comprehension, the strategy of reading comprehension, the material of reading comprehension, etc., which can be difficult for students in reading comprehension if the usage is incorrect. These studies were performed in SMP N 30 Semarang. The researcher interviewed the teachers, who stated that studying comprehension became difficult. Students have problems discovering the primary concept from the text. The students have a problem to make inferences from the text. So, the researcher desired to deeply realise students's problems in comprehending English Reading text. Difficulties in studying comprehension are a critical hassle to solve because studying is considered a fundamental want in elements of life, particularly in mastering English. Difficulties in studying comprehension are implored to look at because there are nevertheless many students who can not comprehend the text's meaning,

From the background explanation above, the researcher uses the study with the title **"AN ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENT'S DIFFICULTIES IN READING COMPREHENSION AT VIII (G) AT SMP N 30 SEMARANG"**

Literature Review

According to the book by Dr. Syamsul Rizal with the title *Reading Skill Theory and Its Measurement*, reading comprehension apart from practicing thinking, reading comprehension means that readers don't just look at what they read. through written symbols, and also includes thought processes the message sent by the author in the reading text. Reading comprehension is an important subject for students, especially junior high school students who will later study further in high school.

The reading comprehension subject is learning in the form of understanding the content of reading or text in a paragraph where students are required to know the meaning contained and be able to conclude the content of the reading and analyze the reading. In this case, students must read the text first, then analyze and conclude so that they get a summary of the story and important points of the reading. Studying reading comprehension has many benefits, namely making the brain develop, expanding knowledge, obtaining important information, and being able to understand the structure of text. In reading comprehension, there are types of texts that raise various discussion themes.

Every ability to acquire English has a challenging level to comprehend and excel at the ability. Particularly for acquiring reading abilities, the learners encounter difficulties mastering reading skills. Currently, a few learners are reluctant to read the text. They are more intrigued by observing and listening to something. The negative behaviours of learners nowadays include their lack of enthusiasm for reading the text and their limited availability of time to read. Various obstacles in reading can hinder the learners from mastering the reading skill. Furthermore, according to Westwood (2001), challenges for most impoverished readers are worsened by the reality that they lack. They are unaware of efficient techniques to aid them in comprehending information (Putri, 2020).

Moreover, Shehu (2015) asserts that issues regarding students' understanding of written material include vocabulary, cognitive capacity, lack of extensive reading, and the nature of the text. These challenges create obstacles for students in deciphering the meaning of words and sentences and comprehending the content of the texts. Crawley & Mountain stated that reading is basically something complex that involves many aspects, not just saying words, but also visual observation, thinking, psycholinguistic, and metacognitive activities (Astuti & Dian, 2021). It is a common problem for numerous students to face challenges when completing their assigned tasks. These challenges primarily revolve around three main areas: comprehending and choosing pertinent material, structuring and amalgamating information obtained from

various written sources, and utilizing accepted formats used by the academic community (Satriani, 2018).

The relevant literature review is a reference material for the researcher of this study. Research on critical discourse analysis in literature conducted according to Yunus et al. (2013) with the title *Students' Comprehension in Reading Expository Text the Fourth Semester of English Education Study Program STAIN Padangsidempuan*. This research was conducted using a qualitative approach related to using the ability to read expository texts of students of the English Study Program semester IV STAIN Padang Sidempuan. The research output found that the ability of students who were used as samples in this study to know expository texts was relatively low, namely 58.6%. Then, the researcher also found that students had difficulty knowing complicated terms due to their low ability to understand English vocabulary, recognize text types, and analyze text content.

According to Kustanti (2016), with the title *Difficulties and Solutions for Learning English Reading Text*, this research was conducted. To get a powerful study, the researcher must get the foremost idea from that passage/text. As an educator or instructor, through digging or knowledge of student's difficulties in mastering English reading text and doing treatment to get their solutions, they need to make a terrific application to get a good way in teaching studying, and the learner will revel in mastering English, especially for Reading.

According to Mardiani et al. (2021), with the title *Difficulties of High School Students in Indonesia in Understanding English Texts*, this study aims to determine the difficulties of students in high schools in the Langgam area, Riau, in learning English narrative texts. The method used in this research is quantitative. The results obtained by students having difficulty knowing English narrative text are caused by two factors, namely intrinsic & extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors are limited vocabulary knowledge, problems with memorizing information, lack of familiarity with subject matter, lack of fluency in reading, and problems using information processing after reading inadequately. Extrinsic factors are weak expressive reasoning, difficulty in the text's content because of the text's level, and the use of reading strategies in the teaching and learning process.

Methods

This final project uses a descriptive qualitative method. According to Sutopo (2006, p.40), the qualitative approach has descriptive characteristics. What information collected from the first direct sources becomes part of the researcher's second, about the primary analysis tools information in the form of words in sentences or meaningful pictures (Subandi, 2011). According to Sudaryanto (1988, p. 2) states that the descriptive term indicates that the research is conducted solely on facts or phenomena experienced by the speaker experience so that the data is produced in a form similar to language, portrait, or description (Saraswati & Sartini, 2017). Data analysis is inductive and qualitative, with more findings from qualitative research. They emphasize meaning rather than generalizing. Using this method, the researcher will analyze the difficulties of reading comprehension in SMP 30 Semarang VIII G Grade, and the analysis results will be in word form.

This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 30 Semarang of second-grade students at Jl. Amarta Raya No.21, Krobokan, Kec. Semarang Barat, Kota Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50141 in the academic year 2022/2023. The object of this research is students in second grade in class VIII G, so the total population is 32 people in class. The population of this study was only students in class VIII (eight) G of SMP N 30 Semarang. There are 32 student populations in one class. Then the writer becomes the analyst. All students are expected to be able to fill out the questionnaire seriously so that the researcher can provide maximum results in this research. In qualitative research, the primary data collection tool is the person or researcher by observing,

asking, listening, requesting, and taking data. The researcher must have accurate data to be interviewed and not just anywhere. The researcher collected data from primary data sources and secondary data. Data is a factual statement or material used as the basis for research (analysis or conclusions).

Result and Discussion (Times New Roman 12, Bold)

The research instrument of this research was a questionnaire. After the instrument was applied to the sample, the result was analyzed to meet the objectives of the research as well as to draw conclusion about the objective of the study. Researcher described the findings into three parts; the student's difficulties in reading comprehension, the students' overcome difficulties in reading comprehension, and discussion.

After analyzing fifteen questions, the researcher found the students difficulties in reading comprehension:

Result	Percentages
Inferring information that is only implicit in a text	$\frac{626}{900} \times 100\% = 70\%$
Making inferences to connect up the ideas in a text	$\frac{632}{900} \times 100\% = 70\%$
Inferring the meanings of particular words from context	$\frac{613}{900} \times 100\% = 68\%$

Based on the discussion on previous chapter, the focus of this research were to find out the difficulties in reading comprehension in term of 1) Inferring information that is only implicit in a text include main idea implied, 2) Making inferences to connect up the ideas in a text, and 3) Inferring the meanings of particular words from context. Considering the result of data analysis described above, on the three of the research problems, this research found that mostly the students had no difficulties.

Based on the theory by answering the first question, the students had no difficulties in reading comprehension. The data revealed that 75% of the students had strong comprehension and 5,6% of them had very strong ability to comprehend reading texts. This fact indicate that they had good or very good reading comprehension ability and they did not have many difficulties in reading comprehension. They had no difficulties in reading comprehension because they successfully managed mastering reading during the first to the third semester and they did use the strategy to infer the information of the text, the main idea in reading comprehension, and they predict and guess the main idea appropriately.

However, some students still got difficulties in comprehending reading texts. Based on the result of the data, 2,8% of the students had weak comprehension and 16,6% had average level of comprehension or had a bit of difficulties. They had difficulties in reading comprehension even though they had learnt during the first to the third semester. Based on the theory by three difficulties, they might have difficulties because they did not understand the strategy to infer the information of the text, they were lack of knowing the main idea in reading comprehension, and they were unable to predict and guess the main idea appropriately. They did not apply the appropriate reading techniques while reading. They

read the whole passage more than once and found the meaning of every word in the text first before answer the questions.

By the percentage of 69%, it means that the students actually showed medium level of comprehension as they had constraints with respect to three aspects of reading difficulties. This may appear not only from the features of the text but also from the students' ability. The problems that appear from the features of the text, such there were unfamiliar vocabularies which were used in the text, unfamiliar content of the text which make the students are not interested to read, the appearance of an ambiguous pronoun which was confusing for the students, and the sentence pattern which was too complicated to be understood by the students. Moreover, the students probably also had difficulty in reading a text especially in long text.

In answering the second research question, there were two strategies in reading comprehension. They were metacognitive and cognitive. In using the two strategies the students had Average criterion (55,5%). In addition, they mostly tended to use metacognitive strategies (78%) to answer the text. They likely used metacognitive strategy rather than cognitive. This strategy can be classified in the following three clusters of metacognition: (1) planning; (2) monitoring; and (3) evaluating strategies. Planning strategies are used before reading; activating learners' background knowledge to get prepared for reading is an example of planning strategies. Also, previewing a title, picture, illustration, heading, or subheading can help readers grasp the overview of the text. The students may also preview the general information in the text and its structure. The students may check whether their reading material has a certain text structure, such as cause and effect, question and answer, and compare and contrast. Further, setting the purpose for reading can also be categorized as a planning strategy. Monitoring strategies occur during reading. Some examples of monitoring strategies are comprehension of vocabulary, self-questioning (reflecting on whether they understood what they have read so far), summarizing, and inferring the main idea of each paragraph (Israel, 2007:450).

Readers may also identify and focus on key information or key words, including: (1) but; (2) however; (3) on the other hand; (4) in addition; (5) also; and (6) in conclusion. Determining which part of the passage can be emphasized or ignored based on the purpose of the task is another monitoring strategy. Evaluating strategies are employed after reading. For example, after reading a text, learners may think about how to apply what they have read to other situations. They may identify with the author, a narrative, or main character, and may have a better perspective of the situation in the book than they did at first. Besides, Metacognitive reading strategies consisted of the following: (1) setting goals for reading; (2) previewing a book before reading; (3) monitoring the appropriateness of the textbook for the purpose; (4) identifying text structure; (5) determining important information in the textbook; (6) utilizing supplemental features (such as tables); (7) using cue words and typographical support (e.g., italics); (8) inferring; and (9) confirming predictions. Metacognitive strategies increase the students' meaning construction, monitoring of text and reading comprehension, and their ability to evaluate the text they are reading. This metacognitive reading framework should be familiar to teachers who integrate before, during, and after reading processes when teaching students effective comprehension strategies (Pressley, 2006:564). In summary, metacognitive reading strategies are classified into three groups of planning (pre-reading), monitoring (during reading), and evaluating (post-reading) strategies, and each group has a variety of strategies that require readers' metacognitive processing.

By exploring the result of the data and the theories reviewed by the experts, it can be concluded that most of third year students' of SMPN 30 Semarang described situation where they face problem in reading in the same time they could solve these difficulties. They tended to answer the reading tests successfully using the two strategies especially the metacognitive one.

Conclusion

The teacher should identify difficulties related to reading comprehension before learning or before the students read the text. It will make the students Disagree to understand the text to help them solve the students problems in comprehending the text. In short, the teachers should be more creative in applying the techniques of teaching reading skill. The third year students of SMPN 30 Semarang can increase and deep their knowledge by reading various texts. When they face difficulties on reading the various kind of texts, they have to practice using the strategies they had gotten. The researcher also hoped that the next researchers will continue this study by conducting the further investigation and exploring deeper about the relationship between the students background knowledge of the content of the text and their ability in understanding and solving their problem in reading.

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