

STUDENTS' ABILITY IN MASTERING READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract

Narrative text is one of reading texts should be mastered by the students in learning English. Reading skill is considered as a skill that needs a strong comprehension. Thus, this paper aimed to find out to what extend students understand reading of narrative text; to identify the items of reading skill mastered well by the students in comprehending narrative text; and to examine the method used by the teacher in teaching reading narrative text. The worksheet and interview were applied to analyze the data. The result showed that students' ability in understanding reading of narrative text is very good. The first aspect of reading which mastered by the students is main idea with 84,44%, the second is reference with 83,89%, the third is detail with 81,11%, the fourth is inference with 80,33% and the last aspect is vocabulary with 66,67%. It concludes that the aspect that mastered well by the students is main idea and the most difficult aspects for the students in reading is vocabulary. Pertaining to interview, teacher taught the students by using many methods in order to avoid the students' boredom in learning.

Keywords: *Reading Skill, Reading Comprehension, Narrative Text*

INTRODUCTION

People communicate with each other to convey and receive information in their daily life. A good communication has some components such as language. Language is a media used by the people to communicate with others. There are many languages used by people throughout the world like English. English is an international language that everybody should master it in order to take part in the global competition (Elizabeth, 2005).

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language that has to be mastered by the students from elementary schools up to the university levels. As one of the school subjects that is formulated and prescribed in the national curriculum. The main objective of teaching English in school is developing potential of communication written and spoken to reach functional literacy level,

realizing about the importance of English to increase the language's competition in global society, developing the students' understanding about the correlation between language and culture (Suhardi, 2017). Therefore, learning English is important for the students to develop their language to face the global competition.

To learn English there are four skills taught to the students that is listening, speaking, reading and writing. These four skills help people to communicate well, either in spoken or written form. One of those skills help people gain information to support their communication is reading. Reading is one of the very important skills in learning language to seek information and to gain knowledge. Hurwitz (2009) defines that reading is a process of getting meaning from printed or written materials. So, reading is the ability to obtain the meaning through

reading, a reader needs to use eyes and process the image captured by eyes in brain to get clear comprehension. According to Alyousef (2008), reading can be seen as an interactive process between a reader and a text which leads to automaticity or reading fluency. It means that when someone reads the text, he must understand what he has read. To comprehend a reading text, commonly, reading is designed in a text form consist of questions which have relationship with the text in order to know the reader can understand what he has read. So, reading is a process of understanding the meaning of a text in which the readers can get important ideas and information of what they have read.

In school, reading skill becomes one of the compulsory skills as it tested in national exams. It is as a determiner of students' graduation. In the national exam, the questions are always given relates to reading comprehension. There are more 2 reading texts provided in the National Examinations and each of reading texts has more 5 questions. It shows that students' mastery in reading comprehension is very influential of his success in answering the questions and passing the final examination.

There are some kinds of texts being studied in school, they are descriptive, narrative, expository, recount and procedures text. From some kinds of texts, however, the narrative text becomes the choice to be explored. As Anderson (2009) states that narrative is a piece of text tells a story and in doing so, entertains or informs the reader or listener. By using narrative text as a genre for teaching reading, the students will be more interested and easy to study because narrative text tells about an interesting story that construct the teaching learning process

more attractive for students to enjoy reading. Based on some statements about reading skill, this study elaborated three points to be investigated: 1) To what extent do students understand reading of narrative text? 2) What is the item of reading skill that mastered well by the students in comprehending narrative text? 3) What is method used by teacher in teaching reading of narrative text?

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The Definition of Reading

Reading is one of important skills in learning a language. People may read in order to get information or enrich their knowledge and sometimes to critic a writer's idea or writing style. People also read for pleasure or enhance knowledge of the language being read. Alyousef (2005) states that reading can be seen as an interactive process between a reader and a text which leads to automaticity or reading fluency. It means that reading is a process of understanding the meaning of a text in which the readers can get important ideas and information of what they have read.

Readers can comprehend the text because of the interconnection between the readers' background of knowledge and the new knowledge of the text that the readers read. According to Harmer (1998) "Reading is an exercise dominated by the eyes and the brain. The eyes receives message and the brain then has to work out the significance of this message, in the process of reading, we need the ability to comprehend the message". It indicates that the reader must pay attention to the text.

Spache and Spache (1969) say that reading is obviously a multifaceted process that like chameleon, changes its nature from one development stage to the text. At one

stage, the major performances may be visual discrimination among forms and words, and the learning of sufficient command words to enable the reader to begin the true act of reading. Later, the process may shift to one involving a number of thinking processes: recalling, interpreting, judging, and summarizing. This describes that reading is finding the meaning of the text through some processes that influence each other as mentioned above, they are thinking, recalling, interpreting, judging, and summarizing.

Therefore, reading can be defined as an active cognitive to establish meaning. Reading is not a straightforward process of lifting the words off the page. It is a complex process of problem solving in which the reader works to make sense of a text not just from the words and sentences on the page but also from the ideas, memories, and knowledge evoked by those words and sentences.

2. The Definition of Reading Comprehension

Reading without comprehension is nonsense and useless. Reading comprehension is related to the capacity of one's mind to understand the grasped ideas or the process of transferring ideas from reading the text to readers' mind to have a comprehension. Burnes (2002) points out that comprehension is not separate skill but involves the relationship of the student's knowledge and organization of that knowledge as it relates to suggested by Piaget, comprehension is a process involving combination of information onto student's existing knowledge. The student's prior knowledge is important in comprehending a reading text. Reading comprehension is the ability to understand the idea and

information in the reading texts. The reader must understand the meaning of the written text after she or he read it. According to Lems et al., (2010), reading comprehension is the ability to construct meaning from a given written text. Reading comprehension is not a static competency; it varies according to the purposes for reading and the text that is involved. When the prerequisite skills are in place, reading becomes an evolving interaction between the text and the background knowledge of the reader.

This is accomplished through use of methods, both cognitive and metacognitive. In conclusion, reading comprehension is an activity involving a number of thinking processes to pronounce, understand and interpret the printed symbols written by the author for searching Information. Reading comprehension is the essence of the reading process from what is being read. A readers' success in reading is evaluated by the ability and extent of understanding the ideas or information found in reading text. Thus, reading comprehension requires active thinking process that depends not only in word-recognition skill but also on the reader's own experiences and previous knowledge.

3. Aspects of Reading Comprehension

According to Mikulecky and Jeffries (1998), there are some aspects that highly related to each other. They are main idea, detail information, vocabulary and inference in reading comprehension.

1. Main Idea

The main idea of a passage or reading text is the central thought or message. In contrast to the term topic, which refers to the subject under discussion, the term main idea refers to the point or thought being expressed. Mikulecky and Jeffries (1998)

argued that main idea is the writer's idea about the topic which is formed by both the topic and the idea. Identifying main idea and supporting details is an important part of reading comprehension

2. Detail

The purpose for reading guides the reader's selection of texts. All people read for some purpose. In order to achieve the purpose, detail is very important thing in reading (Elizabeth, 2005). Detail is considered as the most crucial thing in reading comprehension. We need detail to comprehend the text. It is also the first thing that we must be able to do to identify the topic of the text. In examination, there are some questions related to detail information.

3. Vocabulary

One of the most persistent findings in reading research is that the extent of students' vocabulary knowledge relates strongly to their reading comprehension and overall academic success (Logan, et.al., 1991). This relationship is logical to get meaning from what they read, students need both a great many words in their vocabularies and the ability to use various strategies to establish the meanings of new words when they encounter them.

4. Inference

Inference is the ability to read between the lines or to get the meaning an author implies but does not state directly. Actually, all comprehension strategies involve inference in the sense that comprehension (Doff, 1988). It also requires readers to note text clues, to access prior knowledge associated with clues, and then, on the basis of that background knowledge, predict (infer) what the meaning is.

METHOD

This study is descriptive quantitative research. Descriptive quantitative research is the systematic scientific investigation of quantitative properties and phenomena (Arikunto, 2006). The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models theories and/or hypotheses pertaining to natural phenomena (Sugiyono, 2011). So, this study is designed to investigate the students' ability in mastering narrative text.

To collect the data, this study applies students' worksheet and interviews one English teacher in SMU 3 Banda Aceh. The participant of students is the second year that consists of 30 students. Students' worksheet is commonly given by teacher to train the students in mastering the lesson. In this study, the worksheet is used to see the students' reading skill. Meanwhile, the interview is conducted to know methods used by teacher in teaching English. In order to find out the result of data, this study examines the data to analyze the students' ability in mastering reading narrative text and to verify the used method in teaching reading by using descriptive analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Reading is one of the compulsory skills in learning English. The using of narrative text to identify students' ability in mastering reading comprehension is considered able to attract students in learning English. There are five aspects used to investigate students' ability in mastering reading; main idea, reference, detail, inference and vocabulary. The result of data analysis is based on percentage that performed as following:

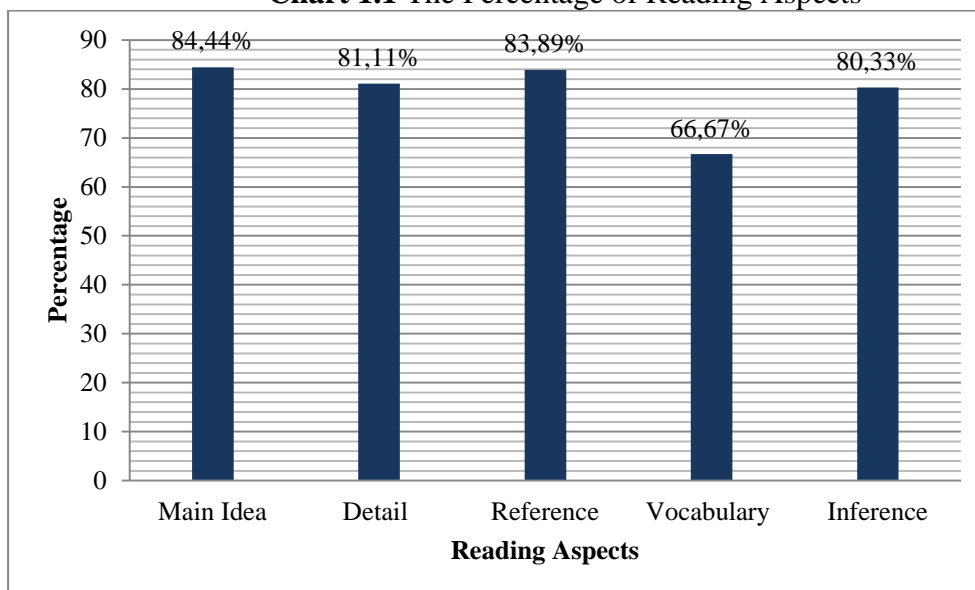
Table 1.1 The Students' Answer in Understanding Narrative Text

| No | Student | Reading Items | | | | | Total |
|------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------|
| | | Main Idea (6) | Detail (6) | Reference (6) | Inference (6) | Vocabulary (6) | |
| 1 | Students 1 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 21 |
| 2 | Students 2 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 22 |
| 3 | Students 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 22 |
| 4 | Students 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 22 |
| 5 | Students 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 22 |
| 6 | Students 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 22 |
| 7 | Students 7 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 22 |
| 8 | Students 8 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 24 |
| 9 | Students 9 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 23 |
| 10 | Students 10 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 23 |
| 11 | Students 11 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 23 |
| 12 | Students 12 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 23 |
| 13 | Students 13 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 23 |
| 14 | Students 14 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 23 |
| 15 | Students 15 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 23 |
| 16 | Students 16 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 24 |
| 17 | Students 17 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 25 |
| 18 | Students 18 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 25 |
| 19 | Students 19 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 25 |
| 20 | Students 20 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 25 |
| 21 | Students 21 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 25 |
| 22 | Students 22 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 26 |
| 23 | Students 23 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 27 |
| 24 | Students 24 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 27 |
| 25 | Students 25 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 26 |
| 26 | Students 26 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 26 |
| 27 | Students 27 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 26 |
| 28 | Students 28 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 26 |
| 29 | Students 29 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 26 |
| 30 | Students 30 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 26 |
| Total | | 154 | 152 | 146 | 151 | 120 | 723 |
| Mean Sore | | 5,13 | 5,07 | 4,87 | 5,03 | 4,00 | 24,10 |
| | | 85,56 | 85,50 | 81,17 | 83,83 | 66,67 | 85,56 |

Based on data above, students' ability in mastering reading of narrative text is very good. As seen from the level of percentage of five aspect of reading in which main idea with 84.44%, reference with 83.89%, detail information with 81.11%, and inference with

80.33%. Meanwhile, vocabulary performs as an adequate aspect with 66.67%, so it indicates that students' ability in understanding reading of narrative text is satisfied.

Chart 1.1 The Percentage of Reading Aspects



Based on the chart, main idea depicts the highest aspect mastered by the students with 84.44%, while detail, reference, and inference are the moderate aspect with 81.11%, 83.89%, and 80.33%. Last, vocabulary indicates as the lowest aspect mastered by the students with 66.67%. So, it summarizes that main idea becomes the proficient aspect acquired by students.

Furthermore, interview with the English teacher reveals that the students' ability in mastering reading comprehension is good. Teacher teaches the students by using many methods. She changes the method from a meeting to another meeting. The teacher uses cooperative learning, small group work and also grammar translation method. It is to avoid the students' boredom

in learning. Furthermore, teacher uses a particular method in teaching reading comprehension. For the difficult text, the method which used must give the contribution to help the students in learning reading comprehension. As quoted from the statement of teacher:

“I used the method based on the students' need. I do not always ask them to sit in a group, because, it will not be effective method if the text is easy to be comprehended by the students. Therefore, sometimes I use Grammar Translation Method. I also used media such as series pictures to help the students comprehend the text well”.

However, the students face the problem in reading because they have less of

vocabulary that influenced their comprehension in reading. Also, the students do not attempt to practice reading texts outside the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Narrative text is one of the reading texts should be learnt by the students to master reading skill. The using of narrative text to see the students' ability in understanding reading presents an effective way for learning reading English. The students' ability in understanding reading text is satisfied that presented from the percentage level of five aspect of reading; main idea with 84.44%, reference with 83.89%, detail with 81.11%, inference with 80.33% and vocabulary with 66.67.

The using of many methods in teaching reading is considered as an incredible way to improve students' ability in reading skill. Teachers should apply a creative teaching method that attracts students in learning reading skill.

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