



The Students' Ability in Reading Comprehension in Narrative Text

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ABSTRACT

Reading skill plays an important role in English learning process, especially when student have to deal with TOEFL Exam which includes reading and writing skill. The writer observed that the process of comprehending a reading text was still a serious problem for the students. The writer applied a qualitative method in this research with descriptive approach. The subject of the study was the first semester students class E of Universitas Prima Indonesia Medan. The instrument of data collecting was multiple choice test. The mean score of the students' in comprehending narrative text was 77. It shown that their comprehension narrative text was average to good. There was 12 students (48%) was classified as Excellent, 12 students (48%) was classified as Good and there was 1 students (4%) was classified as Average whereas no student (0%) was classified as poor to comprehending narrative text. Therefore, the writer hopes that the other English lecturer should always try to create an interesting text and media for their teaching.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Language has four skills, they are listening, speaking, reading and writing. In learning language, one of the aspects that should be improved is reading. In daily life, it is very important to get information from every reading passage, especially in learning English. Reading is one of the basic skills in English which is not simply translated word by word but need to be acquired during language course. Therefore, when the students learn to read, they should be able to comprehend the readings text during the process of reading. They are not only expected to read the text in good pronunciation or to find the meaning of each word within the text. Reading skill plays an important role in English learning process, especially when student have to deal with National Examination which includes reading and writing skill. Reading can be seen as an active process of comprehending where student need to be taught strategies to read more efficiently. That is way the process of reading cannot be separated from comprehension because reading without comprehension is useless. (Grabe William and Fredricka L. Stoler, in journal Herlina, 2012).

There are several previous researches which found about the ability of students in comprehending narrative text. First, Wijnarko from English Education, Language and Art Faculty, State University of Surabaya (2011). The research entitled "The Students' Ability in Comprehending Narrative Texts". The results shows that the students' reading ability increased in doing the task from the first meeting until the last meeting. There was increase in the students' reading ability in doing the task containing indicators of reading comprehension skill that had to be achieved by students. Most the students could fulfill the skill off reading comprehension on the task. They applied their background knowledge to infer implicit and explicit meaning

of the text and to infer an unknown word from the context, determine author's purpose, identify type of text structure and draw conclusion. In addition, he determines appropriate strategies and skills to develop for teaching so that the students can comprehend texts.

The second, Olfah from English program study FKIP, University of Pontianak (2013). The research entitle "Student's Ability in Comprehending Narrative Texts". The method of this thesis was used in this research was descriptive method. The technique off data collecting was written test. The mean score of the students' in comprehending narrative text was 75. It shown that their comprehension narrative text was average to good. Therefore, the writer hopes that the other English lecturers should always try to create an interesting text and media for their teaching. Based on the results, lecturer can apply narrative text to improve the student in comprehending narrative text.

Based on the writer observation, the process of comprehending a reading text was still a serious problem for the students, first, they are not enough vocabulary. Student are not able to understand the text and they are not to mention if they find new words. Second, lecturers tend to emphasize more on students reading results. Sometimes lecturers do not give attention to the learning process but the results of the learning. Third, sometimes lecturer do not ask the students to translate the text. So students are not understanding about the text. Based on the explanation above the writer would like to conduct the study about "*the students' ability in comprehending narrative text*"

1.2 Problem of the study

Based on the background of the study, the problem of the study is formulated as following: How is the student ability in comprehending narrative text at eighth grade students in Universitas Prima Indonesia?

1.3. Objective of the study

The objectives of the study as the following to find out the students' ability in comprehending narrative text in the eighth grade students of Universitas Prima Indonesia.

1.4. Significance of the study

The study is very significant for For the student are able to improve their ability to comprehend of narrative text, for the lecturer to plan and conduct a better in teaching reading comprehending in order to motivation the students to read of narrative text, for the reader to increase their knowledge especially to decide the right to develop their reading comprehension of narrative text, and other researchers, as a reference material in conducting their research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

A research is considered as a scientific way to discover new fact to get additional information. In doing research, it is very important to clarify all terms that related to the study in other to have the same perspective of the implementation in the field. The terms function to give a concept that is specifically meant in the particular context. In this case, the writer is going to elaborate the terms those are important for the purpose of this study.

2.2 Reading

2.2.1 Definition of Reading

According to H.Douglas Brown (2004:185) Reading is a skill that is taken for granted. In foreign language learning reading is likewise a skill that lecturers simply expect learners to acquire. According to David Nunan (2003:68) Reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning. The goal of reading is comprehension. Strategic reading is defined as the ability of the reader to use a wide variety of reading strategies to accomplish a purpose for reading. Good readers know what to do when they encounter difficulties. Fluent reading is defined as the ability to read at an appropriate rate with adequate the comprehension. Meaning does not rest in the reader nor does it rest in the text. The readers' background knowledge integrates with the text to create the meaning. According to Athur W. Heilman (2005:4) reading is an active and ongoing process that is affected directly by an individual's interaction with his environment.

2.2.2 Purposes of Reading

According to William Grabe and Frederica L Stoller (2002:13-15) reading have four the purpose:

a. Reading to search for simple information

Is a common reading ability, though some researchers see it as a relatively independent cognitive process. It is used so often in reading task that is probably best seen as a type of reading ability. In reading to search, we typically scan the text for a specific piece of information or a specific word.

b. Reading to learn from texts

Reading to learn typically occurs in academic and professional contexts in which a person needs to learn a considerable amount of information from a text. Reading to learn is usually carried out at a reading rate somewhat slower than general reading comprehension.

c. Reading to integrate information, write and critique texts

Reading to integrate information requires additional decisions about the relative importance of complementary, mutually supporting or conflicting information and the likely restructuring of a rhetorical frame to accommodate information from multiple sources.

d. Reading for general comprehension

The notion of general reading comprehension has been intentionally saved for last in this discussion for two reasons. First, it is the most basic purpose for reading, underlying and supporting most other purposes for reading. Second, general reading comprehension is actually more complex than commonly assumed. Reading for general comprehension, when accomplished by a skilled fluent reader, requires very rapid and automatic processing of words, strong skill in forming a general meaning representation of main ideas, and efficient coordination of many processes under very limited time constraints.

2.2.3 Process of Reading

According to David Nunan (2003:70-73) the models can be divided into three categories bottom-up models, top-down models, and interactive models. They are:

1. Bottom-up

Models typically consist of lower-level reading process. Students start with the fundamental basics of letter and sound recognition, which in turn allows for morpheme recognition followed by word recognition, building up to the identification of grammatical structure, sentences, and longer texts. Letters, letters clusters, words, phrases, sentences, longer text, and finally meaning is the order in achieving comprehension.

2. Top-down

Model on the other hand. Begin with the idea that comprehension resides in the reader. The reader uses background knowledge, makes predictions, and searches the text to confirm or reject the predictions that are made. A passage can thus be understood even if all of the individual words are not understood. Within a top-down approach to reading the lecturer should focus on meaning generating activities rather than on mastery of word recognition.

3. Interactive models of reading

The models that are accepted as the most comprehensive description of the reading process are interactive models. The third type combines elements of both bottom-up and top-down models assuming “that a pattern is synthesized based on information provided simultaneously from several knowledge source” (Stanovich, 1980, p 35). Murtagh (1989) stresses that the best second language readers are those who can “efficiently integrate” both bottom-down and top-down process.

2.2.4 Level of Reading

According to Arthur W. Heilman (2005:246) reading have four levels, there are:

1. Literal comprehension

Understanding the ideas and information explicitly stated in the passage.

Abilities:

- a. Knowledge of word meanings.
 - b. Recall of details directly stated or paraphrased in own words.
 - c. Understanding of grammatical clues-subject, verb, pronouns, conjunction, and so forth.
 - d. Recall of main idea explicitly stated
 - e. Knowledge of sequence of information presented in passage.
2. Inferential comprehension

Understanding of ideas and information not explicitly stated in the passage.

Abilities:

- a. Reason with information presented to understand the author's tone, purpose, and attitude.
 - b. Infer factual information, main ideas, comparisons, cause-effect relationship not explicitly stated in the passage.
3. Critical comprehension

Analyzing, evaluating, and personally reacting to information presented in a passage.

Abilities:

- a. Personally reacting to information in a passage indicating its meaning to the reader.
 - b. Analyzing and evaluating the quality of written information in terms of some standards.
4. Creative comprehension

At the creative level the reader can take information or ideas from what has been read and the developed new ideas from them. The creative level stimulates the reader to new and original thinking.

Based on the levels of comprehension, the writer designed the to measure the level one and three of comprehension because in narrative text, the students are expected to understand the content of the text, to judge the value or find the moral value of the story.

2.2.5 Types of Reading

According to H. Douglas Brown (2004:189) in this case of reading, variety of performance is derived more from the multiplicity no types of texts (the genres listed above) than from the variety of overt types of performances. Nevertheless, for considering assessment procedures, several types of reading performance are typically identified, and these will serve as organizers of various assessment tasks.

1. Perceptive

In keeping with the set of categories specified for listening comprehension, similar specifications are offered here, expect with some differing terminology to capture the uniqueness of reading. Perceptive reading task involve attending to the components of larger stretches of discourse: letters, words, punctuation, and other graphemic symbols. Bottom-up processing is implied.

2. Selective

This category is largely an artifact of assessment formats. In order to ascertain one's reading recognition of lexical, grammatical, or discourse features of language within a very short stretch of language, certain typical task are used: picture-cued tasks, matching, true/false, multi-choice, etc. Brief responses are intended as well. A combination of bottom-up and top-down processing may be used.

3. Interactive

Interactive reading types are stretches of language of several paragraph to one page or more in which the reader must, in a psycholinguistic sense, interact with the text. That is reading is a process of negotiating meaning; the reader brings to the text asset of schema for understanding it, and in take is the product of that interaction. The focus of an interactive task is to identify relevant features (lexical, symbolic, grammatical and discourse) within texts of moderately short length with the objective of retaining the information that is processed. Top-down processing is typically of such task, although some instances of bottom-up performance may be necessary.

4. Extensive

Extensive reading, as discussed in this book, applies to texts of more than a page, up to and including professional articles, essays, technical reports, short stories, and books.

2.3 Reading Comprehension

2.3.1 Definition of Reading Comprehension

According to William Grabe and Fredericka L. Stoller (2002:29) Reading comprehension is an extraordinary feat of balancing and coordinating many abilities in a very complex and rapid set of routines that makes comprehension a seemingly effortless and enjoyable activity for fluent readers. Reading comprehension is one of the Indonesian language skills that must be developed by the school. Reading comprehension has become something important and indispensable for students because student success largely depends on their ability to read. If students' reading comprehension is lacking, it is possible to fail in learning or at least students will have difficulty in making progress, on the other hand if students have the ability to read with a good understanding, of course they would have a better chance to succeed in learning.

2.3.2 Strategies for Reading Comprehension

According to H. Douglas Brown (2001:306) there are ten such strategies, each of which can be practically applied to your classroom techniques, there are:

1. Identify the purpose in reading
Efficient reading consists of clearly identifying the purpose in reading something. By doing so, you know what you are looking for and can weed out potential distracting information. Whenever you are teaching a reading technique, make sure students know the purpose in reading something.
2. Use graphemic rules and patterns to aid in bottom-up decoding
At the beginning levels of learning English, one of the difficulties students encounter in learning to read is making the correspondences between spoken and written English. While you can assume that one-to-one grapheme-phoneme correspondences will be acquired with ease, other relationships might prove difficult. Use efficient silent reading techniques for relatively rapid comprehension.
If you are teaching beginning level students, this particular strategy will not apply because they are still struggling with the control of a limited vocabulary and grammatical patterns. Your intermediate-to-advanced level students need to be speed readers, but you can help them increase efficiency by teaching a few silent reading rules:
 - a. You do not need to "pronounce" each word to yourself.
 - b. Try to visually perceive more than one word at a time, preferably phrases.
 - c. Unless a word is absolutely crucial to global understanding, skip over it and try to infer its meaning from its content.
3. Skim the text for main ideas
Two most valuable reading strategies for learners are skimming and scanning. Skimming consists of quickly running one's eyes across a whole text for its gist. Skimming gives the reader the advantage of being able to predict the purpose of the passage, the main topic, or message, and possibly some of the developing or supporting ideas.
4. Scan the text for the specific information
The second in the most valuable category is scanning, or quickly searching for some particular piece or pieces of information in a text. Scanning exercises may ask students to look for names or dates. To find a definition of a key concept, or to list a certain number of supporting details. The purpose of the scanning is to extract specific information without reading through the whole text. For academic English, scanning is absolutely essential. In vocational or general English, scanning is important in dealing with genres like schedules, manuals, forms, etc.
5. Use semantic mapping or clustering
Readers can easily be overwhelmed by a long string of ideas or events. Making such semantic maps can be done individually, but they make for a productive group work technique as students collectively induce order and hierarchy acceptable.
6. Guess when you are not certain
The point here is that reading is, after all, a guessing game of sorts, and the sooner learners understand this game, the better off they are. The key to successful guessing is to make it reasonably accurate.
7. Analyze vocabulary
One way for learners to make guessing pay off when they do not immediately recognize a word is to analyze it in terms of what they know about it. Several techniques are useful here:
 - a. Look for prefixes that may give clues.
 - b. Look for suffixes that may indicate what part of speech it is.

- c. Look for roots that are similar.
 - d. Look for grammatical contexts that may signal information.
 - e. Look at the semantic context (topic) for clues.
8. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings
This requires the application of sophisticated top-down processing skill. The fact that not all language can be interpreted appropriately by attending to its literal, syntactic surface structure make special demands on readers. Implied meaning usually has to be derived from processing pragmatic information.
9. Capitalize on discourse makers to process relationship
Many discourse makers in English signal relationship among ideas as expressed through phrases, clause, and sentences. A clear comprehension of such makers can greatly enhance learner's reading efficient.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

In this research, the writer applied a qualitative research. According to Bogdan and Taylor (in Moleong, 2006:4) qualitative method is use as research procedures that resulted descriptive data containing of spoken and written words and people behavior which can be observed . In other word, qualitative research is a research procedure that resulted descriptive data and relies on narrative description.

3.2 Location and Time of the Research

3.2.1 Location

The research was conducted in UNIVERSITAS PRIMA INDONESIA MEDAN on Jln. Danau Singkarak Medan. It is focused on the first year students of 2018/2019 academic year.

3.2.2 Time

The research has done on Oct 8th, 2018 until Nov 23rd, 2018

3.3 Subject of the Research

The subject of the research was the students of Universitas Prima Indonesia Medan in academic years 2018/2019. There were five classes at first semester, those are class A, B, C, D, and E. The writer only took one class (class E) that consist 25 students.

3.4 Instrument for Collecting Data

The data of this research was collected by using multiple choice test. The students was given 20 questions of multiple choice test, which related to the text that they red. The time was given to finish the test is 40 minutes.

3.5 Technique for Collecting Data

The writer collected data by using test. The test that is used by the writer was multiple choice test. The data for this research collected from the student's test multiple choices by these steps:

1. First the writer gave multiple choice test which relate narrative text.
2. Second, the writer gave time 40 minutes for the students to do the test.
3. Third, the writer collected the test and gave the score of multiple choice test.

In scoring the test, this study used score ranging 0-100 counting the correct answer and applying this formula:

$$S = \frac{R}{N} \times 100$$

Where :

- S = score of the test
R = number of correct answer
N = number of question

(Taken from Heaton,1988:9)

Table 1: The Category of Students' Ability

Range Score	Category
80-100	Excellent
60-79	Good
50-59	Average
< 49	Poor

(Taken from Heaton, 1988:96)

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Data

The data of this research was score. In answer to get score, the writer firstly check the students' answer sheet. The students' right score in reading narrative text the best became the data of this research. The following table shows the students' right score.

Table 2: The category of students' Ability

Range Score	Number of Students	Category of Ability
80-100	12	Excellent
60-79	12	Good
50-59	1	Average
<49	0	Poor

The table above showed that the students' who were able in analyzing comprehending of narrative text at second grade of Universitas Prima Indonesia Medan as following:

1. There were 12 (48%) students' who got score 80-100 categorized as "Excellent".
2. There were 12 (48%) students' who got score 60-79 categorized as "Good".
3. There were 1(4%) students' who got score 50-59 categorized as "Average".
4. There is no students who got score 0-40 categorized as "Poor".

4.2 The analysis of instrument

4.2.1 Mean

After getting the data of students' ability, the writer calculated the average of students' score. The step is done to know the achievement of the students' to answer the test. To calculate the average frequency of the students' achievement in comprehending narrative text to the eighth grade students of Universitas Prima Indonesia Medan in academic year 2015/2016, the following formula is used the formula of the Mean Score :

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where :

M : the average frequency of students' score

$\sum X$: the total number of the students' score

N : the total number students

(Taken from Donald,Ary 1979:103)

The mean of students' ability in this study is as following :

$$M = \frac{1925}{25}$$

$$M = 77$$

Based on the computation of the students mean score above, the mean score of the students' ability in comprehending narrative text is 77. It indicated that their performance in comprehending narrative text was average to good. It showed that the eighth grade students of Universitas Prima Indonesia are good in comprehending narrative text.

4.3 Research Finding

The calculated of students' percentage scores:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

Where :

P : the percentage of the students

S : the number of the students

T :the total number of students

- $P = \frac{12}{25} \times 100\%$
P =48% (Excellent)
- $P = \frac{12}{25} \times 100\%$
P = 48% (Good)
- $P = \frac{1}{25} \times 100\%$
P =4% (Average)
- $P = \frac{0}{20} \times 100\%$
P =0% (Poor)

Table 3: The percentage of students score

Ability of students	Number of students	Percentage
Excellent	12	48%
Good	12	48%
Average	1	4%
Poor	0	0%
Total	25	100%

In the table above, it describe that there was 12 students (48%) was classified as Excellent, 12 students (48%) was classified as Good and there was 1 students (4%) was classified as Average whereas no student (0%) was classified as poor to comprehending narrative text

5. Conclusuion and Suggestion

5.1 Conclusion

Based the findings in the previous chapter IV, the writer concludes the followings:

1. The students' ability of UNIVERSITAS PRIMA INDONESIA in comprehending narrative text is as the following: Excellent 12 students, Good 12 students, Average 1 students. Where 48% students who got score 80-100 categorized as "Excellent", 48% students who got score 60-79 categorized as "Good" and 4% students who got score 50-59 categorized as "average". So the writer can categorized that UNIVERSITAS PRIMA INDONESIA is good in comprehending narrative text.
2. The mean score of the students' ability in comprehending narrative text at UNIVERSITAS PRIMA INDONESIA is 77. So, the mean score is higher than the curriculum of the university. It means the students of UNIVERSITAS PRIMA INDONESIA are average to good in comprehending narrative text.
3. The knowledge in reading in order to help the students to understand meaning of words. The students in this school have serious problem in vocabulary. As the result, the student cannot comprehend the text.

5.2 Suggestion

1. To make sure the teaching learning process runs well, the lecturer should explain the materials well and clearly especially about narrative text.
2. The lecturer should guide the students before retelling story in form of narrative text.
3. The lecturer should prepared some vocabularies that related with the topic or material in order to help students share their information.

The writer should know the difficulties of students so that the lecturer can know how to make the students understand this material easily by using suitable learning method. It is very interesting for the next researcher to use this research as references to conduct the same

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