



AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' READING ABILITY IN READING AN EXPOSITORY TEXT OF THE FIFTH SEMESTER STUDENTS IN ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to describe the reading ability of the fifth semester students of English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang in academic year 2017/2018 in reading an expository text. This research was a descriptive research. The data collected through a reading comprehension test. There were five indicators tested; identifying topics, finding the main idea, identifying supporting details, making inference and identifying writers' purpose. The result shows that students' ability in identifying the topics is *good*, (the mean score is 71.48), students' ability in finding the main idea is *good enough*, (the mean score is 65.70), the ability of students in identifying supporting detail is *good enough*, (the mean score is 68.65), student ability in making inference is *enough* (the mean score is 59.36) and student ability in identifying writers' purpose is *good enough* (the mean score is 68.75). Thus, the results of this research indicated the students' reading ability of the fifth semester students of English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang in academic year 2017/2018 is *good enough*, where the total mean of students' score is 66.72.

Key words: *Reading comprehension, students' reading ability, expository text.*

A. INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is the goal of reading. Reading comprehension is the goal of reading. In the simple definition, reading comprehension can be said as an ability to grasp meaning from printed text. Grabe (2009: 15), reading comprehension as a process of negotiating understanding between the reader and the writer. Similarly thought from Fitrawati (2009:90), reading comprehension is an interactive process between writers and readers. The reader tries to comprehend the writer's thoughts in the text. Reading comprehension is the ability to understand information in a text and interpret it appropriately. Readers need

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to identify the information and connect it with what they have known. The reader tries to interpret information to get messages Brown (2007: 79).

In the process of interpreting information, the readers must use their background knowledge. So, reading comprehension also can be defined as readers 'ability to construct the meaning or important ideas of the text by using their background knowledge and experiences. Rozimela (2014: 361) also said reader interacts dynamically with the text when he tries to extract the meaning. In this process, various kinds of knowledge are being used, linguistics knowledge and syntactic knowledge and schematic knowledge.

Students who learned a foreign language need to comprehend all of the texts that have been read. In other words, reading comprehension is very important for them. The level of comprehension will affect the students' comprehension about a reading text (Jufri, 2014). Kuo (2010) states that in order to help students learn reading comprehension successfully; two main issues must be addressed: an appropriate reading strategy to be used for helping students to enhance English comprehension and appropriate system to integrate verbal and graphic information. To enhance reading comprehension, students should develop some strategies, for example, looking ahead to predict, looking back to clarify, selecting or comparing new information to prior knowledge, and summarizing. Some of these strategies will be more effective if they are integrated into verbal or graphic information.

The success of reading will be reached if the reader could comprehend the text read. Students who learned a foreign language need to comprehend all of the texts that have been read. Even though the students have learned how to read articles and essay in this course, the students still have lack of comprehension. Based on the data from researcher advisor, the students still have lack of reading comprehension. It is revealed from researcher's interview result that conclude several difficulties that faced by students. *First*, the students have limited vocabulary. *Second*, it because student' lack of reading interest. *Third*, they have lack of text background knowledge.

The researcher did this research to find out the level of students in fifth semester of English Departemen of Universitas Negeri Padang in academic year 2017/2018's reading ability. These students were chosen because they had taken reading 3 course. Based on the curriculum of English Departement of Universitas Negeri Padang, They had learned about reading articles and essay. It expected students in this level had more experience and can comprehend well the text given.

In conducting this research, the researcher used an expository text. An expository text is one of several kinds of texts that students had been learned in Reading 3 course. Expository text is a text that has a purpose to explain the readers about something that related to the topic (Dymock, 2005: 177). This text focuses on writers' argument and use evidence, examples, or facts to explain a concept or to inform about a topic and the information must be presented fairly and in a non-biased manner.

The researcher chooses this text because this text was very suitable for students. It can be said that this text was quite difficult to comprehend by the

students. During reading an expository text, they had to know the writers' idea in the text such as the main idea and supporting ideas of the text. Sometimes, the idea was not stated clearly in the text, so that the students have to infer them. To get more understanding, students should identify the purpose or why the writers' write the expository text.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

A reading comprehension test was used as the instrument of this research. The tests are given in 60 minutes. *Second*, students were asked to collect their tests. Finally, the scores of students' test were used as data. Students' scores were gotten from the division of the number of students' correct answers in each indicator with the number of questions available on each indicator.

The researcher analyzed the data based on results of students' reading test. Then, the researcher used a descriptive method in explaining the result of the test got by the students. The researcher classified the data into five reading indicators. Next, the researcher calculated the result of the test in order to know the students' ability in reading an expository text. Then, she determined the percentage of the students' grade by presenting the score and by classifying the students who got an A to an E. In determining the percentage, the first step was presenting a raw data. Then the researcher classified the students' mark based on their comprehension in five reading indicators of the test. The results of the students' scores were converted into the following intervals that were from Peraturan Akademik Universitas Negeri Padang in the academic year 2014/2015. The descriptions of the students' scores can be seen in the following table:

Table B.1
The classification of students' scores

Rank of Students' Score	Mark	Number values	Category
85 – 100	A	4.0	Excellent
80 – 84	A-	3.6	Very Good
75 – 79	B+	3.3	Quite Good
70 – 74	B	3	Good
65 – 69	B-	2.6	Good Enough
60 – 64	C+	2.3	More than Enough
55 – 59	C	2	Enough
50-54	C-	1.6	Less than Enough
40-49	D	1.0	Poor
≤ 39	E	0,0	Fail
-	T	-	Postponed

Adopted from Panduan Akademik UNP 2014

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Students' Ability in Reading An Expository Text

The distribution of scores in the reading test showed the students' ability in general. The percentage of students' general score could be seen in this following table:

Table C.1
Students Reading ability in general

Rank of Students' Score	Mark	Category	Number of students	Total students	Percentage
85 – 100	A	Excellent	1	28	4%
80 – 84	A-	Very Good	3		11%
75 – 79	B+	Quite Good	4		15%
70 – 74	B	Good	5		18%
65 – 69	B-	Good Enough	3		11%
60 – 64	C+	More than Enough	3		11%
55 – 59	C	Enough	5		18%
50-54	C-	Less than Enough	2		8%
40-49	D	Poor	1		4%
≤ 39	E	Fail	0		0%
-	T	Postponed	0		0%
Mean			67,21		
Mark			B-		

The table shows the students' percentage of the result from students' reading comprehension test. From the table, the data revealed that most of students' reading ability in reading expository text is a B- or *good enough*. 1 student got an A (4%) , 3 students got an A- (11%), 4 students got a B+ (15%), 5 student got a B (15%), 3 students got a B-(11%), 3 students got a C+ (11%), 5 students got a C- (18%), 2 students got a C- (8%), 1 student got a D- (4%), and none of them got an E-(0%). In sum, it can be seen that the average scores ware 67.21 which in rank of *good enough* category (in rank score 65-69) and got a B-.

Here the mean of students' mean scores in each reading indicators tested as follows:

Table C.2
The Mean of Students' mean scores In Each Indicator

No	Indicators	Mean of students Score	Mark	Category
1	Identifying the topic	71.48	B	Good
2	Finding main ideas	65.60	B-	Good Enough
3	Identifying supporting details	68.65	B-	Good Enough
4	Making inferences	59.36	C	Enough
5	Identifying the writers' purpose	68.75	B-	Good Enough

The Students' ability in reading in identifying a topic of an expository text was *good*. There were 1 student got an E (4%), 6 students got a C- (21%) 9 students got a C+ (32%), 9 students got a B+ (32%), and 7 students got an A (25%). The mean of students score in finding topic was 71.48 (in rank of score B or *good*).

The students' reading ability in finding main idea was *good enough*. The result shows, there were 2 students got an E (7%), 3 students got a C- (14%) 10 students got a C+ (35%), 9 students got a B+ (32%), and 3 students got an A (11%). The mean of students score in finding main idea was 65.60 (in rank of score B or *good enough*).

The students' reading ability in identifying supporting details was *good enough*. The result shows that there were 1 student got a D, 1 students got a C- (3%), 3 students got a C (11%), 5 students got a C+ (19%), 6 students got a B- (21%), 4 students got a B (15%), 3 students got a B+ (11%), 3 students got A- (11%), and 2 students got an A (6%). The mean of students score in finding supporting details were 68.65 (in rank of score B- or *good enough*).

The students' reading ability in making inference was *enough*. There were 3 students got an E (11%), 9 students got a C- (32%) 8 students got a C+ (29%), 6 students got a B+ (22%), and 2 students got an A (7%). The mean of students score in making inference was 59.36 (in rank of score C or *enough*).

The students' reading ability in indentifying writers' purpose was *good enough*. The result shows that, there were 2 students got an E (7%), 3 students got a C- (11%), 7 students got a C+ (25%), 9 students got a B+ (32%) and 7 students got an A (25%). The mean of students score in identifying writer's purpose was 68.75 (in rank of score B- or *good enough*).

2. Discussion

Students' reading ability in reading an expository text is reflected in the students' score in their reading comprehension test. Overall, the students' reading ability on in reading an expository text was *good enough* with the means score

66.71. This result was from students' reading comprehension test based on the five indicators given. She also found that 88% students got scores in rank an A to a C. It means most of students have good ability in reading an expository text. They might comprehend the five indicators tested in this research. The researcher thought that they had the knowledge, experiences and reading material during the reading courses. Moreover, Students had been accustomed to read many types of text and take some comprehension tests. These experiences, knowledge and material given might help them in answering the reading comprehension test in this research.

However, some others still had *poor* ability in reading an expository text. There were 12% students got a C- to an E, it means they still have difficulties in reading an expository text. It might be caused by students they had not mastered the indicators that being tested or they still face difficulties in applying their knowledge about the five indicators while answering questions given. They might have lack of concentration in reading text so they might just guess the answers only. For these students, the researcher suggested to have more practice.

The different results were shown by Eka Sustri Harida (2014). The sample of her study were 43 students in the fifth semester students. In her research, she found that there were 73% students got scores less than 50. It means students still had *poor* ability in reading. Eka said that the students that the students had difficulties in identifying main idea and supporting idea, and she also found the students did not apply the reading strategies while reading a text.

Form all indicators tested in reading test of this research, identified topics was the highest mean of students score. Based on findings, the mean of students' scores in identifying topic was *good*. It indicated that the most of the students in this research had good ability in identified topics. From this result, they seemed to understand how to identify the topic. They might follow the strategies to identify the topics. The writer argues that the students' tested already had experience in identifying topics from many texts they read during the reading courses at the Universitas Negeri Padang.

The total different result was conducted by Hendra Eka Putra (2005). The sample of this research were students in second year of Universitas Bung Hatta. Based on his research, it showed that students' ability in identified topics in his research was very *poor*. Most of students got a D and an E. It means most students still have low ability in identified topic. Hendra said that the students in his research were mostly did not understand how to identify the topics and tried to guess the answer from the questions given.

Both of researchs used the same kind of text, that is text expository. The sample of the research were also in different semester. Hendra's sample was students in second year, which might in the third or fourth semester. In contrast, the researcher's sample was students in fifth semester. She saw that the experience and knowledge of students are different. The sample of her research got higher scores than Hendra's sample because they might have more experience and knowledge in identified topics.

The second students' highest mean scores were identifying writers' purpose. It indicated the students have good enough ability in identifying writers' purpose.

This indicator was not difficult for students. According to Pirozzi (2012: 203), the writers' may have clues reveal much about their purposes in the text. Students who had already known about the clues were more easily to answer the question about indentifying the writers' purpose. The students who still have bad mark in answering questions about identified purpose might be caused by they have lack of concentration so they could not find those clues in the text.

The third students' highest mean scores were identifying supporting details. Students in this research had *good enough* ability in identifying supporting details. From the test, there were 79% students got scores in rank A- C+. It indicated that most of students had comprehended in identifying the supporting detail. They might apply scanning technique in finding something detail in the text. They could differentiate which sentence was major detail or minor detail, and they could identify facts, reasons, descriptions, and examples.

The same research had done by Sri Lestari, Pipit Rahayu and Evi Kasyulita (2015), the result of their study showed the students' ability in identifying supporting detail was *poor*. 52% of students got poor scores in the research. The researchers argue that this result indicated that the students did not had deep understanding in identifying supporting details in reading text.

The fourth students' highest mean scores were finding main idea. It can be seen students have *good enough* ability in finding main idea. Most of the students had known the strategy to find the main idea, for instance, find the located the topic sentence of the paragraph. However, for students who still have low ability in finding the main idea indicated that they had not really understood how to find the main idea.

The different result showed by Hendra Eka Putra (2005). The students score in finding the main idea. It can be seen that the most of students have high ability in finding the main idea where most of students got high score in finding the main idea as well as their ability to determine the location of the topic sentence were also got high score. The researcher thinks that if the student have already known where the located of a topic sentence in a paragraph, they will know the main idea more easily.

From all indicators tested, making inference was the lowest mean of students' scores. In sum, students have enough ability in finding making inference. It can be assumed that half of the students could understand in making inference and the other half could not. It seems that most of students still face difficulty in answering questions about making inference.

Actually to answer a question about something infers needs students critical thinking. According to Wilson (2009: 26), the critical thinking is a process, a way of thinking, to understand something. Completely it is a way in which ideas are developed and organized into a line of reasoning which moves in logical order. By using their own critical thinking, students' will be able to find the thing that is not stated in the text. Therefore, half of students who have good ability in making inference indicated that they have good critical thinking while others do not.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The result shows that students' ability in identifying the topics is *good*, (the mean score was 71.48), students' ability in finding the main idea is *good Enough*, (the mean score is 65.70), the ability of students in identifying supporting detail is *good enough*, (the mean score is 68.65), student ability in making inference is *enough* (the mean score is 59.36) and student ability in identifying writers' purpose is *good enough* (the mean score is 68.75). Thus, the results of this research indicate the students' reading ability of the fifth semester students of English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang in academic year 2017/2018 is *good enough*, where the total mean of students' score is 66.72.

The researcher suggests that for reading courses lecturers can teach and guide the students to enhance their skill in identifying the topic, finding main ideas, finding the supporting ideas, making inference, and identifying writers' purpose. These reading indicators are much needed in comprehending all kind of texts given. Lecturers may give a lot of exercises for students or may give some tips in identify those indicators while reading a text. It is also suggested for the next researchers to find the factors that can influence students reading ability in reading an exposition text.

Note: This article is written based on the writer's thesis supervised by Drs. Saunir Saun, M.Pd. and Fitrawati, S.S. M.Pd.

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