

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES ON READING COMPREHENSION OF DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT THE EIGHTH GRADE OF SMP NEGERI 2 BARUMUN TENGAH IN 2020/2021 ACADEMIC YEAR

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan: 1) kesulitan pemahaman membaca teks deskriptif yang dihadapi siswa kelas VIII SMP Negeri 2 Barumun Tengah tahun ajaran 2020/2021, 2) faktor kesulitan pemahaman membaca teks deskriptif yang dihadapi oleh siswa kelas VIII SMP Negeri 2 Barumun Tengah tahun ajaran 2020/2021. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan tes dan wawancara. Triangulasi digunakan untuk memeriksa keabsahan data. Hasil penelitian ini adalah 1) kesulitan siswa dalam memahami bacaan teks deskriptif sangat buruk dengan skor rata-rata 31,87% persentase salah pada ide pokok 22,93%, salah pada informasi spesifik 15,60%, salah dalam kosakata 26,60%, salah referensi 19,27%, salah menyimpulkan 15,60%. 2) Faktor-faktor kesulitan siswa adalah motivasi siswa dalam membaca pemahaman teks deskriptif sangat rendah, alat bantu belajar siswa sangat penting untuk mencapai tujuan pembelajaran, lingkungan belajar siswa sangat berpengaruh terhadap kesulitan membaca siswa.

Kata kunci: Kesulitan siswa, faktor, teks deskriptif pemahaman membaca

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is crucial skill for students of English whether it is as a second language or a foreign language. Reading still plays great role and it is essential as a tool to convey meaning and information through the text. Reading for foreign language learners is not an easy task because reading in English is complicated and it is hard to get the meaning from the text. It needs comprehension to get meaning or to get information conveyed by the writer. It can be caused by the language system of English is different from the students' own language.

Reading is an active process, it involves interpreting passages, not just receiving a message. It is reasonable for reading is one of the basic ways of acquiring information. Because when the students have a good competence in reading English, it will help them to obtain and enrich their knowledge. Due to the importance of reading, the English curriculum of junior high school, especially at the eighth grade. The students are expected to comprehend the meaning of the short functional text of some kinds of text. There are some kinds of text such as descriptive, narrative, procedure, report etc. The students have to know the definition, characteristics of the texts and language features of the texts.

Descriptive text is one of the genres, in order to make students know how to describe person, place or thing. and it is taught by English teacher of SMP Negeri 2 Barumun Tengah grade VIII. However, many students had difficulties in understanding descriptive text on generic structure and language features of descriptive text. Therefore, the students could not describe the generic structure and the

language feature of the text. As the result, the students were not able to describe the text in a systematic order, and they were not interested in learning English in the classroom.

Based on the writer's observation on March 10, 2021 at SMP Negeri 2 Barumun Tengah and the result of discussion with English teachers, it could be said that the students' reading comprehension was still low especially in comprehend the descriptive text. In fact, it was really hard for them to determine the main idea, to make the conclusions of the descriptive text, and to identify generic structure of descriptive text. Besides, students had still low interesting to read English text. Most of their reading marks were relatively low. Generally, it could be said that the students did not understand what they read.

From the explanation above, there were some problems faced by students in comprehending reading descriptive text. Those problems were caused by several factors. First, students' reading comprehension was relatively low because they were not interested to read English text. Besides, the students could not identify kinds of text. As we know that each text has different generic structure and language features. Also, learning methods did not increase students' reading comprehension. Next, teacher seldom returned the students' exercises so that they could not measure their achievement. Teacher's activities mainly consisted of simple oral presentation during the class. At last, the tasks or exercise for students were to finish pages in the text book as their homework because there were not enough times to finish them in classroom.

The writer worry if the problems still run ever after students will cannot face the problem related to reading comprehension such as they are fail in their study or at least they had difficulties in making progress and they are not being able to face school exams and facing national exam. Therefore, this problem must be solving immediately. Based on explanation above, the researcher wants to conduct a research entitled “An Analysis of Students’ Difficulties on Reading Comprehension of Descriptive Text at the Eighth Grade of SMP Negeri 2 Barumun Tengah in 2020/2021 Academic Year”.

1. The Nature of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is an active process to get information from a reading by understanding the elements in it. Reading without comprehending meaning is an empty act. Because to get information, human need to understand it deeply and then process it into the human brain.

According to Richard and Schmidt (2002:443) cited in Kartawijaya (2017:82) states that, there are some definitions of reading:

- a. Reading perceives a written text in order to understand its contents. This can be done silently (silent reading). The comprehending text is called reading comprehension.
- b. Saying a written text aloud (reading aloud).

Then, according to Anderson in Nunan (2003:68) cited in Kartawijaya (2017:82) says “Reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning”. Next, according to Klinger et al (2002:8) states “Reading Comprehension is a multi component, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text (previous knowledge, strategy use) as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in text, understanding of text types).” Meanwhile, according to Smith and Johnson (1980) cited in Irwanto and Sitti (2017:165) states “Reading comprehension understands, evaluating utilizing of information and gained through the interaction between reader and author”.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher concludes that reading is an interactive process between the reader and the text. In comprehending a text readers should have their own strategy. Strategy refers to how readers make a sense of what they read and what they do when they do not understand something in the text.

2. The Kinds of Difficulties in Reading

In understanding a reading, usually, the reader will face some difficulties that can hinder the process of understanding in a reading. According to Taylor (1995) cited in Adnyana (2018:5) these are types of reading difficulties that commonly faced by the students in their learning.

- a. Decoding Difficulties

Decoding is the process by which word is broken into individual phoneme and recognized based on those phonemes. Someone who has difficulty in decoding is not able to comprehend the meaning when doing a reading.

- b. Comprehension Difficulties

Comprehension relies on mastery of decoding. Someone who struggles to decode finds it difficult to understand and remember what has been read.

- c. Retention Difficulties

Retention requires both decoding and comprehending what is written. This text relies on high-level cognitive skills, including memory and the ability to group and retrieve related ideas. As students’ progress through grade levels, they are expected to retain more and more of what they read.

Based on the explanation above, it concludes that Comprehension difficulty is difficulties in understanding and remembering the reading. In comprehension difficulty, there are aspects which the students’ should understand to comprehend a text well. The aspects are determining main idea, finding specific/detail information, reference, inference, and vocabulary.

3. The Difficulties of Reading Comprehension

According to Nuttal (1982) cited in Irwanto and Sitti (2017:161) states “There are five aspects of reading which the students’ should understand to comprehend a text well, they all determining main idea, finding specific/detail information, reference, inference, and vocabulary”.

4. The Factors of Reading Comprehension

According to Taylor (1995) cited in Adnyana (2018:5) states that the factors which caused the difficulties in reading comprehension are: a) Learners Motivation, 2) Learner Aid, 3) Learning Environment

5. Descriptive Text

There are some kinds of text that is called genre, such as narrative text, descriptive text, procedure text, recount text, report text, and so on. In this research, the researcher chooses descriptive text as the subject.

According to Wishon and Burks (1968:322) cited in Kartawijaya (2017:83) states that: Description text gives sense impressions – the feel, sound, taste, smell, and look of things. Emotion may be described, too – feeling such as happiness, fear, loneliness, gloom, joy. Description helps the reader, through his imagination, to visualize a through his imagination, to visualize a scene or a person or to understand a sensation or an emotion.

Next, according to Gerot and Wignell (1994) cited in Etfita (2016:24) states “Descriptive text is text type that describes a particular person, place or thing”. Meanwhile according to Cavanagh (1998) cited in Etfita (2016:24) states “Descriptive can occur as ‘stand alone’ texts. They are often part of a longer text, such as the description of a character or setting in a story or biography”.

Based on explanation above, it concludes that descriptive text is a kind of genre which contains a detailed description of an object. Usually the objects described can be person, places, or thing. Describe means to provide details about what someone or something looks like.

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The location of this research was carried out at SMP Negeri 2 Barumun Tengah, which is in Gading Village, Barumun Tengah District, Padang Lawas Regency, North Sumatera. The researcher focused the study in the eighth grade with 16 respondents. The process of this research was conducted for three months (March until May 2021).

This research used the qualitative research. The researcher collected data using reading comprehension test and interview as the instrument to collect the data.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researcher finds that the students' reading comprehension of descriptive text is very poor with the mean score of all students is 31.87%. The researcher has identified the students' difficulties and has calculated the number of each difficulty. The researcher draws up the result of calculation into percentages.

Based on the percentages of number each difficulty, it can be concluded that are 22.93% students who are incorrect in answering questions items to look for the main idea. There are 15.60% students who incorrect in answering questions items to look for specific information. There are 26.60% students who incorrect in answering questions items to look for vocabulary. There are 19.27% students who incorrect in answering questions items to look for reference. There are 15.60% students who incorrect in answering questions items to look for inference.

The factors of students' difficulties are students' motivation in reading comprehension of descriptive text is very low, students' learning aid is very important to achieve learning objectives, students' learning environment is very influential on students' reading difficulties.

From the result of analyzing, the researcher shows the result of the percentages each types students' difficulties in reading comprehension of descriptive text can be seen in following table:

Table 1 Types of Difficulties, Frequency and Percentages

No.	Types of Difficulties	Frequency	Percentages
1.	Main Idea	25	22.93 %
2.	Specific Information	17	15.60%
3.	Vocabulary	29	26.60%
4.	Reference	21	19.27%
5.	Inference	17	15.60%
Total		109	100%

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4. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the data analysis in chapter IV the researcher can be concluded some conclusions from this research as follows:

- a. The result of the research shows: the students' reading comprehension of descriptive text is very poor with the mean score of all students is 31.87%. The researcher has identified the students' difficulties and has calculated the number of each difficulty. The researcher draws up the result of calculation into percentages. Based on the percentages of number each difficulty, it can be concluded that are 22.93% students who are incorrect in answering questions items to look for the main idea. There are 15.60% students who incorrect in answering questions items to look for specific information. There are 26.60% students who incorrect in answering questions items to look for vocabulary. There are 19.27% students who incorrect in answering questions items to look for reference. There are 15.60% students who incorrect in answering questions items to look for inference.
- b. The factors of students' difficulties are students' motivation in reading comprehension of descriptive text is very low, students' learning aid is very important to achieving learning objectives, students' learning environment is very influential on students' reading difficulties.

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