

Students' Problems in Reading Comprehension at Junior High School in Indonesia

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Abstract. Objective: to describe reading comprehension problems that faced by the students at Junior High School in Indonesia. In this study, the writer used descriptive research. Moreover, the writer took students in urban area as the research subject. Result: showed that students' have problems in reading comprehension. Analysis: showed that the students' problems are in prior knowledge, interest, decoding, text type, vocabulary, literacy instruction quality, independent practice, answering question in reading, understanding the question in reading, and interested in the text, and being an active reader.

Keywords: Problem, Reading Comprehension.

1 Introduction

Reading is most useful and important skill for students. Reading has four types, they are: reading aloud, reading skimming, reading scanning, and reading comprehension. Reading comprehension skills should be learned in order that readers can understand and interpret what he or she reads in curriculum KTSP in Indonesia.

According to curriculum KTSP [3], standard competence of reading skill in Indonesia at Junior High School level that must be mastered by students is "understanding the meaning of simple short functional written text; recount and narrative for interacting in the daily life". One of basic competence is "responding significance in the simple short transaction and interpersonal conversation accurately, fluently, for interacting in the daily life". There are some indicators of achievement: "identifying communicative purpose narrative text / recount, identifying rhetoric and generic structure narrative text / recount, identifying some information of the text functional, and identifying generic structure of functional text.

The ability of students in reading comprehension is low. This is indicated that the students were still facing difficulties in reading comprehension, such as difficulty in process of decoding, limited vocabulary, and having no background information relating to the text. It means that they have problems in reading comprehension.

The teacher must find technique that adjusts with the problem existed. However, the problem should be indicated earlier. By knowing the problems of students we can choose the strategy or method that fits for solving that problem. Complicated problem also can be easier to solve if we know what problems they face.

According to [8] Reading is an active process which consists of recognition and comprehension skill. Reading is an important activity in life with which one can update his/her knowledge. Reading skill is an important tool for academic success. We can't deny that reading is a very important activity in life to gain new knowledge. We can open up new worlds and opportunities. Moreover, it also is an essential skill for future academic.

In the other hand, [10] says that reading is talking about comprehension. Comprehension itself is what reading is all about. Decoding without comprehension is simply word barking like knowing the word correctly without understanding its meaning. Effective comprehenders not only know the meaning of the text they are reading, they can also use it to get the information. Its means reading is the ability to read text, process it and understand its meaning.

the writer thought that reading comprehension is a process of
vulary knowledge, and prior knowledge to build meaning.

From the definition of reading above, we know that reading is an activity to read letters and words in order to get some information from printed language and the goal of reading is to understand the texts and to be able to learn from them. Reading consists of four types: reading aloud, reading skimming, reading scanning, and reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension can be defined as the ability to obtain meaning for some purpose. In order to comprehend successfully, the reader must identify a series of letters, lexicon or mental dictionary, and integrate individual word into a coherent sentence. As such, successful reading comprehension requires the efficient coordination, decoding abilities, and previous knowledge. [2] In short, it can be said that successful reading comprehension requires the efficient coordination, decoding abilities, and previous knowledge.

Based on the statements, the writer thought that decoding ability is the ability to identify the basic sounds and sound blends (phonemes) that make up a word, know what it means, recognize it in context and know whether or not it is being used correctly in a sentence.

Previous knowledge or prior knowledge or background knowledge is the knowledge of what they read. Its means the reader have to know about a subject. Reading comprehension is a multicomponent, highly complex process that includes many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text as well as variables related to the text itself. [6]

The definition above is similar to what Blair-Larsen means that reading comprehension is an essential skill for children in school settings and beyond. A broad range of task requires children to comprehend written text, particularly as children progress in school and is expected to learn more independently. The most familiar reading task, and the one that children frequently encounter during early exposures to text, is comprehension of a story or narrative passage [4][11].

The success or failure of students in their future studies will depend very much on their mastery in reading. The ability to read and understanding what they read is a goal as well as a fundamental basic tool of education. Reading comprehension is not only a matter of understanding the print on page but, it is the creation of meaning by combining what the print tells with what the reader already possesses as knowledge. To achieve comprehension, it is crucial for the reader to make use of his previous experiences. [9]

Background knowledge plays an important role in the student's ability to understand text. It has a large effect on student performance in comprehending the text what they read. Reading comprehension is a process in which the reader builds meaning using as the building materials the information on the printed page and the knowledge stored in the reader's head. It includes intentional thinking, during which meaning is built through interactions between text and reader.

Based on the statements, the writer thought that reading comprehension is a process constructive between what students read and their knowledge of the topic.

2. Research Method

In this research, the research uses a qualitative approach. Qualitative approach refers to qualitative research. The type that used in this research is descriptive type. Descriptive method gives the description of phenomena that occurs naturally without any intervention of an experiment by collecting data in order to answer the question related to the method that they used. [1]

The location of this research is at one of the schools in Banjarmasin, South Borneo, Indonesia at Junior High School level. It is located on urban area. It is the school which considers English and Arabic language as daily conversation language in communication. All of students are obliged to use both of those languages in their daily life as long as they study and stay there. However, the students were still facing difficulties in English language especially in reading comprehension.

The technique in this research is the ways in data collecting, and the instruments are the devises or tools in technique in order to get the data from the research subject. The instrument used to get data in this research is questionnaire. Questionnaire consists of 37 questions. The options only consist of two choices, namely yes and no.

The following chart is indicators used as questionnaire:

Table 3.1. Specification of Questionnaire

Indicator	Number of Questions	Number of Items
Purpose	2 questions	1,2
Being an active reader	3 questions	3,4,5
The type of text	3 questions	6,7,8

being used		
The quality of literacy instruction	3 questions	9,10,11
Interest	2 questions	12,13
Independent practice	3 questions	14,15,16
Was the reader able to decode most of the words in the selection?	3 questions	17,18,19
Did the reader understand the specialized vocabulary of the selection?	3 questions	20,21,22
Did the reader follow directions?	3 questions	23,24,25
Did the reader's experiential background interfere with comprehension?	3 questions	26,27,28
Was the reader interested in the selection?	2 questions	29,30
Was the reader able to write the answer correctly?	3 questions	31,32,33
Did the reader understand the question?	2 questions	34,35
Could both the teacher's and the student's answers be correct?	3 questions	31,32,33

Technique in collecting the data is questionnaire. The data will be collected by distributing from the students. There are five classes; VIIIA has 36 students, VIIIB has 36 students, VIIC has 34 students, VIID has 33 students, VIIE has 27 students, and the total is 166 students. In this research the researcher used sample cluster and took the eighth grade which consists of one class, it class VIII A that has 36 students. The result of this questionnaire is described to some problems in reading comprehension that faced by the students.

Table 3.2. The Populations of the Research

No	Class	Number of Students
1	VIII A	36 students
2	VIII B	36 students
3	VIII C	34 students
4	VIII D	33 students
5	VIII E	32 students
Total		166 students

Table 3.3. The Sample of the Research

No	Class	Number of Students
1	VIII A	36 students
Total		36 students

The following procedures will be done to collect the data:

- (1) Asking permission to conduct a research at this school.
- (2) Making the questions as questionnaire.
- (3) Determining the students as respondents.
- (4) Giving the questionnaire to students.
- (5) Collecting the questionnaire from students.
- (6) Gathering students' work, in this case is data of questionnaire written by them.

The technique used in analyzing the data in this research according [7] stated that the data analysis consists of three plots of activity.

1. Data reduction

In this stage, the writer will reduce data from the raw data which is found from questionnaire in this research. It means that the writer will categorize, tabulate, and calculate the information from questionnaire. Data of questionnaire written by the students will be reduced in which they have “Yes” and “No” optional answers.

2. Data display

In this stage, the writer will display the data obtained from the previous technique into table and arrange the data into good order so that the structure of the data will be easily understood.

3. Conclusion Drawing/Verification

This is final stage of data analysis of the study in which the writer will draw a conclusion based on the findings.

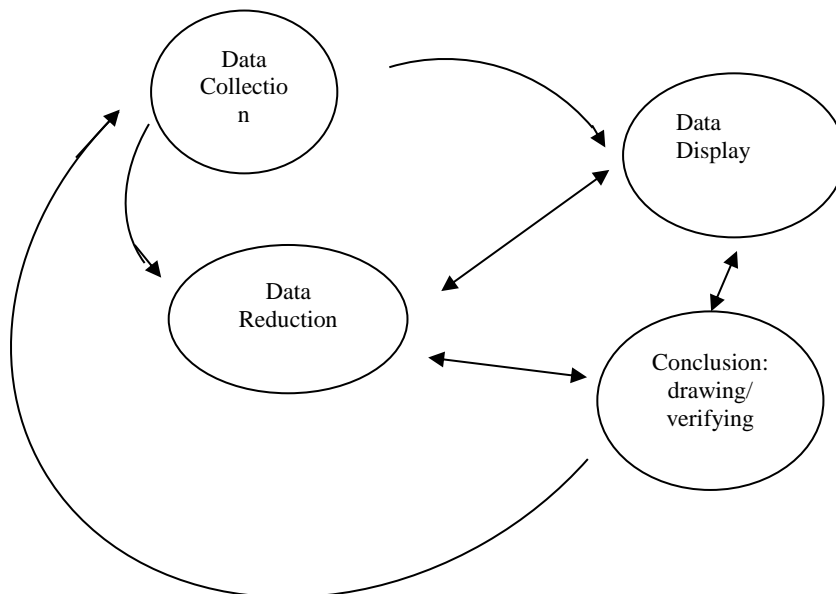


Fig. 1. Framework of Analyzing Data

3. Results and Discussions

The research was carried out by class VIIIA has 36 students. However, when researcher gave questionnaires, there were only about 34 students. The researcher found the students' problems in reading comprehension are: Prior knowledge, interest, decoding, the type of text being used, vocabulary, the quality of literacy instruction, independent practice, answering question in reading, understanding the question in reading, interested in the text, being an active reader, instruction between the teacher and student to answer the question in reading, following direction, and purpose.

Discussions

The description above showed that the student's problems in reading comprehension are: their *prior knowledge*. It means that most of students have no experience about topic they read and never read it before. *Interest*, most of students rarely take the time regularly to read and go to the library to borrow a book. Therefore some of them have no interested to increase their English language. *Decoding*, they have difficulty to guess the meaning of words through a context and orally. *The type of text being used*, it can be known that most of students have no knowledge about the text and don't understand the text in the form of data.

Their *vocabulary* and the *quality of literacy instruction*, it means that students have been asked to read a book in library. However, there is almost a half who has not been asked yet. Meanwhile the quality of literacy instruction is needed to support the students in learning. *Independent practice*, It is a problem because most of students seldom take the time regularly to read and discuss about what they read while it is extremely important for them to develop their knowledge especially in learning English language. *Answering question in reading*, most

of students have difficulty to answer the question correctly. *Understanding the question in reading*, the students also have difficulty to understand the question in the text. *Interested in the text*, it means that most of students sometimes dislike their reading material. *Being an active reader*, it means most of students still a passive reader they don't want to try to find the difficult words to read a book or open the dictionary.

And also *instruction between the teacher and student to answer the question in reading*, it is not a problem because both teacher and students have a good instruction the teacher always helps his students and gives a correction if their answer is wrong. *Following direction*, it also is not a problem because the students always follow the direction of their English teacher to read the book.

The last is *purpose*. But it also is not a problem because only (17.50%) students who had problem in purpose. It can be inferred that most of students hadn't problem in purpose. They always read the instruction when doing something and always read a question before reading the text.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded students have problem in reading comprehension.

4. Conclusions

The students' problems in reading comprehension are: Prior knowledge, interest, decoding, the type of text being used, vocabulary, the quality of literacy instruction, independent practice, answering question in reading, understanding the question in reading, interested in the text, and being an active reader. Thus, it is expected that teachers have to provide the knowledge about the material that will be taught to the students in advance before beginning the lesson. This will help students activate their prior knowledge related to the material that will be taught. Teachers have to increase the interest of students by asking them to go to the library to read a book and it is hoped the teachers can ensure that the student's assignment involves material at a more acceptable level of difficulty.

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