

USING ASSESSMENT OF READING TEST

Analysis of Reading Comprehension Problems toward the Ninth Graders

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Abstract

The difficulty to understand a text in English has become common problem for young learners having English as Foreign Language. Through preliminary investigation, problems about reading comprehension were identified. Some students have gotten background knowledge about short functional text in form of descriptive and recount text in eight graders. This study examines reading comprehension problems about those types of text toward the ninth graders in the level of Junior High School in Indonesia. This is a case study research. The purpose is to explain the main English reading comprehension problem encountered by the ninth graders after doing reading test. Finding revealed problems from literal and interpretive comprehension level of reading based on the result of all students' answer.

Keywords: comprehension, ninth grade of EFL learners, reading comprehension, reading comprehension level

Introduction

Reading is confessed as one of the most crucial skill; in fact in many cases around the world people may argue that reading is the most important foreign language skill (Shaw, 2003, p. 89). Reading skill plays a role in the learning process and this skill becomes the only way that helps students to keep contact with English (Ahmed, 2016). According to Broughton in Tarigan (1986, p. 12) one of aspects from reading comprehension is to comprehend simple understanding, as grammatical, rhetorical and lexical. In SMP N 8 Jambi City in Indonesia, the Ninth Graders has been studied materials about descriptive and recount text, both of texts demand the students to know grammatical, rhetorical and lexical in each text type. Dealing with those reason, this study examines the main reading comprehension problems encountered by the ninth graders at SMP N 8 Jambi City, Indonesia.

Comprehension is making a sense out of a text as the result of interaction between the perception of graphic symbols that represent language and the reader's prior knowledge (McNeil, 1992).

Reading Comprehension is as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing toward a meaning through interaction and involvement with written language (Mukhroji, 2011).

Reading Comprehension Level

According to Mohammad in Isnaini (2010, p. 13) in Mira (2011, p. 12), there are three standard of comprehension level, they are:

- a. Literal Comprehension, this level involves surface meaning; the teacher can ask students to find information and ideas that are explicitly stated in the text. It is also appropriate to test vocabulary.
- b. Interpretive or referential comprehension, students go beyond what is said and read for deeper meaning. In this level they must be able to read critically and analyze carefully what they have read. Students need to be able to see relationship among ideas.
- c. Critical reading, the students should criticize what the text inform or discuss about. They have to evaluate the ideas presented by the writers in the text. Critical evaluation occurs only after students have understood the ideas and



information that the writers have presented.

Methodology

Duff (1990, p. 35) in Nunan (1995) states case study may be based on particular groups such as group dynamic within a classroom, an organization, an event and a process. This research is a case study research involving two classes as a sample in which the total students are 67 students. The purpose is to explain the literal reading comprehension problem encountered by the ninth graders. This case study method uses quantitative data which are taken from students’ score in reading comprehension task. The instrument used in this research is a reading comprehension test in form of short answer task.

According to Pandiya (2013, p. 48) for scoring scale of reading test, there are two alternatives; subjective test and objective test. Scoring system of objective test is clear, just 1 for correct answer, and 0 for wrong answer. But, this research uses subjective test where the variety of scoring scale can be based on the levels of cognitive domain, whether it is knowledge, comprehension, application, or evaluation. The researcher takes score based on the analytical scoring rubric which is designed based on Categories for reading comprehension assessment.

The researcher collected the data from the result of the task that consists of 25 items with several points which were conducted in each item. The task was used to measure students’ reading comprehension competences in form of score. After the data was collected and checked, the researcher did an analysis of the quantitative data in statistical analysis. The time which is provided to answer the task was two meetings or 80 minutes. It was based on standard meeting; 1 meeting per 40 minutes.

Findings and Discussion

Finding revealed problems from comprehension level of reading based on the result of all students’ answer. There were

four indicators of literal reading comprehension, and four indicator of Interpretive or referential comprehension that have been described below:

Table 1. The Percentage of All Students’ Answers for Each Item

Variable	Indicator	Items	% in each indicator	
<i>Literal Comprehension (Basic reading)</i>	Recognize the true meaning of words in the paragraph.	(1) (2) (16)	92.83%	
	Able to identify reference words of the text.	(20) (25)	85.39%	
	Able to distinguish fact and details only.	(3) (4) (7) (24)	77.67%	
	Able to identify what was written by an author in text	(11) (18) (22) (23)	56.75%	
	<i>Interpretive or referential comprehension</i>	Able to describe fact and detail information from the text.	(8) (9) (13)	72.49%
		Able to respond the author’s meaning, feeling and attitude in the text.	(6) (19) (21)	36.37%
		Able to infer the main idea when this is not explicitly stated in text.	(12) (14) (17)	86.69%
		Able to respond an opinion and provide general support and facts from the text.	(5) (10) (15)	63.01%

Literal comprehension variable revealed basic competences of the Ninth Graders’ reading comprehension. From the basic competences, this level involved surface meaning such as to find information and ideas that were explicitly stated in the text. Based on findings, the first indicator was the highest percentages; 92,83%, that almost of students can answer this question. And then, the lowest percentage was the

fourth-indicator which stated that students should be able to identify what was written by an author in text, but the result of students' correct answer indicated at least half of total students can answer perfectly. It is 56,78%.

While in interpretive or referential comprehension variable, students should be able to read English texts critically and comprehended carefully what they read. Based on findings, from each indicator, one out of four indicators was the lowest percentage of all indicators, it was 36,37%. It also indicated that the students did not have enough competences to response the author's meaning, feeling, and attitude in the text. And then, the last indicator also had low percentage, where it indicated that there was at least half percentage of total calculation was correct answer; 63,01%.

Conclusion

Finally, the main reading comprehension problems faced by the Ninth Graders at SMPN 8 Kota Jambi are taken from the lowest percentage of the result in reading test below:

1. Many students were not able to respond the author's meaning, feeling and attitude in the text. It is explained on table of interpretive comprehension level that students' achievement is 36.37%. It means that most students cannot answer all questions related to this indicator.
2. Many students were not able to identify what authors were written in text. It is explained on table of literal comprehension level that students' achievement is 56.75% correct. It means just half of total students can answer all questions related to this indicator.
3. Many students were not able to respond an opinion and provide general support or fact from the text. It is explained on table of interpretive comprehension level with students' achievement is 63.01%. It is good enough achievement, but the teacher need to improve skill related to this indicator.

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