ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION IN COMPREHENDING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

[1][*]**SukartaKartawijaya**
[1]*Sekolah TinggiIlmuEkonomiSaktiAlamKerinci*
[*]*arumisyakira@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

This aim of the research was to analyze students' ability in comprehending descriptive text at grade VIII of SMP Negeri 1Kota Sungai Penuh academic year 2016/2017. The population of this research was students at grade VIII of SMP Negeri 1 Kota Sungai Penuh.The sample was taken by using cluster sampling technique.The data of this study were students' ability in comprehending descriptive text. It was focused in generic structure and specific information. The data was collected by using reading test. To know the validity and reliability of the test, the writer used Pearson Product Moment and Spearman-Brown formula. It was found that the reliability of the test was high correlation (0.61).The result of the data showed that the students' reading ability in comprehending the descriptive text was low. It could be seen from the data, the majority of the students got high score was 4.76 %, and the total of low score was 33.33 %.Connected to the result, the writer suggests the students to practice their reading ability aspecially in descriptive text. If they practice more, they will have good reading ability. To the English teachers, the writer suggests to give more explanation and exercises for students related with descriptive text. Then for the other researcher, the writer suggests to study the students' difficulties in descriptive text.
Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Descriptive Text

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kemampuan siswa dalam memahami teks deskriptif pada kelas VIII SMP Negeri 1 Kota Sungai Penuh tahun ajaran 2016/2017. Populasi penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VIII SMP Negeri 1 Kota Sungai Penuh, dan sampel diambil dengan teknik cluster sampling.Data penelitian ini adalah kemampuan siswa dalam memahami teks deskriptif. Ini difokuskan pada struktur generik dan informasi spesifik. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan uji bacaan. Sebelum penulis memberikan tes baca ke sampel, tes tersebut diujicobakan. Untuk mengetahui validitas dan reliabilitas uji, penulis menggunakan rumus Pearson Product Moment dan Spearman-Brown. Ditemukan bahwa reliabilitas uji korelasi tinggi (0,61).Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan membaca siswa dalam memahami teks deskriptif rendah. Bisa dilihat dari data, mayoritas siswa mendapat skor tinggi adalah 4,76%, dan total skor rendah adalah 33,33%.Berkaitan dengan hasilnya, penulis menyarankan agar siswa mempraktikkan kemampuan membaca mereka secara khusus dalam teks deskriptif. Jika mereka berlatih lebih banyak, mereka akan memiliki kemampuan membaca yang baik. Kepada guru bahasa Inggris, penulis menyarankan untuk memberikan lebih banyak penjelasan dan latihan untuk siswa yang terkait dengan teks deskriptif. Kemudian untuk peneliti lainnya, penulis menyarankan untuk mempelajari kesulitan siswa dalam teks deskriptif.
Kata Kunci: PemahamanMembaca, Teks Descriptive

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a 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, report, procedure, etc. The students have to know the definition, characteristics of the texts and language features of the texts.

However, based on the writer's observation in SMP N 1 Kota Sungai Penuh and the result of discussion with English teachers, it could be said that the students' reading ability were low especially in comprehended the text. In fact, it was really hard for them to get the information, to comprehend the text and to identify the reading text. Besides, students had 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.

Descriptive text is one of the genres, and it is taught by English teacher of SMP N 1 Kota Sungai Penuhat grade VIII in order to make students know how to describe person, place or thing. However, many students had difficulties in understanding descriptive text on generic structure and language feature of descriptive text. Therefore, the students could not describe the generic structure and the language feature of the text. As a 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.

From the explanation above, there were some problems faced by students in comprehending reading text. Those problems were caused by several factors. First, students' reading ability was relatively low because they were not interested to read English text. Then, they did not have way to read the text so that they could get the meaning of the 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, teachers 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 exercises for students were to finish pages in the text book as their homework because there were no enough times to finish them in the classroom. In this case, the writer was interested in investigating the students' ability in comprehending text at grade VIII of SMP N 1Kota Sungai Penuh academic year 2016/2017.

Related to the identification of the problems above, the researcher limited her research on investigating the students' ability in descriptive text such as generic structure and the specific information of descriptive text.

This research was important for both the teacher and students of SMP N 1 Kota Sungai Penuhat grade eighth. There were two significances of this research:
1. It was valuable as an input and contribution to the Junior High School teachers in teaching reading, especially in teaching descriptive text in order to make the students were involved in the learning process, and made the students were interested in reading English text.

2. The students wouldknow their reading ability and it would motivate them to enrich their skill in reading especially in reading descriptive text.
3. The other writer coulduse this research as references who would conduct the same research.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reading is the activity of understanding written text. A reader applies different strategies to read a text. When reading a text, a reader finds particular information. However, a reader needs to read more carefully to find specific information. 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.

According to Richard and Schmidt (2002: 443), there are some definitions of reading:

1. Reading perceives a written text in order to understand its contents.
   This can be done silently (silent reading). The understanding that results is called reading comprehension.
2. Saying a written text aloud (oral reading).

This can be done with or without an understanding of the contents. Different types of reading comprehension are often distinguished, according to the reader's purposes in reading and the type of reading used:

a) Literal comprehension, reading isin order to understand, remember, or recall the information explicitly contained in a passage.
b) Inferential comprehension, reading in order to find information which is not explicitly stated in a passage, using the reader's experience and intuition, and by inferring.
c) Critical or evaluative comprehension, Rreading in order to compare information in a passage with the reader's own knowledge and values.

d) Appreciative comprehension, reading in order to gain an emotional or other kind of valued response from a passage.

Then, Anderson in Nunan (2003:68) says that reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning. These show that the information on the text is not enough to make a reader comprehends a text. In order to comprehend a text, a reader brings his previous knowledge or experience on the topic and related it to the information in the text.

Khand (2004: 43) also states that reading is a receptive language process. It is the process of recognition,interpretation, and perception of written or printed materials. Reading proficiency playsa great role in understanding a written statement accurately and efficiently.

Moreover, Barnett, Carrell&Eisterhold in Khand (2004: 44) says that the basic concept is that the reader reconstructs the text information based inpart on the knowledge drawn from the text and in part from the prior knowledge availableto the reader. Reading is thus viewed a kind of dialogue between the reader and the text. It means that a reader needs to make the words meaningful by involving background knowledge or experience of the topic. If a reader does not read to understand, then he reads for nothing.

Furthermore, Taylor (1995:251) stresses that a reader's background knowledge plays a crucial part in the reading comprehension process. People comprehend reading material by relating the new information in the text to their background knowledge. Readers use their background knowledge as they read in order to make inference regarding unstated information and also to make elaborations that enhance their comprehension.

In Wikipedia (2010: 1) stated that reading comprehension is the ability to read text, process it and understand its meaning. An individual's ability to comprehend text is influenced by their traits and skills, one

of which is the ability to make inferences. If word recognition is difficult, students use too much of their processing capacity to read individual words, which interferes with their ability to comprehend what is read. There are a number of approaches to improve reading comprehension, including improving one's vocabulary and reading strategies.

From some definition about reading and reading comprehension above, it is clear that reading is an interactive process between the reader and the text. In the process, the reader involves actively to construct the meaning to get comprehension. In constructing the meaning, adding word meaning together in the text is not enough to comprehend the text, a reader needs to bring what he/she knows about the topic and related it to the information on the text. So in comprehending a text, readers should have their own strategy. Strategy refers to how readers make sense of what they read and what they do when they do not understand something in the text. It is also important for teacher to teach students the reading strategies.

In addition, there are four types of reading. According to Brown (2004: 189-190), several types of reading performance are typically identified, and these will serve as organizers of various assessment tasks. The four types are:

1. Perceptive

Perceptive reading tasks involve attending to the components of larger stretches of discourse: letters, words, punctuation, and other graphemic symbol. 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 tasks are used: picture-cued tasks, matching, true/false, multiple choice, etc. stimuli include sentences, brief paragraph, and simple charts and graphs. Brief responses are intended as well.

3. Interactive

Interactive reading types are stretches of language of several paragraphs to one page or more in which the reader must, in a psycholinguistics sense, interact with the text. That is, reading is a process of negotiating meaning; the reader brings to the text a set of schemata for understanding it, and in take is the product of that interaction.

4. Extensive

Extensive reading applies to texts of more than a page, up to and including professional articles, essays, technical reports, short stories, and books. (It should be noted that reading research commonly refers to "extensive reading" as longer stretches of discourse, such as long articles and books that are usually read outside a classroom hour. Here is the definition messaged a little in order to encompass any text longer than a page).

There are some kinds of text that is called genre. One of the texts is descriptive text. Wishon and Burks (1968: 322) states: "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 scene or a person or to understand a sensation or an emotion".

Bima and Kurniawan in Hami (2011: 1) state that descriptive text is a text which sayas what a person or thing is like. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing. Descriptive text stretches out manyinformation about certain people, things, and person clearly and detail.

In addition, Puguh (2011: 1) define that descriptive text is a text which says what a person or a thing is like. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing.

Breston in Rahma (2005: 7) proposes two types of description which will find

most useful namely description of a place and description of the person. In the same page, Rahma states the descriptions into three steps below:

a. Begin the descriptions with a topic sentences that introduce the person, place or object and if it is possible the general impression of the object.

b. Present the supporting sensory details and logical order using chronological order, or order importance if we use chorological order, present the details in the order in which they exist in space. For example: from left to right, top to bottom, or from to back. If we use order by importance we may start with least important details. Continue with the most important details. With east details the other hand, we must capture the readers authentic by starting with the strongest details and continue with less striking details reinforce the impression created by the first details.

c. Use the transitional words and phrase and emphasize the order of the description.

d. Place each group of related details in a paragraph if the details contain many details.

e. Conclude with a sentence that restate the general impression or indicates the end of description.

It can be said the text has different form of generic structure, and language feature. There are two generic structure of descriptive text and each text has its own generic structure.

Mabruroh (2011: 25-25) explains the language features of descriptive text as follows:

1. Specific participant
   a) Certain noun for example; my car, my dog, my new house; but if (car, dog, dolphin and etc) are not allowed.
   b) The use of detail noun phrase for example I have a white skinned girl friend.
   c) The use of adjectives that have features describing, numbering,

classifying; for example two strong legs.
   d) The use of thinking verb and feeling verb to express private writer opinion about the subject, for example I think it is clever animal, Police believe the suspect is armed.
   e) The use of action verb for example my cat eats my mouse.
   f) The use of figurative language like that simile, metaphor, for example John is white as chalk.

2. Simple present tense for example; I live in simple house, the house is very beautiful, it has a wonderful park.

Then, Puguh (2011: 1) describe the Language Feature of Descriptive Text:
- Using attributive and identifying process.
- Using adjective and classifiers in nominal group.
- Using simple present tense

From the explanation above, the genres or kind of texts have different form of the generic structure, and language features. In descriptive text, the generic structures are identification and description while the language features used is simple present tense, the use of action verb, noun, adjectives and etc. By learning the genre, the students can know the different of the texts especially in descriptive text.

RESEARCHSTUDY

The form of this research was a descriptive research. The aim was to analyze the students' ability in comprehending descriptive text. Gay (1987: 189) states that descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. This study was done in order to get description about students' ability in comprehending descriptive text.

Gay (1987: 188) also states that descriptive research is useful in investigating many kinds of educational problem. Sellinger and Shohami in Octavia (1999: 23) affirm that descriptive research

involves a collection of techniques used to specify, delineate, or describe naturally occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation.

The population of this study was all of the eighth students of SMP N 1Kota Sungai Penuh academic year 2016/2017. They were chosen because they learned about text especially descriptive text. The sample was taken by using cluster sampling technique. According to Gay (1987: 110) cluster sampling is sampling techniques in which the sample is in group and do not individuals are randomly selected. Furthermore Gay (1987: 114) says that in descriptive study, the sample should be at least 10% of the population. At grade VIII of SMP N 1 Kota Sungai Penuh, there were several classes.

In this case, one of the two classes would become the sample and it would be chosen with cluster sampling because there were several classes were homogeny since they were taught by the same teacher with the same materials. The writer used the following formula:

$$S_X{}^2 = \sqrt{\frac{n.\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2}{n(n-1)}}$$

$$S_Y{}^2 = \sqrt{\frac{n.\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2}{n(n-1)}}$$

$$F = \frac{S_{besar}}{S_{kecil}}$$

This testing was conducted by comparing the value of F_{count} and F_{table}. If F_{count} was smaller than F_{table} ($t_{count} \quad t_{table}$), it was homogeny and if $F_{count} > F_{table}$, it was not homogeny.

The instrument in this research was reading descriptive text test. The students were asked to answer the question that focuses on generic structure and specific information of descriptive text. The writer asked the students to answer the questions in 60 minutes. The form of the test was multiple choices and found specific information from the text.

As already discussed previously, the students' ability in comprehending descriptive text was not good, either their ability to comprehend generic structure and specific information. There were several students had comprehend descriptive text, they only make several mistakes but most of them did not comprehend it. See the table of students' score in the following:

No	Interval	F	Number of Students	Grade
1	80 - 100	A	1	Excellent
2	75 – 79, 9	B+	1	Very Good
3	70 – 74, 9	B	3	Good
4	65 – 69, 9	C+	1	Enough
5	60 – 64, 9	C	6	Average
6	50 – 59, 9	D	2	Poor
7	< 50	E	7	Fail

Based on the table above, it was know that most of the students failed in comprehending descriptive text. Only one student got A (excellent), one student got B+ (very good), there were three students got B (good), one students got C+ (enough), six students got C (average), two students got D (poor), and there were seven students got E (fail). It was proved that students did not understand the descriptive text. Besides that, there were several mistakes that they did in comprehending specific information in descriptive text, they could not get the information from the reading text. Related with the data analysis

above, it showed the students' ability in comprehending descriptive text was low.

Based on these findings, it can be seen that the students felt hard to get the information from the text. In this case, the students did not use their background knowledge when understanding the text, and the students did not know the rules of each text. As a result they failed to understand the text. Johnson says (2002:43) when the students can connect what they are learning with their own experience, they discover meaning, and meaning give them a reason for learning. Having a reason to learn, ofcourse, make the students are interesting to learn. When the students are interested to learn, the positive attitude usually follow (Whitcher, 2005:2).

In addition, thinking critically is the ability to reason in organized way. This is an important mental activities in comprehending a reading text because reading comprehension is an active process between the reader and the text and in the process the reader need to to bring what he/she knows about the topic and related it to the information on the text. Thinking critically make the students use their knowlegde and intelligence effectively (Caroll, 2004).

In conclusion, in teaching reading comprehension, the students have to get the meaning from the text. This process involved the students' background knowlegde about the topic of the text. The students begin to contruct meaning by relating what they know to the new information in the text. When they got problem in doing it, they formulate the problem, gather the data by reading the text and after that they analize the data to come to a conlusion. In the teaching process, teacher helps it to make the process of understanding the text easier.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the analysis, the writer concluded that in general, the students' ability SMP Negeri 1Kota Sungai Penuh academic year 2016/2017 in comprehending descriptive text was low, because most of the students failed in comprehending descriptive text. Only one student got A (excellent), 1 student got B+ (very good), three students got B (good), 1 student got C+ (enough), six students got C (average), two students got D (poor), and there were most of them or seven students got E (fail). It was proved that the student did not understand the descriptive text.

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