

IDENTIFYING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION CONSTRAINTS OF 4TH SEMESTER ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF ISLAM MALANG

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Abstract: This article aims at knowing the students' reading constraints from two aspects; constraints in major reading skill and difficult text type for the students. The research design in this study is descriptive quantitative research. The subject of this study is 4th semester students of English Department, and it consists of 30 students. The researcher used two instruments; a questionnaire and reading test. The participants took reading test after filled the questionnaire. The finding of the study is that the reading comprehension constraints faced by the students are getting the detailed information and understanding the reading text. These constraints seem inseparable since each constraint would affect the other. Then, narrative text is actually considered as the most difficult text in questionnaire result, and descriptive text is found as difficult text based on reading test result. The result is different because of the students might pay more attention on the difficult text that they have admitted in questionnaire. Therefore, the most difficult English text type is descriptive text, followed by narrative text.

Key Words: Reading Comprehension, Reading Constraints

INTRODUCTION

English is an international or foreign language that mostly used in educational approaches. There are four skills in English. Those are speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Generally, all these four English skill are very important, but of the four English language skills, reading is a primary skill in learning English. Yunus and Parlindungan (2012) stated that as one of the significant abilities in English, reading should be learned and helped in a legitimate manner to get better English capability. In line with this issue Anderson in Suhendri (2002) said that reading is a process of constructing meaning from written language. Accordingly, it should be focused on the beginning of learning English. Through reading, learners will learn a new vocabulary and right spelling which really helps learners to develop the other three skills. The more students read, the better they will build their critical mindset in English.

The process of comprehending text by the students is not instantly at ease. According to A'yun and Yunus (2017), to understand the entire text, readers must decode the text and

make interpretations. As a result, they have a framework for comprehending the text. This complex process makes some learners face difficulties in comprehending the reading text. Some problems are faced by EFL students in comprehending English texts (Iklima, Yunus, Sholihah, 2020). This statement was stated after the researchers found issues faced by the students in understanding the concept of the text and difficulties in knowing unfamiliar vocabularies. According to Indriastuti (2021), although the quantitative target for the number of readings can be achieved if an extensive reading approach is applied, in terms of quality, not all students have good reading skills. This shows that not all students can carry out reading activities fluently, they must face difficulties. The students find difficulties in processing written text, such as lack of vocabulary, lack of prior knowledge, limited time, and obstacles in concluding the passage.

Reading comprehension is a mixed process from linked vocabularies until students' knowledge to the text (Qrquez & Ab Rashid, 2017). This complex process affects students' difficulties in reading. Poor readers who have less time in reading definitely get problem in understanding vocabulary and text message. All the students face various difficulties in reading comprehension, and the various constraints are formed depend on their reading frequency.

Previous researchers haven't done any research about students' constraints in major reading skill. The research about difficult text among three types of reading text also hasn't done yet in higher education level. Therefore, the researcher wants to conduct a research to know students' reading comprehension constraints and difficult text type for higher level students.

METHOD

The researcher used descriptive quantitative research as research design. According to Surakhmad (1982), quantitative method is a method used in research by measuring indexes of research variables to get an overview among these variables. Simply, quantitative research is a knowledge-seeking process that uses data in the form of numbers as a way to find information about what we want to know. Descriptive research method is a research method that describes (photographs) current issues. The use of this descriptive quantitative method is suitable for research variables that focus on real-life problems and phenomena in the form of research results in the form of meaningful numbers.

Descriptive research design is considered to use in this research because its purpose is to getting further information and telling of the details about the social phenomenon

discussed in this study. Descriptive research is chosen because this research design is able to systematically describe the students' constraints.

The subject of this study is 4th semester students of English Department at University of Islam Malang. The total selected students to be participants in this study were 30 students. The researcher chose the participants randomly.

In this study, the researcher used two instruments to collect the data; a questionnaire and a reading test. The questionnaire was adopted from previous research in order to get adequate and valid data. The researcher combined Material for English Proficiency Test from Foreign Language Development Center (FLDC) University of Islam Malang and Detik-Detik UNBK Bahasa Inggris 2018 as reading test to get reliable data. The participants filled the questionnaire first, and then they answered the reading test. The data in this study was processed by using framework developed by Surakhmad; Searching, Collecting, Classifying, Analyzing, Interpreting, Describing Conclusion. This framework is followed in line with the purpose of the study which the researcher interested to find and describe the students' reading comprehension constraints.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

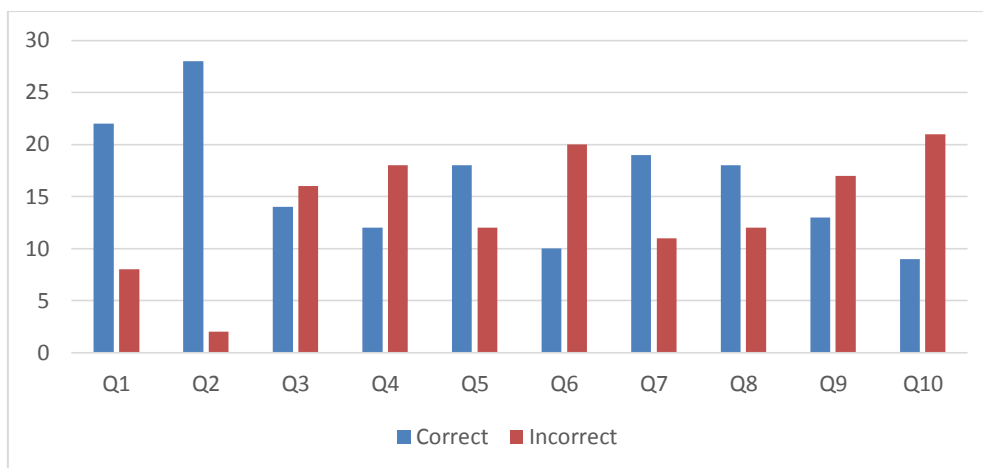
Questionnaire Result

Based on the questionnaire filled by the participants, the researcher summarized the student's experiences which explained students learning in reading class. From the questionnaire result, it shows that 55% of the participants admitted that narrative text is difficult, 37% of the participants admitted that descriptive text is difficult, and the rest of participants (8%) admitted that recount text is difficult. We can conclude that the most students at 4th semester of English Department consider the narrative text as the most difficult text type among the three.

In the questionnaire result, researcher found that getting detailed information and understanding reading text are the frequently reading constraints faced by the students. Then, difficulty in defining vocabulary is in second place constraints to frequently find by the students. The fact that three constraints are related to each other is found in the questionnaire result filled by the students.

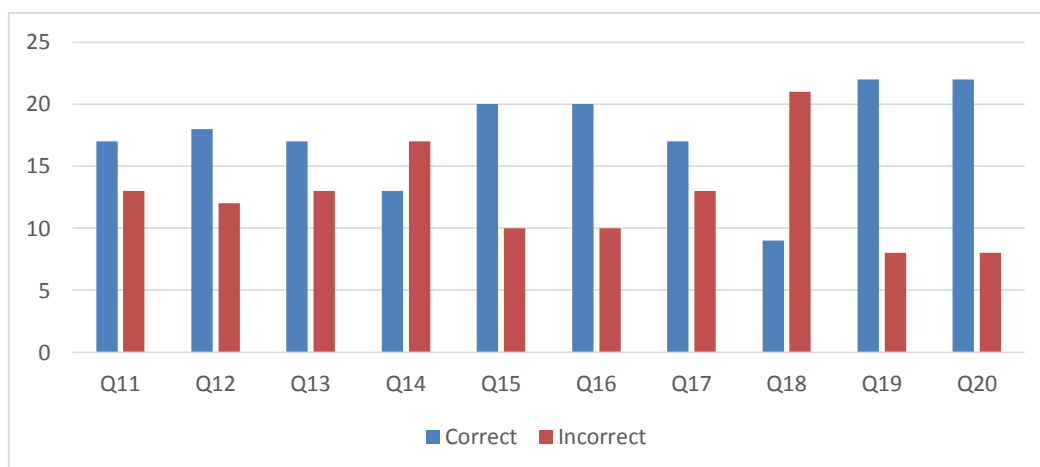
Reading Test Result

The result of the reading text showed that only 7 students who were able to give correct answer for more than 20 reading test questions.



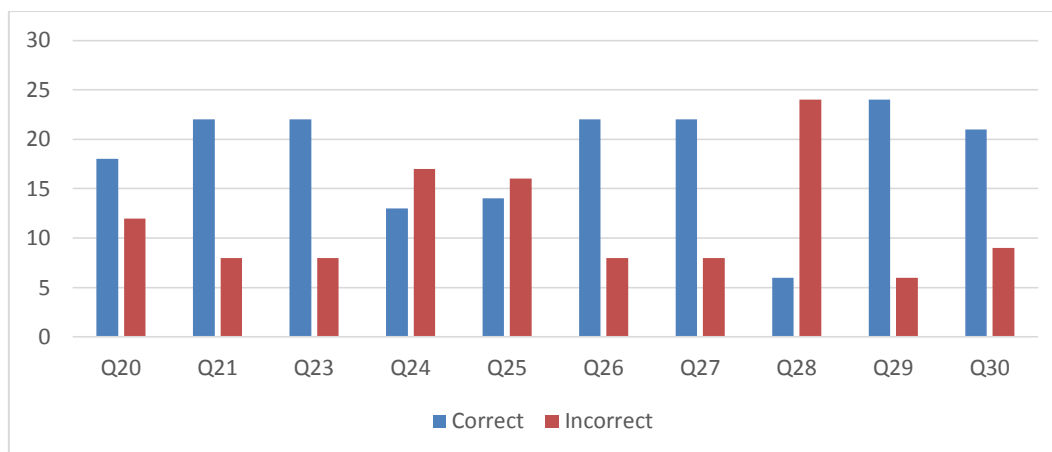
Picture 1. The Diagram of Descriptive Text in Reading Test Result

In the picture 1, it is the diagram of descriptive text in reading test that has been given to the students. It shows the amount of students who answer correct and incorrect in each descriptive text question. On average, there are 16 students able to answer in each descriptive text question correctly. Based on the diagram above, 10th question is the most difficult question to answer. The question is about concluding or recreating writer's idea, and the amount of the students who failed to answer this question is the highest.



Picture 2. The Diagram of Narrative Text in Reading Test Result

In the picture 2, it is the diagram of narrative text in reading test that has been given to the students. It shows the amount of students who answer correct and incorrect in each narrative text question. On average, there are 17 students able to answer in each question of narrative text. Based on the diagram above, 18th question is the most difficult to answer in narrative text question. The question is about concluding writer's idea by choosing true or false based on the text they have read, and 21 students failed in answering this question.



Picture 3. The Diagram of Recount Text in Reading Test Result

In picture 3, it is the diagram of recount text in reading test that has been given to the students. It shows the amount of students who answer correct and incorrect in each recount text question. On average, there are 18 students able to answer in each question of recount text. Based on the diagram, most of the students failed in answering 28th question. The question is about translating unfamiliar word by connecting to a sentence of the text. Only 6 students could answer this question correctly.

Discussions

The findings of this study show two points. First, the major constraints in reading comprehension are getting the detailed information and understanding the text proved by both questionnaire and reading test. The students admitted that they find difficulties in getting detailed information, and it makes them difficult to concluding writer's idea in reading test. The three constraints actually related and affect each other constraints. Second, the most difficult reading text type is descriptive text. It is proved by the amount of students who able to answer correctly in descriptive test is less than other text type. Based on the questionnaire, the students considered the narrative text as the most difficult one. This difference might be formed because of the constraints in the reading test. The narrative text type is the second difficult text in reading test result. The researcher believes that this difference appeared because every student has different difficulties in learning. Participants in the present study might have different ways in overcoming their difficulties, for example, they paid attention and chose answer carefully in the text that they considered as the most difficult.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

It can be concluded that the major constraints in reading comprehension are getting the detailed information and understanding the reading text. These two constraints seem

inseparable because the amount of students who sometimes still face these constraints is same. Then, the most difficult English text type is descriptive text, followed by narrative text. The result of questionnaire and reading test about difficult English text type is actually different. The researcher assume that the students paid attention more on the difficult text that they have been stated in questionnaire (narrative text) and gave less attention to the other text.

The suggestion for the teachers, they must recognize the students' difficulties in reading comprehension class, and select appropriate technique that can help the students in overcoming the obstacles in reading comprehension. The teacher also consider the material and class design which motivate the students in class and make students enjoy in reading English text. The teacher also could design the material in whole semester wisely in order to give the difficult material longer time allocation, so the students could have enough time to understand and overcome their difficulties.

For EFL Learners or English students, they have to be aware on difficulties in reading English text. They can seek or find the best solution for themselves. Moreover, the English students must escalate their reading intensity in order to train their reading comprehension skill.

For future researchers, they should find out the constraints that students faced on other skill in English study; listening, writing, or speaking. Then, it is suggested for future researcher to set effective and efficient research and to use more participants in future research. Also, the researcher is suggested to find students reading constrain from highest score to lowest score.

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