

STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN READING COMPREHENSION AND THE STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH THE DIFFICULTIES

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ABSTRACT

The aims of this research are to find out students' difficulties in reading comprehension and the strategies to deal with the difficulties. This study used a qualitative approach with case study design. In this study, the researcher employed a single instrumental case study, because the researcher only focus on high achievers. This current study involved 19 in this study were first grade students at SMA Hasyim Asy'ari Batu, and they were asked to do the test given by the researcher. The test consisted of four aspects (main idea, detail information, understanding vocabulary, and making inferences). The students' scores from the test were used to invite five students with the highest score to interview, the interview is used to find out the difficulties in reading comprehension and the strategies they use to deal with the difficulties. The collected data were then analyzed using the data from the test were analyzed descriptively by using formula percentage calculations, meanwhile, the data from the interview were analyzed by using transcription. The findings showed that students were still difficult with four types of difficulties in detail information, difficulty in understanding vocabulary, difficulty in determining main idea, and difficulty in making inference. Meanwhile, several factors that cause students' difficulties were difficulty in understanding long sentences in the text, difficulty in understanding vocabulary, and difficulty in concentration. The researcher discovered that the strategies they used to overcome their difficulties were by highlighting, translating, and reading repeatedly. It can be implied that they use cognitive strategies to deal with the problem.

Keywords: reading comprehension, descriptive text, reading difficulties, reading strategies

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian reading interest according PISA (2018) study released by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD as the organizer on Tuesday, December 3, 2019, it was shown that the ability of Indonesian students to read achieved an average score of 371, with an average OECD score of 487 Kemendikbud (2019). Thus, Indonesia is ranked 6th from the bottom or 74th. In more detail, based on the results of the PISA study, 30% of Indonesian students are at least Level 2 in reading ability. At a minimum, these students can identify a main idea from a medium-length reading, find information based on explicit, sometimes even complex criteria, and can find the purpose and form of the text when explicitly directed to do so OECD (2019). Based on these results, there are still many students who still have difficulties in reading comprehension.

Low interest in reading makes reading comprehension not good. This is due to two factors, internal and external factors. According to Rahim (2008), several internal factors affect students' reading, including difficulty understanding long sentences, difficulty in understanding vocabulary, and concentrating. There are several other external factors that affect students' reading comprehension according to Westwood (2008), which are environmental factors including home environment it cannot be neglected that parents play important role in the home. Reading comprehension learning issues in pupils can also be attributed to learning environment at school. To overcome reading comprehension difficulties, students need a strategy. The learning methods can be divided into cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies from this diversity of approaches (O'Malley et al., 1990). Metacognitive cognitive and socio-effective reading strategies play various roles in students' reading processes.

In teaching of reading in Indonesian context, must follow basic competence which was published by the government. According to basic competence which is issued by Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan the basic competence Merdeka of first-grade senior high school, the students are expected to comprehend social function, text structure, and language features in reading text (descriptive, narrative, recount text, and so on) in oral and written. However, in a real situation, so many students in Indonesia still have difficulties reading descriptive text, narrative text, recount text, and report text. There are some previous studies students' difficulties in reading comprehension on narrative text of the tenth grade by Putri (2018) the mostly difficulties in identify factual information (21.97%). The second students' difficulties in comprehending recount text at senior high school by Prayitno (2021) result of the study showed that there were 68.7% students had difficulties in finding the main idea. The third analysis' on students difficulties in reading report text at senior high school by Nasution (2022) found that the percentage of students difficulties in reading comprehension in narrative text understanding vocabulary 26.60%. There are some previous study an analysis of students' difficulties in reading text and strategies in overcoming the difficulties at senior high school by Fadillah (2019) they mostly tended to use metacognitive strategies 78% in reading comprehension. And the last cognitive strategies used to improve reading skill by English good achievers at senior high school by Tyas (2020) the result of this study use cognitive strategy are repletion, resourcing, and note talking.

Based on the description above, several previous studies were conducted at the senior high school level, demonstrating how crucial it is to be aware of the difficulties in reading comprehension. previous research has focused on narrative text, recount text, and report text. In this study, it is more focused on the type of descriptive text because it has not been widely researched, and previous research only focuses on difficulties in this study not only focuses on difficulties but also strategies.

METHODS

Research Design

This research investigated the students' difficulties in reading comprehension and the strategies to deal with the difficulties. This research used a qualitative approach and case study as the research design is to be more detailed and focused on finding the students' difficulties in reading comprehension and strategies to deal with the difficulties. Based on the bounded problem or case size, case studies are classified into three types Creswell (2016). There are several case studies, an intrinsic case study, and a single instrumental case study. In this study, the researcher employed a single instrumental case study because the researcher only focus on exploring case that were natural by high achievers students.

Participants

In collecting the data, the research was conducted in SMA Hasyim Asy'ari Batu. The participants of this research were first-grade students of SMA Hasyim Asy'ari Batu. The participants consisted of 19 students, with seven male and 12 female with ages 15-17 years. The students were given a test, that had been validated by teachers who teach, this study used participants final score taken from test to invite five students with high scores for interview session. Five students who were chosen to be interviewed are (ABR, YAF, KAS, NSU, and MSA) they have the highest scores during the test and they are female gender.

Instruments

In order to get the result of the research, the researcher used reading test and interview. The researcher used a test to collect the data to investigate the students' difficulties in reading comprehension, while the interviews were done to get more information to complete their answer from the test and strategies to deal with the difficulties. Both of the instruments of this research were self-constructed by the researcher with a validation advisor and teacher who teaches. Overall, A test with 10 multiple-choice questions that the researcher created was based on the reading comprehension test. There were five participants to interviewed from the high score on the test, in this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the data using interview guidelines as the instrument. The interview with Indonesian language and interview consisted of six questions: four for the opening and two for the main section of the interview. The two main questions were asked about difficulties in reading comprehension and strategies to deal with difficulties and used follow up questions. The interview guideline is self-constructed by the researcher with a validation advisor and teacher who teaches. After getting the feedback, the interview guideline is revised based on the comments and suggestions from the advisor and teacher who teach. The researcher establishes a self-construct interview guideline to obtain specific answers to the research question. The aim of using interviews in this research is to obtain a thorough grasp of the students' reading comprehension issues and the approach to solving them.

Data Collection

The first one of the researchers gave a test to 19 students, then the test was conducted at the school using paper, the test is carried out for 30 minutes, then the researcher corrected the test that had been done and gave value. three days later the researcher interviewed five students with the highest score based on the reading test given by the previous researcher. First of all, the researcher asked permission from the Students for the interview process with the invited students and for the willingness to be interview. Then the researcher interviewed the students one by one according to the interview questions that had been made. The interview had conducted face-to-face, the interview was carried out by the research a deep interview to discover the deepest information concerning the students' difficulties with internal or external factors and the strategies to cope with the difficulties, interview was conducted for 20-25 minutes. In order to collect additional information during the interview, the researcher used a mobile phone in this stage to record the data from the note-taking for the other instrument. After the interview was conducted by the researcher then the researcher transcription.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the researcher applied data analysis techniques. First, to find out the students' difficulties in reading comprehension test, the data from the test researcher use percentages. Secondly, interview data analysis Initially, the process involved identifying the students' voice notes by thoroughly listening to the recordings in multiple times and underlining their key points. Next, the recordings were transcribed, and the interview transcripts were re-read. Difficulties in reading comprehension, during this process were highlighted with yellow, red, and green color to indicate difficulties in reading comprehension and strategies were highlighted with

blue, purple, and brown. Finally, the data was presented based on the themes corresponding to each question.

Trustworthiness

Four strategies for building trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To guarantee the quality of this study, the researcher builds credibility to gain trustworthiness in the data. To build credibility the researcher used one of the techniques to build credibility, namely member checking. In member checking, the researcher showed the interview transcripts to ensure the data obtained was accurate data, and the researcher made a transcript for participants to review or comment on the interview data. The part had the opportunity to provide feedback about the interview data in which data may be added or subtracted. By doing this, the researcher could ensure that the interview is valid and verify that the research result can be trusted Doyle (2007).

FINDINGS

Students' Difficulties in Reading Descriptive Text

After computing the data, the result is presented below. to determine difficulties in the reading aspect, a descriptive percentage analysis was used, and a transcript interview. The result of the test students' difficulties in reading comprehension can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. The Classification of Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension

No.	Question items number	Types of Difficulties	Frequency	Percentage
1	2, 7	Detail information	38	35.2%
2	3, 5, 8, 10	Understanding vocabulary	31	28.6%
3	1, 4	Determining main idea	22	20.4%
4	6, 9	Making inference	17	15.8%
Total			108	100%

After classifying and analyzing the students' answer in reading comprehension test, the researcher finally found that were difficulties of students' reading comprehension which consisted, the difficulty in detail information got the highest percentage which was 38 or 35.2%. Then, it was followed by students' difficulty in understanding vocabulary with the percentage of difficulty was 31 or 28.6%. Also, the students had difficulty to determine the main idea with the percentage of difficulty was 22 or 20.4%. Moreover, the students did not have any difficulty in making inference with the percentage of difficulty was 17 or 15.8%.

Based on the result of interview, the first faced by the students is understanding long sentence in the text which, from five students who were interviewed regarding the causes of their reading difficulties, there were three people (ABR, YAF and KAS).

ABR: When reading very long text, it is difficult to find the information that is told in the text and what the meaning of the text is.

YAF: The difficulties I face are things that make me less concentrated and long sentence, for examples when I read the first sentence and continue reading to the next it makes me less focused.

KAS: Sometimes, concentration is my obstacle, so sometimes if I read long text and get distracted by small things or think about other things, it also becomes my weakness in reading.

The students' understanding of long sentences in the text is low, and they do not understand the meaning of the material. The student will need more time to search up the explanation of the word and the proper response because he or she does not grasp the text or the sentence. They look up the meaning of words in dictionaries because the difficulty in finding the information and meaning of the text also is caused by the lack of vocabulary mastery.

The second problem was difficulty in understanding the vocabulary, there are three (NSU, ABR, and MSA).

NSU: When I read, it is hard to read because there is a lot of vocabulary that I do not know and it is hard to find the information in the story.

ABR: When reading very long text, it is difficult to find the information that is told in the text and what the meaning of the text is.

MSA: Difficulties in concentrating and sometimes not understanding what the meaning.

Students who have difficulty could be said having a good mastery of vocabulary was really needed in reading the text in English. Based on the students' response, some students often could not understand the meaning of some vocabularies they found in the text. It was not the same as learning to read written texts as it was to learn to understand written texts, because they did not know what the word means, the students were unable to comprehend the content of the text.

The third problem was students' difficulty in concentration, from five students who were interviewed regarding the causes of their reading difficulties, there were three (YAF, MSA, and KAS).

YAF: The difficulties I face are things that make me less concentrated and long sentence, for examples when I read the first sentence and continue reading to the next it makes me less focused.

MSA: Difficulties in concentrating and sometimes not understanding what the meaning

KAS: Sometimes, concentration is my obstacle, so sometimes if I read long text and get distracted by small things or think about other things, it also becomes my weakness in reading.

The researcher found that the factor that caused students' difficulty in concentration of the text was they are lose concentration when reading the long sentence text, for example when they read the first sentence and continued reading to the next. It made them less focused. In addition, when they read the first paragraph and moved to the second paragraph and it made them lack of concentration. Besides that, they lost their understanding long sentence when the situation was crowded and noisy. Thus, it made them lose concentration to comprehend the text while reading the text.

The Strategies to Deal with the Difficulties

Based on the findings of the students' reading comprehension and difficulties in reading comprehension and continuing to interview section with first grade students,

following are the strategies to deal with difficulties. Based on the interview above, from five students (ABR, KAS, MSA, YAF, and NSU)

ABR: Usually I the method of reading over and over, highlighting and translating to find answers and their meanings.

KAS: To overcome my difficulties usually by marking and reading repeatedly.

MSA: I usually improve my reading comprehension using highlighting, translating and read repeatedly.

YAF: By reading repeatedly and taking the gist of reading from descriptive text.

NSU: To overcome difficulties in translating I usually mark the passages that I do not understand then I will translate the meaning using a dictionary.

Based on interviewed above strategies to deal with the difficulties from the researcher found that strategies to deal with difficulties when reading comprehension. To deal with difficulties in vocabulary they use translating, then when they have difficulty in concentration they choose to read over and over again, and when they have difficulties detail information they choose to highlighting the parts which they think are the points. It could be stated that the students to deal with the difficulties in reading comprehension used cognitive strategies.

DISCUSSION

The first problem faced by students was difficulties in detail information which got 35.2% of difficulties. The percentage indicated the first grade of students SMA Hasyim Asy'ari had difficulties in detail information. Most of the students failed in finding detailed information presented in the texts. It showed most of the students still have low understands material. Based on the data above, the researcher eventually stated that the majority of the students found them difficult to understand material that is directly stated in the text so they could not find. It might be happened because they rarely read and find it difficult to understand meaning of words in English. A study was done by Putri (2018) revealed the same result that difficulties in detail information was the most difficult aspect faced by students. The second aspect is the difficulty in understanding vocabulary which got 28.6% which was categorized high, it indicated that the first grade of students at SMA Hasyim Asy'ari Batu have difficulty in understanding vocabulary meaning. Most of the students failed in finding the meaning words presented in the texts. It showed most of the students still have lack of vocabulary knowledge. Based on the data above, the researcher eventually stated that the majority of the students found them difficulties so that they answered the wrong answer. It might be happened because the lack of vocabulary mastery. A study was done by Nasution (2022). Revealed the same result that understanding vocabulary was the most difficulties aspect faced by students. Based on students' result the students had difficulty in understanding vocabulary. The students could not understand what the text was about because they did not know the meaning of the words. The researchers found the students knowledge on vocabulary was lacking. They had to look up dictionary to find out meaning of the vocabulary. Sometimes, they ignored keywords in the text, so that they could not comprehend the text.

The third aspect is the difficulties in determining main idea which got 20.4%. it means that question is categorized fair, it indicated that the first grade students at SMA Hasyim Asy'ari Batu have difficulties in determining main idea of the passage. Because the statements is not written on the text, it can be difficulties to determining main idea of the which forms the core of a paragraph. Another reason is because the students did not use their background knowledge and the clues from the text to help them know the main idea in each paragraph. The last aspect is the difficulties in making inference which got 15.8%. it indicated that first grade students at SMA Hasyim Asy'ari Batu have difficulties in making

inference of the passage. It could be stated that the students have difficulties in making inference of the text they comprehended. It also aligns with Kopitski's (2007) assertion that in order to make conclusions, readers must practice synthesizing cues from the text with their prior knowledge. According to the description above, first grade students at SMA Hasyim Asy'ari Batu students had trouble in making inference, understanding vocabulary, detail information and determining main idea. the most difficulties aspect first grade students in reading comprehension is detail information, because the students were could not find detailed information in the text.

The researcher finally could draw a conclusion that were 3 factors that causes the students difficulties in reading comprehension. To begin with, the students still had a lack of vocabulary so it made them difficult to understand English text. Then this is line with the research finding conducted by Prayitno (2021). He found the reason why the students were unable to comprehend English text because their vocabulary mastery was really limited, and that vocabulary was the dominant factor for students' reading comprehension. The second factor was the difficulties to concentration in comprehending English reading the process of reading comprehension such as the students tended to lose their concentration while reading English text. Internal factors that influence students' reading comprehension are generally discovered by reader during reading, according to Rahim (2006), such as difficulty understanding long sentences and texts, difficulty caused by limited background knowledge, difficulties using reading strategies, and difficulties concentrating. Therefore, the loss of concentration while comprehending English text became the second factor that could bother the students in reading comprehension process. As a result of this issue, students who are unable to comprehend long sentences are unable to comprehend the main idea presented in the text. The last factor was the difficulties in understanding long sentences in the text when students read the text, they were unable to comprehend the meaning of the material or sentence. Students will require more time to search for the correct answer. They were unfamiliar with the text vocabulary.

In metacognitive strategies there are methods that involve planning, monitoring, and evaluation. in the planning because they are high school so there is no planning how much reading they should read, because they are still in high school they cannot manage what their future learning will be like and what should they do so they do not use these strategies. Then in social effectiveness there are strategies including taking emotional temperature, working with others, empathizing with others, worrying less, and pushing yourself. they do not use these strategies because they think that reading tests can't ask other people and reading descriptive is not too difficult so it doesn't drain emotions therefore they do not use these strategies. In addition, from the three strategies according to (O'Malley et al., 1990) were metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective. In this research found the results that the strategies that students use are more directed cognitive to deal with their difficulties. for the two strategies metacognitive and socio-affective, they do not use it maybe for them the two strategies are less effective for them to use.

In the difficulties in reading comprehension the students use strategies to deal with the difficulties, there were three strategies in reading comprehension. They were metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective. By exploring the result of the interview and the theories reviewed by the experts, it can be concluded that most of the first grade students of SMA Hasyim Asy'ari Batu described situation where they faced problem in reading in the same times they could solve these difficulties using method was to highlighting, translating and read repeatedly. They tended to answer the reading tests successfully using strategies especially the cognitive strategies. Then this is line with the research finding conducted by

Tyas (2020). Revealed the same result of this study show that good achievers in the tenth grade accounting that use cognitive strategy are repletion, resourcing and note talking.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In reading descriptive text are in terms. The difficulties faced by the students' detail information, vocabulary, determining main idea, and making inference. The most difficulties part of reading comprehension for students is difficulties in detail information which has the highest percentage. Secondly, based on the findings of the interview, the researcher also found that three factors, including difficult vocabulary, difficult long sentences, and difficult concentration, were affecting the students' difficulties in comprehending English reading material. It may be inferred that a number of first-graders struggled with reading lengthy texts and frequently lost focus when trying to understand English content due to their limited vocabulary knowledge. The last question is related to the strategies to deal with the problems. The researcher discovered that the strategies they used to overcome their difficulties was to highlighting, translating, and reading repeatedly, which was part of the cognitive strategies. It can be implied that they use cognitive strategies to deal with the problem.

According to the findings of the present research, the following recommendation are made to students, teachers, and future researchers. For students to read English texts more diligently so that their vocabulary increases and they can more easily understand the texts they read, students must also manage their learning and learn other strategies such as metacognitive and socio-affective. Teachers should be able to spot when a student is having difficulty understanding what they are reading and help them learn the best method for understanding what they are reading. Then, as a guide for students reading growth during the learning process, the teacher can also use this strategy. The teacher must have a planned reading habit such as extensive reading and using group reading. For future researchers, it is suggested that the future researcher can research the same case with a focus on moderate and low achievers.

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