

A Study on the Seventh Grade Students' Reading Comprehension Ability of Descriptive Texts at SMPN 6 Jember

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Abstract

Reading is very important for the students in learning English, especially for the students. The students are able to comprehend what they read to get the ideas and make a conclusion about the information from the text as intended by the writer. The design of this research was descriptive qualitative research. This research began by conducting a preliminary study by interviewing the English teacher of the seventh grade students of SMPN 6 Jember. The data of this research were collected from the students' of reading comprehension ability test that was analyzed by using the formula. The result of the students' reading comprehension ability of descriptive texts covering word comprehension, sentence comprehension, paragraph comprehension and text comprehension were showed the highest percentage of four indicators was word comprehension with the percentage 83.08% which belonged to the "very good" category and the lowest percentage was the text comprehension with the percentage 57.89% that was classified as "poor" category. It showed that the teaching English in reading comprehension ability of descriptive texts needs to be developed especially in the lowest category that was belonged to text comprehension.

Keywords: *Descriptive Research, Descriptive Texts, Reading Comprehension Ability.*

Introduction

English is a global language [1]. English may not be the most spoken language in the world, but it is the official language in a large number of countries. It is estimated that the number of people in the world use in English language. In Indonesia, English as is taught as a compulsory subject at Junior High School up to University as a foreign language.

The teaching of English is intended to master the four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing [2]. The English skills are divided into two categories. Some of the English skills are productive and receptive skills [8]. Speaking and writing are categorized as productive skills because these skills require the user of language to create a product in spoken or written form of language. On the other hand, reading and listening are categorized as receptive language process, the students receive input from what they read and listen then they cultivate the input, give some additional information, arrange them and produce them as output.

One of the language skills that students should master is reading. The main purpose of reading for pleasure or for information should be understood by the students [3]. So in this case, reading is one of the skills that should be mastered by the students who are learning English as a foreign language.

Reading comprehension is based on using the appropriate meaning-making processes from the printed messages. The students have to understand what the words mean, understand the sentences that make up the paragraph, and understand the whole text. In reading teaching learning activities the teacher needs teaching sources. One of them is a text. Text is a main component in the most of reading teaching learning activities. A good reading text can introduce interesting topics, stimulate discussion, excite

imaginative responses and be the springboard for well-rounded, fascinating lessons [5].

In junior high schools, there are some texts, such as recount text, narrative text, descriptive text and procedure text [2]. The researcher focuses on descriptive text because the descriptive text should be gave to the seventh grade level. Based on the preliminary study conducted by the researcher at SMPN 6 Jember, the seventh year English teacher said that the students reading comprehension ability was quite good but sometimes the students still got problems in learning English.. In here, the researcher gave a reading comprehension ability test for the students' in class A and class B to measure the reading comprehension ability of the students'. Class VII A and VII B chose purposive by using mid-term score. VII A and VII B have almost similar average score. Class VII A administered the reading comprehension ability test and class VII B administered the try out test, which chosen by doing a lottery. In addition, according to the information from the the English teacher, this school has 20 classrooms, it consists of 7 classroom for grade VII, 7 classroom for grade VIII and 6 classroom for grade IX. The teacher taught English based on 2006 Institutional-Based Curriculum. In the seventh grade level, there are procedure text and descriptive text as the material given in the first and second semester. On the teaching and learning process especially in English for grade VII, the teacher use lecturing and discussing. So, after he give the explanation to the students, the teacher asks the students to do the exercises, then discuss the answer with the whole class. About the material, the English teacher uses books from the school library as reference book and from "Bright" book published by Erlangga in 2013 and from the internet. Beside, he also takes the material from LKS, the LKS that is used by the teacher is LKS Bima. The teacher used LKS as the supplementary book, the English teacher use the

exercises in LKS as homework for the students and discuss the answer in the next meeting.

The findings of the previous researchers are important to support this research. The previous researcher conducted descriptive research at SMP *plus Nurul Hikmah Pamekasan* that was intended to describe the eighth grade students' attitude toward reading habit and their reading comprehension ability of descriptive texts [4]. In her research finding notes that the students' attitude toward reading habit and their reading comprehension ability of descriptive texts were belonged in good category. It also known that the eight grade students' attitude toward reading habit in the neutral category.

Considering the background of the research above, the researcher was intended to conduct a research entitled "A Study on the Seventh Grade Students' Reading Comprehension Ability of Descriptive Texts at SMPN 6 Jember" with the intention to know how was the seventh grade students' reading comprehension ability of descriptive texts at SMPN 6 Jember.

Research Method

The research design that used in this research was descriptive qualitative research. The purpose of this research was to describe the seventh grade students' reading comprehension ability of descriptive texts at SMPN 6 Jember. More specifically, this research to measure students' reading comprehension ability covering comprehending word, comprehending sentence, comprehending paragraph, and comprehending text. A descriptive study simply describes a phenomenon. In this case, the object that being observed is the students' to measure the ability reading comprehension on descriptive text [6].

This descriptive study describes a given state of affairs as fully and carefully as possible. The description of phenomena is a starting point for all research endeavors. This descriptive study was proposed to describe systematically, accurately, and factually the students' reading comprehension ability of the seventh grade students in the 2013/2014 academic year at SMPN 6 Jember.

The methods that were used by the researcher in collecting the data were reading comprehension ability test and document as the data. Meanwhile, documentation was used as the research data. Test is an instrument that presents to each subject a standard set of questions that required the completion of a cognitive task [6]. Test in this research was used to measure the seventh grade students' reading comprehension ability covering word comprehension, sentence comprehension, paragraph comprehension and text comprehension. The materials that were included in the test are based on the themes in the 2006 Institutional Level Curriculum for Junior High School. The test in this research was teacher-made test. The teacher-made test in this research was made based on reading material from different book that was being used in daily teaching learning process. The researcher used LKS "Pakem" by Mediatama as a guide to construct a reading test, while in the daily teaching learning process the student used LKS "Bima". The reading comprehension test of this research consisted of 25 questions

which covered identifying main idea and supporting details. It consisted of 9 items for word comprehension, 6 items for sentence comprehension, 5 items for paragraph comprehension and 5 items for text comprehension. But, the researcher eliminated into 20 questions. Each item had different point for each indicator that was multiplied by 100. Thus, the total score of the test items was 100. Furthermore, the time allocation for the students doing the reading test was 45 minutes.

The researcher consulted the instrument (reading comprehension ability test) to the English teacher and the research consultants before conducting the reading comprehension ability test. It was because wanted to know whether it was suitable with the students' level or not. After that, the researcher administered a try-out to the other students in another class who did not belong to the research respondents. The functions of try-out were to measure the reliability of the test, to know the difficulty level of the test items, to know whether the instruction was clear or not and to know whether the time allocation was enough or not.

Discussion

In this research, before administered the reading comprehension ability test to the respondents, the researcher tried out the test items first to the other class who had same level with the respondents. The try out was intended to know the reliability of the test items. Therefore, by administering try out, the researcher knew whether the test items were difficult or easy for the students, the instructions were understandable or not, the time allocation was enough or not, and the material in the test was appropriate with the students' level or not. The Try Out test was in the form of multiple choice models. The multiple choice test consisted of 25 items, in which each item had 4 options. The test was divided into four indicators: 9 items for words comprehension, 6 items for sentences comprehension, 5 items for paragraphs comprehension, and 5 items for texts comprehension. The researcher analyzed the difficulty of item test, and divided into 3; difficult, easy and average. It was also beneficial to determine the points for scoring.

Table 1 : The Difficulty Index of Each Test Item and its Interpretation in Try Out Class (VII B)

Item Number	N	R	F.V	Criteria
1	36	28	0.78	Easy
2	36	15	0.42	Average
3	36	14	0.39	Average
4	36	17	0.47	Average
5	36	14	0.39	Average
6	36	16	0.44	Average
7	36	15	0.42	Average
8	36	17	0.47	Average
9	36	14	0.39	Average
10	36	17	0.47	Average
11	36	15	0.42	Average
12	36	29	0.81	Easy
13	36	28	0.78	Easy
14	36	27	0.75	Easy
15	36	18	0.50	Average
16	36	18	0.50	Average

Item Number	N	R	F.V	Criteria
17	36	19	0.53	Average
18	36	17	0.47	Average
19	36	16	0.44	Average
20	36	18	0.50	Average
21	36	16	0.44	Average
22	36	7	0.19	Difficult
23	36	15	0.42	Average
24	36	16	0.44	Average
25	36	15	0.42	Average

Based on the result of the difficulty index analysis, 4 out of 25 items were categorized as easy items, 1 item were categorized as difficult items, and the remaining items were categorized as average (20 items). Dealing with the time allocation, the researcher found that the time allocation for the try out was appropriately given because the students were able to do the entire test items within 45 minutes. Thus, it could be concluded that there was 4 items belonged to too easy and an item was too difficult, so the researcher eliminate those items until found 20 items for reading test.

The reading test was used to obtain the data in the form of students' score. The reading comprehension ability test was in the form of multiple choice models with four options. Based on the result of try out, the researcher eliminate the questions into 20 questions. The researcher made various point range on scoring because the difficulty index was classified into three categories, they are "easy", "average", and "difficult". The point range was helpful in this research in order to give different point based on the difficulty categories. The point for easy item would be different from average item and so forth. Each items has 3 points for word comprehension, 5 points for sentence comprehension, 6 points for paragraph comprehension and 8 points for whole text. The total points of the test were 100 points. Then, the researcher presented the students' score in the form of percentage. According from the analyzing the students' scores of reading comprehension ability of descriptive text above, the researcher classified the students' ability in the following table.

Table 2 : The Classification of the Students' Reading Comprehension Ability Test

Students' Ability (%)	Category
81 - 100	Very Good
70 - 80	Good
60 - 69	Fair
40 - 59	Poor
0 - 39	Very Poor

The following table presents the results of the students' category of reading comprehension ability test based on the classification the score level.

Table 3 : The Students' Category of Reading Comprehension Ability Test

No	Students' Score	Frequency	%	Category
1	81 - 100	7	18,42	Very Good
2	70 - 80	11	28,94	Good
3	60 - 69	16	42,10	Fair

No	Students' Score	Frequency	%	Category
4	40 - 59	4	10,52	Poor
5	0 - 39	0	0	Very Poor
Total		38	100	

Based on the Table 3 above, it was clear that the number of the students who took the reading comprehension ability test was 38 students. The result showed us that only 18.42% who got the scores between 81-100 that were categorized "very good". Meanwhile, 28.94% of 38 students gained the scores between 70-80 that were included in "good" category. Then, 16 students out of 38 students (42.10%) who got the scores between 60-79 that were categorized "fair". There were 4 students out of 38 students (10.52%) who obtained the scores between 40-59 which were categorized "poor". The last category showed us that there were no student (0%) who got the scores between 0-39 that were categorized "very poor". Finally, it can be concluded that most students of grade VII class A got the percentage 42.10% the scores between 60-69 which was categorized "fair" based on the students' category of reading comprehension ability test above.

The students' on the seventh grade reading comprehension ability of descriptive texts covering word comprehension, sentence comprehension, paragraph comprehension and text comprehension, that showed with the table 4.

Table 4 : The Students' Descriptive Text Reading Comprehension Ability of Each Indicator

No	Indicators	The percentage of students' ability	Category	Interval (%)
1	Word Comprehension	83,08%	Very Good	81-100
2	Sentence Comprehension	74,21%	Good	70-80
3	Paragraph Comprehension	69,47%	Fair	60-69
4	Text Comprehension	57,89%	Poor	40-59
5	Descriptive text Reading Comprehension Ability	73,94%	Very Poor	0-39

The table above presented the percentage of the students' test in reading comprehension ability of descriptive text covering word comprehension, sentence comprehension, paragraph comprehension and text comprehension. The highest percentage of four indicators was word comprehension with the percentage of 83.08% which belonged to the "very good" category. It meant that 83.08% the students got the scores between 81-100. Then, the percentage of the sentence comprehension was 74.21% which was included "good" category. It can be said that 74.21% the students obtained the scores between 70-80. The percentage of paragraph comprehension was 69.47% which was categorized "fair" category. It meant that 69.47% the students achieved the scores in range 60-69. The last was text comprehension with the percentage 57.89% which was

classified as “poor” category. It meant that the students got the scores between 40-59 in percentage 57.89%. From the four indicators, it can be stated that the highest percentage was word comprehension with percentage 83.08% and the lowest percentage was text comprehension with percentage 57.89% that was classified in “poor” category.

Based on the discussion above, in summary it was revealed that the reading comprehension ability of descriptive text the students of grade VII at SMPN 6 Jember belonged in “good” category level with percentage 73.94%. Because most of the students >50% from 38 students had the ability in reading comprehension covering word comprehension, sentence comprehension, paragraph comprehension and whole text comprehension.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the results of data analysis and the discussion, the conclusions can be drawn as to follows : Generally, based on the results of the reading comprehension test, the seventh grade students’ English reading comprehension ability of descriptive text at SMPN 6 Jember was in “good” category. The result of students’ reading comprehension ability covering comprehending word, comprehending sentence, comprehending paragraph and comprehending text, showed that word comprehension with the percentage of 83.08% which belongs to the “very good” category. Then, for percentage of the sentence comprehension is 74.21% which was included “good” category. The percentage of paragraph comprehension was 69.47% which was categorized “fair” category. The last is text comprehension with the percentage 57.89% which was included to “poor” category. From the four indicators, it can be stated that the highest percentage was word comprehension with percentage 83.08% and the lowest percentage was text comprehension with percentage 57.89% that was classified in “poor” category.

Considering the results of this research, the completion of this research study warrants several suggestion that are proposed to the English teacher, and the future researchers. The suggestions were presented as follows.

1. The English Teacher

This suggestions are given in terms of what the English teacher of SMPN 6 Jember can get from this research. The English teacher was suggested to gave more attention in teaching text comprehension more intensively because based on the result of the test the lowest score category on the seventh grade level students of SMPN 6 Jember was text comprehension.

2. The Future Researcher

It is suggested that the result of this research can be used as a reference and information for future researchers to conduct further research by applying different text, design, and method. Focus on the text comprehension because it has the lowest category in seventh grade of SMPN 6 Jember. It could be by using experimental treatment or action research to measure the effect of the students’ reading comprehension ability particularly in text comprehension. This result hopefully can help another researcher.

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