A STUDY ON THE READING ABILITY OF THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS OF MTs DARUL HIKMAH PEKANBARU IN COMPREHENDING DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS

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Abstract: This research is aimed to find out the reading ability of the first year students of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru. The population of this research is the first year students of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru. The number of sample is 36 students selected by using cluster random sampling technique. The instrument to collect the data was multiple choice test items with 30 questions. . Each text consist of 5 questions which cover the components of reading and the components of descriptive that is finding main ideas, finding factual information, finding meaning of difficult word, finding reference, and finding inference. The data were analyzed by classifying them into five levels of mastery, such as very poor, very poor to poor, poor to mediocre, mediocre to good and good to excellent. Based on the findings this research, it was found that the students' reading ability of the first year students of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru was in good level with the mean score was 66.91. The implication of this research is that the first year students of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru have a good ability in reading descriptice text.

Key Words: Students' ability, Reading, Descriptive Text

PENELITIAN TENTANG KEMAMPUAN MEMBACA SISWA MTs DARUL HIKMAH PEKANBARU DALAM PEMAHAMAN TEKS DESKRIPTIF

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kemampuan membaca siswa tahun pertama MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru. Populasi penelitian ini adalah siswa tahun pertama MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru. Jumlah sampel adalah 36 siswa yang dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik cluster random sampling. Instrumen untuk mengumpulkan data adalah soal tes pilihan ganda dengan 30 pertanyaan. . Setiap teks terdiri dari 5 pertanyaan yang meliputi komponen bacaan dan komponen deskriptif yaitu menemukan gagasan utama, menemukan informasi faktual, menemukan makna kata yang sulit, menemukan referensi, dan menemukan inferensi. Data dianalisis dengan mengklasifikasikan mereka ke dalam lima tingkat penguasaan, seperti sangat rendah, sangat rendah ke rendah, rendah ke menengah, menengah ke baik dan baik ke sangat baik. Berdasarkan temuan penelitian ini, ditemukan bahwa kemampuan membaca siswa siswa tahun pertama MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru berada di tingkat yang baik dengan skor rata-rata adalah 66,91. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa siswa tahun pertama MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru memiliki kemampuan yang baik dalam membaca teks deskripsi.

Kata Kunci: Kemampuan Siswa, Membaca, Teks Deskriptif

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a process to convey message or information. Reading is one of the basic skills that should be mastered by language learners as a receptive skill in language learning. As one of the language skills, reading is not only pronouncing the words, but also getting and comprehending the meaning or information of the text.

According to Grellet (2010), there are two main purposes of reading namely reading for information and reading for pleasure. In the classroom practice, the purpose of reading is reading for information. In order to get the information, students need to comprehend what they have read. As Hornby (1994) states that comprehension is the power of understanding.

Almost all of the students have been learning English since they were in elementary school up to their higher level of education or university. Although English has been taught several years, the result is still considered unsatisfactory especially in reading comprehension in real situation; many students cannot pass their reading class successfully. Most of them faced difficulty in comprehending reading texts.

A similar problem is experienced by the first year students of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru. Based on the writer's observation in MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru, some of students face difficulties in comprehending texts, including descriptive texts. There are some factors that might cause the difficulties in comprehending the text for the first year students of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru. Firstly, students are lacking of vocabulary. It is not easy for the students to read the materials in foreign language rather than in their language. As the result they could not catch the idea and the information in the text. Secondly, students also sometimes have low expectation of reading. They feel that they are not going to understand the text, especially when the text is quite long with many new vocabularies which they have never seen or heard before.

Based on the English syllabus of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru, students are expected able to comprehend recount and descriptive texts. Nevertheless, many students had problem in comprehending the text, especially occurred in class VII of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru. The students got difficulty particularly on descriptive text. From the result of interview to the English teacher, many students did not pass the Minimum Mastery Criteria (MMC) descriptive text. Moreover, the teacher said that the problem was in identify main idea, factual information, meaning of difficult word, reference and inference from the reading text, especially in reading descriptive text.

Furthermore, in the teaching learning process, the writer observed that most of the first year students had problems in comprehending descriptive text. Firstly, they did not know several meaning of the words that made them spent much time to find the main idea in reading descriptive text. Secondly, the students got difficulties to identify the specific information such as the characteristic of person or animal, the location of the place, etc. stated in descriptive text. Thirdly, the students got difficulties to identify the reference and inference in descriptive text. Because of this reason, the writer would like to conduct this research.

METHODOLOGY

The research design is a descriptive research which is used to describe the data in order to get a generalization or a conclusion to the population. Kane (2000), descriptive research involves collecting the data to test or to answer questions concerning the current status of the data. In this study, descriptive research is used to find out the ability of the first year students of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru in comprehending descriptive text.

To get the data, the writer is used the instrument that is multiple choice tests. The text as the instruments were adopted from English book and internet based on junior high school level. The test consists of 30 questions. Each text consist of 5 questions which cover the components of reading and the components of descriptive. The test has been done by the students in 60 minutes.

According to Azwar (1998), Population is defined as a group of subject is used as generalization of result. The population of this research was the first year students of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru in academic year 2017/2018. There are five classes. Each of class consists of thirty six up to fourty students. The total numbers of population is 192 students. They were assumed to have same material of reading skill. Sample is a small part of population. According to Gay (2000), sampling is the process of selecting a number of individual for study in such a way that represents the larger group from which they were selected. He also states that if the population is big and spread out in an intact group that has similar characteristic, cluster sampling is useful. Cluster sampling is a sampling technique where the entire population is divided into groups, or clusters and a random sample of these clusters are selected. Therefore, the writer chooses one class from five classes of the population as the sample.

To take the samples, the writer was provided five pieces of paper into a bottle and each class representative took one piece of paper. The writer shake the lottery and asks one of the students' representatives to take the lottery. The students who gets the paper written "sample" was become the sample of the research.

Furthermore, the level of the student's ability is classified into five levels of mastery. The classification can be seen in this following table:

Table 1. The Classification of Students' Ability

| No. Level	Scores	Ability
1.	81 – 100	Excellent
2.	61 – 80	Good
3.	41 – 60	Mediocre
4.	21 – 40	Poor
5.	0 – 20	Very Poor

(Adopted Harris, 1974)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Before the test was administrated for the students, a tried out to the students who are not involved as the sample. The try out was conducted to find out the validity and the reliability of the test. Heaton (1991) said that from the try out, it could be seen whether the index of difficulty of a particular item is easy or difficult. Heaton (1991) states that the test items are accepted if the score is between 0.30-0.70 and it is rejected if the degree of the difficulty is less than 0.30 (too difficult) and over 0.70 (too easy).

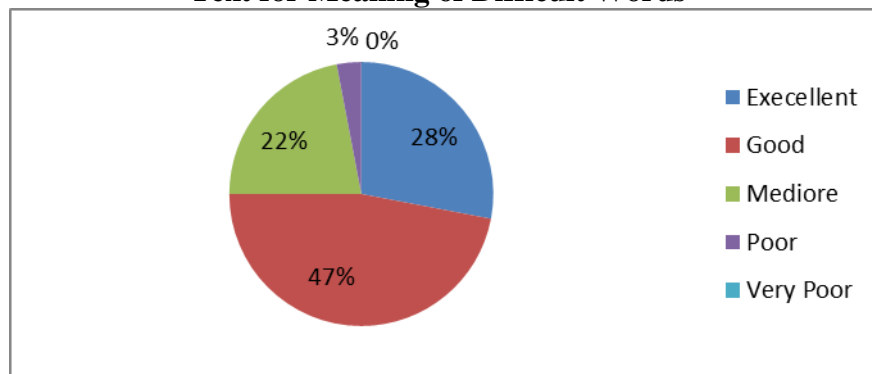**Figure 1. Percentage of the Students' Ability in Comprehending Descriptive Text for Main Ideas**
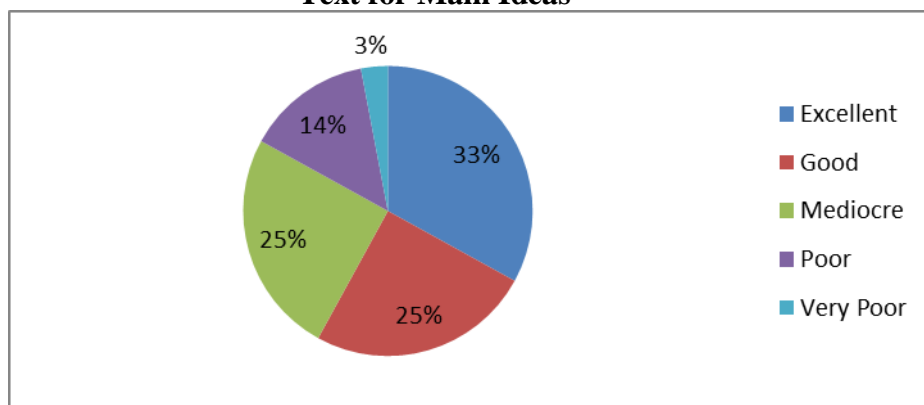
The figure of percentage of the students' ability in in comprehending descriptive text for main idea indicates that the students' ability in comprehending descriptive text for main idea in all level is in different numbers. The highest number that the students can gain is in the excellent level; 33% of students (12 students). For the good level, there are only 25% (9 students). Then, there are 25% of students (9 students) in level of mediocre level. There are 14% of students (5 students) in level of poor. In this component, there are 3% students (1 student) in very poor level.

Figure 2. Percentage of the Students' Ability in Comprehending Descriptive Text for Factual Informations
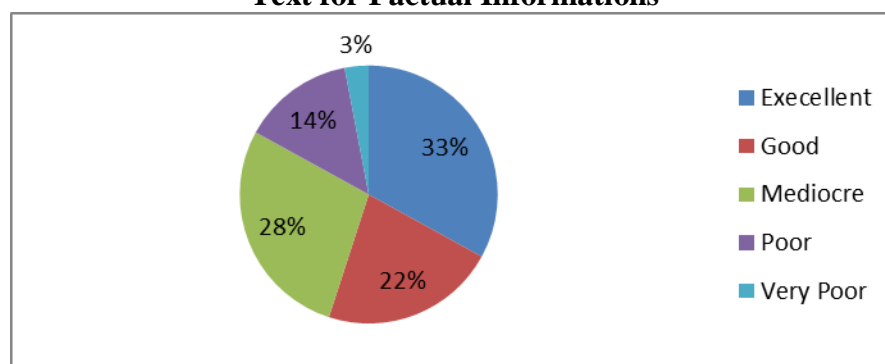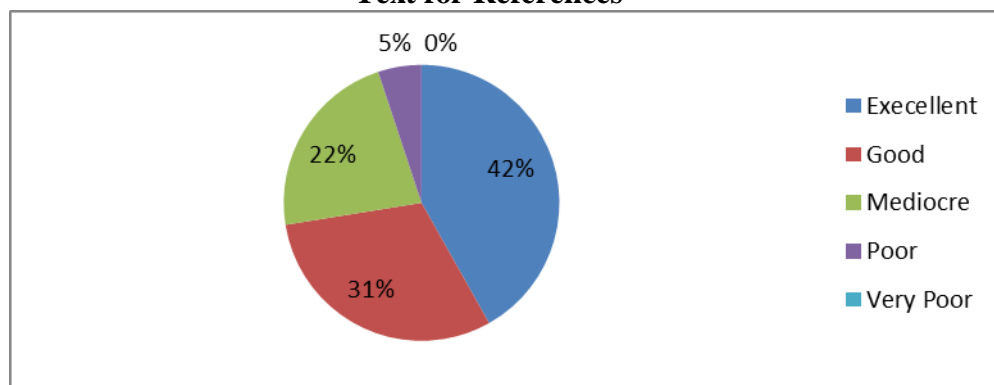
The figure of percentage of the students' ability in in comprehending descriptive text for factual information indicates that the students' ability in comprehending descriptive text for factual information in all level is in different numbers. The highest number that the students can gain is in the excellent level; 33% of students (12 students). For the mediocre level, there are only 28% (10 students). Then, there are 22% of students (8 students) in level of good. There are 14% of students (5 students) in level of poor. In this component, there are 3% students (1 student) in very poor level.

Figure 3. Percentage of the Students' Ability in Comprehending Descriptive Text for Meaning of Difficult Words

The figure of percentage of the students' ability in in comprehending descriptive text for meaning of difficult words indicates that the students' ability in comprehending descriptive text for meaning of difficult words in all level is in different numbers. The highest number that the students can gain is in the good level; 47% of students (17 students). For the excellent level, there are only 28% (10 students). Then, there are 22% of students (8 students) in level of mediocre. There are 3% of students (1 student) in level of poor. In this component, there is no student (0%) in very poor level.
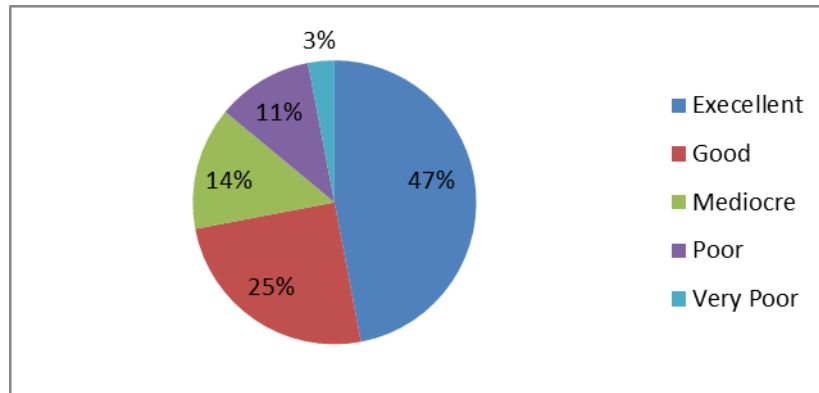
Figure 4. Percentage of the Students' Ability in Comprehending Descriptive Text for References

The figure of percentage of the students' ability in in comprehending descriptive text for references indicates that the students' ability in comprehending descriptive text for references in all level is in different numbers. The highest number that the students can gain is in the excellent level; 42% of students (15 students). For the good level,

there are only 31% (11 students). Then, there are 22% of students (8 students) in level of mediocre. There are 5% of students (2 students) in level of poor. In this component, there is no student (0%) in very poor level.

Figure 5. Percentage of the Students' Ability in Comprehending Descriptive Text for Inferences

The figure of percentage of the students' ability in in comprehending descriptive text for inferences indicates that the students' ability in comprehending descriptive text for inferences in all level is in different numbers. The highest number that the students can gain is in the excellent level; 47% of students (17 students). For the good level, there are only 25% (9 students). Then, there are 14% of students (5 students) in level of mediocre. There are 11% of students (4 students) in level of poor. In this component, there are 3% students (1 student) in very poor level.

Table 2. The Classification of the Students' Ability in Reading Descriptive Texts.

No	Classification of the Question	Mean Score	Level of Ability
1.	In Terms of finding Main Ideas	62	Good
2.	In Terms of finding factual information	62	Good
3.	In Terms of finding the meaning of difficult words	67	Good
4.	In Terms of finding References	71	Good
5.	In Terms of finding inferences	69	Good
	Mean Score of the whole test	66.91	Good

Table 2 shows that from five components of reading descriptive texts, the mean score of comprehending main ideas (62) is classified as good, the mean score of comprehending factual information (62) is classified as good, the mean score comprehending difficult words (67) is classified as good, the mean score of comprehending references (71) is classified as good, and the mean score comprehending inferences (69) is classified as good. Therefore, the mean score of the students' ability based on the table is good.

From all the data, it can be inferred that ability of the first year students of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru in comprehending descriptive texts is in good level.

Discussion

In reading test, the mean score of the students' ability of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru in reading is 66.9. Besides that, four students were in excellent level. Then, there were twenty students categorized into good level. And twelve students were categorized into mediocre level. It means that they had good ability in reading descriptive texts.

In this research, the student's ability from each reading component can be described as follows: five components are in good level. There are five different mean score. The most difficult component in reading descriptive texts is in terms of comprehending main ideas with the mean score 72,72. On the other hand, the easiest aspect of reading is in terms of finding main ideas and factual information with the mean score 62. Meanwhile, the other aspect such as finding difficult words was 67, finding references was 71, and finding inferences was 69. It means that some of the students got difficulties in this component in terms of finding main ideas and factual information; their scores were still not good enough. This problem might be caused by the students' low accuracy in reading. So, the students should read more accurately.

Based on the previous discussions, the researcher analyzed that the first year students of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru can be categorized at good level in reading descriptive texts, but the students still need more practice in reading descriptive texts.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

It has been stated the general objective of this research is to answer the question "How is the reading ability of the first year students of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru in comprehending descriptive texts?" After conducting the research, it can be concluded that the ability of the first year students of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru in reading descriptive texts is in good level. It means that most of the first year students of MTs Darul Hikmah Pekanbaru are able enough at omprehending descriptive texts. It can be seen from the students' mean score which was 66.91.

Furthermore, from thirty-six students, four students (11%) was categorized in excellent level. There are twenty students (56%) are in good level, twelve students (33%) in mediocre level. But none of the students is in poor and very poor level. The highest mean score the students got in reading descriptive texts is in terms of finding references and the lowest mean score is in terms of finding main ideas and factual information.

Recommendations

Based on the result of this research, the writer intends to offer some recommendation. Firstly, considering that the student's ability level in reading comprehension is categorized into mediocre to good level, it is recommended that the students should learn more about descriptive text and should do much improvement to get perfect result. Then, the suggestion is delivered to the English teacher that she should be creatif and innovative in making the class to be more interesting and present to develop the students' motivation and encourage them to practice in reading comprehension in order to make the students familiar with reading materials in terms of five indicators of reading comprehension and component of the text.

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