

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN UNDERSTANDING DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS AT THE SECOND YEAR OF SMAN 3 LANGGAM

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Abstract: *This research was aimed to find out students' difficulties in understanding descriptive texts at the second year of SMAN 3 Langgam. This is descriptive quantitative research. The population of this research was the whole students of the second year of SMAN 3 Langgam. The sample of this research was 34 students of XI IIS 1 class who have been selected by using the cluster-random-sampling technique. The data were collected by using tests and questionnaires. The test consisted of 40 questions and the questionnaire consisted of 25 questions. The findings of this study based on the percentage of incorrect answers of reading test showed that there are eight components of reading comprehension. Six of them were categorized high level as difficult question aspects for the students. There were difficulties in identifying vocabulary, generic structure, factual information, reference, language features, and social function. Two of them were categorized medium level as a not difficult question. There was difficulty in identifying the main idea and inference. Based on the result of the questionnaire, the students felt difficulties in understanding descriptive texts because of internal and external factors. There was limited vocabulary knowledge, weak verbal reasoning, problems with recalling information, difficulty understand the text because of the level of the text, lack of familiarity with the subject matter, lack of fluency in reading, problems with processing information after reading, and inadequate use of reading strategies in the teaching and learning process.*

Key Words: *Analysis, Students' Difficulties, Reading, Descriptive Text.*

ANALISIS KESULITAN SISWA DALAM MEMAHAMI TEKS DESKRIPTIF PADA TAHUN KEDUA SMAN 3 LANGGAM

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kesulitan siswa dalam memahami teks deskriptif di kelas sebelas SMAN 3 Langgam. Penelitian adalah penelitian kuantitatif deskriptif. Populasi penelitian ini adalah seluruh siswa kelas XI SMAN 3 Langgam. Sampel penelitian ini berjumlah 34 siswa kelas XI IIS 1 yang dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik cluster random sampling. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan tes dan angket. Tes terdiri dari 40 pertanyaan dan angket terdiri dari 25 pertanyaan. Hasil penelitian ini berdasarkan persentase jawaban salah tes membaca menunjukkan ada delapan komponen pemahaman bacaan. Enam diantaranya dikategorikan level tinggi sebagai aspek pertanyaan yang sulit bagi siswa. Terdapat kesulitan dalam mengidentifikasi kosa kata, struktur generik, informasi faktual, referensi, fitur bahasa, dan fungsi sosial. Dua di antaranya dikategorikan sebagai level tingkat sedang sebagai pertanyaan yang tidak sulit. Yaitu kesulitan dalam mengidentifikasi ide utama dan kesimpulan. Berdasarkan hasil angket, siswa mengalami kesulitan dalam memahami teks deskriptif karena faktor internal dan eksternal. Pengetahuan kosakata yang terbatas, penalaran verbal yang lemah, masalah dengan mengingat informasi, kesulitan memahami teks karena tingkat teks, kurangnya keakraban dengan materi pelajaran, kurangnya kefasihan dalam membaca, masalah dengan pemrosesan informasi setelah membaca, dan tidak memadai. penggunaan strategi membaca dalam proses belajar mengajar.

Kata Kunci: Analisis, Kesulitan Siswa, Membaca, Teks Deskriptif.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the four language skills taught in the English language learning process besides listening, speaking, and writing. Reading is a language skill that is important to be taught to the students because it helps them to understand and to analyze all written text. The students are also expected to be able to use it in their daily lives. Nunan (2003: 68) has said that reading is a fluent process of the readers, combining information from a text and their background knowledge to build meaning. Through reading, students can improve their knowledge and experiences and enlarge their main sets of thinking. Thus, reading helps students to gain information or verify existing knowledge.

SMAN 3 Langgam is one of the schools that apply curriculum 2013 as its guidance in the teaching and learning process. Based on the syllabus curriculum 2013 in Senior High School, there are some genres of texts to learn such as narrative text, recount text, descriptive text, procedure text and report text. The students have to know the definitions, characteristics, and language features of the texts. In this research, the researcher used descriptive text. The researcher chooses descriptive text because this text has been learned by second year students. In general, descriptive text is a text which describes a person, place, and thing.

Comprehending the text occurs in Indonesian students, they get difficulties in comprehending the text, especially English reading text. It is because English is not their first language. For instance, students will get difficulties when the teacher asked about some information related to the English reading text which they already read. Some teachers also give the question that the answer is not mentioned in the text but still in the context. It meant that students must comprehend the text fully.

According to Oberholzer (2005), difficulty with reading can have an increasingly negative effect on students' schoolwork and tertiary education as reading requirements become greater and more extensive. The difficulties in comprehending reading text should be known and solved by the students and the teacher because comprehending reading text is the important skill and an achievement indicator in reading that should be achieved by the students. If the students get difficulties in comprehending the text, it will affect their study. Therefore, this research is very important to do because knowing the students' difficulties, can lead the teacher to solve the students' problems and the students can improve their reading ability.

Based on the backgrounds above, the researcher is interested in analyzing the students' difficulties in understanding descriptive texts. Thus, this research is entitled "An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Understanding Descriptive Texts at the Second Year of SMAN 3 Langgam".

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is descriptive quantitative research. Descriptive quantitative research is a scientific investigation that explains phenomena by using numbers (Dasrul 2018). This research is designed to analyze students' difficulties in understanding descriptive texts at the second year of SMAN 3 Langgam. The data for this study was gathered by reading tests and questionnaires.

The data for this study used reading test that the writer constructed is an objective in the form of multiple choice. The reading test consisted of 40 items multiple choice test on five descriptive texts. Test items have 4 choices and only one correct answer. The sources of the test were adapted from textbooks and the internet that used school-based curriculum in the same level for the second year students of Senior High School. In this research, items of the test were about the components of reading comprehension and descriptive text.

After students did the test, the researcher gave a link to fill the questionnaire to the students. This research used a close-ended questionnaire to gather the responses of the respondents. Close-ended questionnaire serves the answer that the respondents just need to choose one of the available options. The questionnaire consists of 25 questions with two alternative answers (yes/no). The indicators of the questionnaire consisted of some factors that cause poor comprehension in reading. In distributing the questionnaire, the researcher conducted the research through Google form.

The procedure of the data instruments were analyzed by following steps:

1. Test

To know each of students' score individually, the data were calculated by using Wayan and Sumartana (1986) formula:

$$M = \frac{X}{n} \times 100$$

Where:

M = the individual score

X = the correct answer

N = the number of items

To know the classification of students' reading ability, the researcher used the classification of students' scores by Harris (1974). The classification can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. The Classification of Students' Scores

Test Score	Level of Ability
85,00 – 100	Excellent
69,00 – 85,00	Good
55,00 – 69,00	Mediocre
00,00 – 55,00	Poor

Then, to find which question types were difficult for students, the researcher divided the question items based on its type. It used the following formula as Sudijono (2011):

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100\%$$

Where:

- P = Proportion or index of difficulty
- F = Number of answer the item incorrect
- N = The total number of the students

The researcher calculated the percentage of each category of descriptive texts (main idea, factual information, meaning of vocabulary, reference, inference, social function, generic structure, and language features) to find out the levels of frequency and percentage of the students' difficulties in understanding descriptive texts. Then the total of the score was calculated by using Arikunto's (2006) formula:

$$X = \frac{\sum xi}{n} \times 100$$

Where:

- X = the percentages of students' difficulties
- $\sum xi$ = the total of students' incorrect answer
- n = total of sample

To know the level of students' difficulty in understanding descriptive texts, the result percentages of incorrect answer of reading test was categorized into 4 classifications. The researcher used classification of difficulty level by Arikunto (2006). The classification can be seen in the following table:

Percentage	Classification
76% – 100%	Highest
56% – 75%	High
40% – 55%	Medium
0% – 39%	Low

2. Questionnaire

The researcher calculated the percentage of the students' responses towards each category (limited vocabulary knowledge, lack of fluency, lack of familiarity with the subject matter, difficulty level of the test, inadequate use of effective reading strategies, weak verbal reasoning, problems with processing information, problems in recalling information after reading). The calculation of the percentage based on the following formula:

$$X = \frac{\sum xi}{n} \times 100$$

(Sugiyono, 2012)

Where:

X : The percentage of each category

$\sum xi$: Total of values

n : Total of sample

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The objective of this research was to analyze the students' difficulties in understanding descriptive texts and the factors that cause the students' difficulties in understanding descriptive texts. The researcher has used sample random sampling in selected the sample and XI IIS 1 class was chosen. To obtain the data, the researcher used reading test and questionnaire to analyze students' difficulties in understanding descriptive texts:

1. The Result of Test

To find out the individual score of each student, the researcher divided the number of the correct answers with the total number of items and then multiplied by one hundred (100). The percentage of the students' score can be shown in the following table:

Table 2. The Result of Test			
Test Score	Ability Level	Frequency	Percentage %
86,00 – 100	Excellent	0	0%
69,00 - 85,00	Good	5	14,7%
55,00 - 69,00	Mediocre	27	79,4%
00,00 - 55,00	Poor	2	5,9%
Total		34	100%

In summary, there are no students that achieved *excellent* level in reading test (0%). While, 5 students are in *good* level (14,7%), 27 students are in *mediocre* level (79,4%) and 2 students are in *poor* level (5,9%).

After the researcher finds out the result of students' reading test, the researcher analyzed students' difficulties in terms of components of reading comprehension based on the classification of the questions as described in the blueprint of the instrument. The classifications of students' difficulties levels in understanding descriptive texts shown in the following table:

Table 2. Aspects of Reading

No.	Aspects of Reading	Percentage	Level of Difficulty
1.	Difficulty in Identify Main Idea	52%	Medium
2.	Difficulty in Identify Factual Information	64%	High
3.	Difficulty in Identify Meaning of Vocabulary	72%	High
4.	Difficulty in Identify References	61%	High
5.	Difficulty in Identify Inferences	51%	Medium
6.	Difficulty in Identify Social Function	57%	High
7.	Difficulty in Identify Generic Structure	71%	High
8.	Difficulty in Identify Language Features	60%	High
Average total score		63%	High

Based on the table above, it is known that the highest score of students' difficulties in understanding descriptive texts was identified vocabulary 72% (High Level), identify generic structure with 71% (High Level), identify factual information with 64% (High Level), identify language reference with 61% (High Level), identify language features with 60% (High Level), identify social function with 57% (High Level), identify main idea with 52% (Medium Level) and identify inference with 51% (Medium Level). Then, the average score of students' difficulties in understanding descriptive texts was 63% with High Level.

After finding the mean score, the researcher finds out the difficulties in understanding descriptive texts. The result of students' difficulties in reading descriptive texts at SMAN 3 Langgam showed that students have difficulty in answering each component of reading. Here is the chart of the difficulty percentages item in descriptive text. The chart is in the following table:

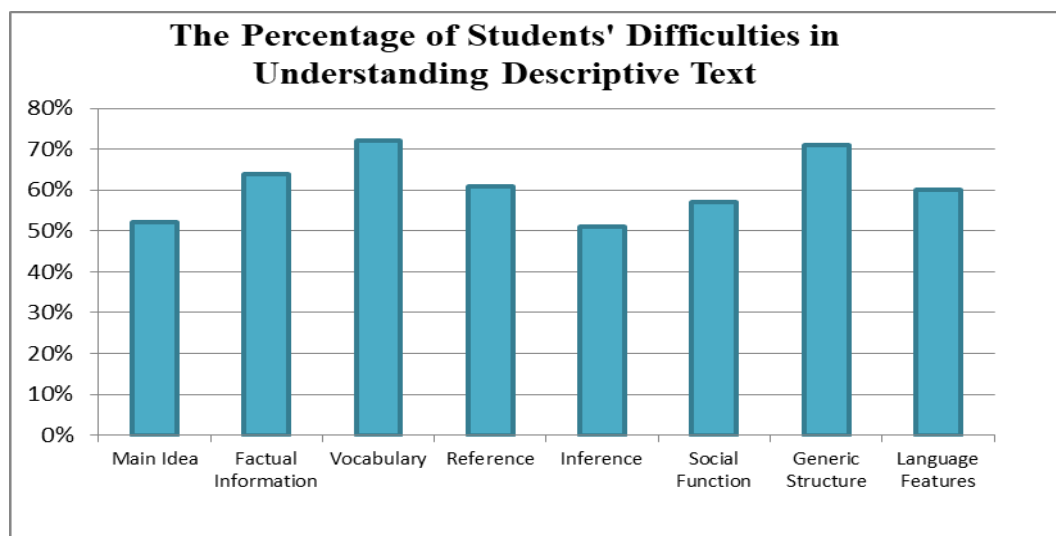


Figure 1. The Percentage of Students' Difficulties in Understanding Descriptive Text

2. The Result of Questionnaire

The data were collected through a questionnaire in Google form. The researcher calculated the questionnaire used Microsoft Excel. The percentages of each question of the questionnaire were automatically collected through spreadsheets of the questionnaire in the Google Form. These questions contained some factors of causes poor comprehension in reading followed by Westwood (2008) consists of limited vocabulary knowledge, lack of fluency, lack of familiarity with the subject matter, difficulty level of the text, inadequate use of effective reading strategies, weak verbal reasoning, problems with processing information, and problems with recalling information. The researcher calculated the percentage of the students' responses towards the questionnaire in each category. The data of factors that cause students' difficulties in understanding descriptive text can be seen in the table:

Table 4. Factors of Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension

No.	Factors of Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension	Percentage (Yes)	Percentage (No)
1.	Limited vocabulary knowledge	89.21%	10.79%
2.	Lack of fluency	82.35 %	17.65%
3.	Lack of familiarity with the Subject Matter	83.82%	16.18%
4.	Difficulty level of the text	87.25%	12.75%
5.	Inadequate use of the effective reading strategies	69.60%	30.4%
6.	Weak verbal reasoning	88.23%	11.77%
7.	Problems with processing information	77.45%	22.55%
8.	Problems with recalling information	88.23%	11.77%

Based on table 4 above, it is known that the highest factor of students' difficulties in understanding descriptive texts was limited vocabulary knowledge (89.21%), weak verbal reasoning (88.23%), problems with recalling information (88.23%), difficulty level of the text (87.25%), lack of familiarity with the subject matter (83.82%), lack of fluency (82.35%), problems with processing information (77.45%), inadequate use of the effective reading strategies (69.60%).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Based on the results of the reading test, it can be concluded that the students at the second year of SMAN 3 Langgam had difficulties in understanding descriptive texts. The purpose of this research was to analyze the difficulties in understanding descriptive text faced by the second year students of SMAN 3 Langgam. Based on the percentage of students' incorrect answers in reading tests, there are eight aspects of reading comprehension and descriptive text, six aspects of them are categorized as High Level as difficult question aspects for students. They are vocabulary, generic structure, factual information, reference, language features, and social function.

Besides, another purpose of this research was to analyze the factors that caused students' difficulties in understanding descriptive text. Based on the result of the questionnaire, the students felt difficulties in understanding descriptive texts because of internal and external factors. There was limited vocabulary knowledge, weak verbal reasoning, problems with recalling information, difficulty understand the text because of the level of the text, lack of familiarity with the subject matter, lack of fluency in reading, problems with processing information after reading, and inadequate use of reading strategies in the teaching and learning process.

Recommendation

Considering the result of students' difficulties in understanding descriptive texts, the researcher would like to give some recommendations for students. The students are supposed to do more learning and must be able to understand the reading of descriptive text in English practice. They need also to improve their ability in reading components and need to be more their vocabulary knowledge. And for English teachers of SMAN 3 Langgam, the English teachers should put more efforts and could give more explanation in order to make the students familiar and make them able to understand the text. And also for the next researchers, the researcher hopes the next researcher will apply a strategy or method to solve the students' difficulties in reading comprehension.

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