STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN COMPREHENDING ENGLISH DESCRIPTIVE TEXT: A CASE STUDY AT THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMPN 11 MATARAM IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2017/2018

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Abstract

The thesis is entitled "Students Difficulties in Comprehending English Descriptive Text: A Case Study at the Eighth Grade Students of SMPN 11 Mataram". This study is focused on finding out the students' difficulties in comprehending English descriptive text come out from reading comprehension elements; determining topic, finding main idea, making inference, finding vocabulary, and finding reference. This research used quantitative and qualitative method to collect the data from class VIIIF consisting of 22 students'selected usingpurposive sampling. To analyze the data this research used three kinds of instrument: test, questionnaire, and interview. The result showed that students' mean score in reading achievement is 31.32, which is categorized "unsatisfactory" level and the students' most difficulties in comprehending English descriptive text is making inference about (25.52%), finding main idea (19.85%), finding reference (19.08), finding vocabulary about (18.05%), and determining topic about (17.53%). The result of questionnaire and interview of students' in SMPN 11 Mataram had bad/negative perception toward comprehending English Descriptive text. They said that descriptive text is difficult to be understood because they cannot translate English words into Bahasa Indonesian and it is difficult to understand the meaning of words in the reading text.

Key words: Students' difficulties, reading comprehension, descriptive text

KESULITAN SISWA DALAM MEMAHAMI TEKS DESKRIPTIF BAHASA INGGRIS: STUDI KASUS PADA KELAS DELAPAN SISWA SMPN 11 MATARAM TAHUN AJARAN 2017/2018

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Skripsi ini berjudul "Kesulitan Siswa dalam Memahami Teks Deskriptif Bahasa Inggris: Studi Kasus pada Siswa Kelas VIII SMPN 11 Mataram". Penelitian ini difokuskan untuk mengetahui kesulitan siswa dalam memahami teks deskriptif bahasa Inggris yang berasal dari unsur pemahaman bacaan; menentukan topik, menemukan ide utama, membuat kesimpulan, menemukan kosa kata, dan menemukan referensi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dan kualitatif untuk mengumpulkan data dari kelas VIIIF yang terdiri dari 22 siswa yang dipilih dengan menggunakan purposive sampling. Untuk menganalisa data penelitian ini menggunakan tiga jenis instrumen yaitu: tes, kuesioner, dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata siswa dalam prestasi membaca adalah 31,32, yang dikategorikan "tidak memuaskan" dan kesulitan siswa dalam memahami teks deskriptif bahasa Inggris adalah membuat kesimpulan (25,85%), menemukan ide pokok (19,85%), menemukan referensi (19.08), menemukan kosakata (18,05%), dan menentukan topik tentang (17,53%). Hasil kuisioner dan wawancara siswa di SMPN 11 Mataram memiliki persepsi buruk / negatif terhadap pemahaman teks Deskriptif Bahasa Inggris. Mereka mengatakan bahwa teks deskriptif sulit dipahami karena tidak bisa menerjemahkan kata-kata bahasa Inggris ke dalam Bahasa Indonesia dan sulit untuk memahami arti kata-kata dalam teks bacaan.

I. NTRODUCTION

Language is an important thing for communication. As we know, language is one of instrument used by human beings to interact and communicate with other people who allow speakers in oral language and writers in written language to express their ideas, opinions and feeling to others.

In competency based curriculum and KTSP (2006) there are several types of text which are taught in the eighth grade students of junior high school. The texts are descriptive, narrative, recount, procedure, and report text. In teaching and learning process such texts are taught and trained by the teacher. Students should be able to master them.

Based on the writer's experience in teaching practice, she found that especially in reading, the problems are that most of the students face difficulty in understanding the texts that they are reading. However, many students face difficulties in comprehending all genres of English texts. That is because of the fact that the students' L1 is not English. Based on the writer's observation, especially at the eighth grade students, the writer found a lot of students who make mistakes to answer the question related to the text, the mistakes resulted in their low reading achievement. These mistakes happened probably because they do not understand the content of the text. In this study the researcher decided to use descriptive text as the test. The choice of this text is not only based on the syllabus of the second year students of junior high school but also the fact that the students seem to have difficulties in understanding descriptive text.

Descriptive text is text type that describes a particular person, place or things. There are common types of question found in reading comprehension include the following kinds of things: (1) Identifying main idea, main point, author purpose or an alternate title for the passage, (2) Recognizing the tone of the passage or identifying the style, (3) Comprehending information directly stated in the passage (finding supporting detail), (4) Answer relational questions about the author's opinion, even if not stated directly, (5) Recognizing the structural methodology employed to develop

the passage, for example, sequence, vocabulary, and represent pronoun (reference), and (6) Extending limited information given by the author to a logical conclusion using inference (inference meaning).Therefore, this study is focused on analyzing the students' difficulties in comprehending English descriptive text especially working on reading questions in determining topic, identifying main ideas, understanding vocabularies, making inference and reference in SMPN 11 Mataram. Therefore, this research is expected to find out the students' difficulties by focusing on determining topic, identifying main ideas, making inference, finding vocabularies, and reference. This study was conducted at the second grade particularly at students grade VIII-F of SMPN 11 MATARAM academic year 2017/2018.

1.1   Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the writer formulated the following research questions:

1. What are the students' difficulties in comprehending English descriptive text?
2. What is the students' perception of the difficulty of English descriptive text?

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study can be stated as follow:

1. To find out the students' difficulties in comprehending English descriptive text.
2. To know the students' perception of the difficulty of English Descriptive text.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURES

Reading is a complex information processing skill in which the reader interacts with a text in order to (re) create meaningful discourse. With the bottom-up approach, reading is viewed as a process of decoding written symbols, working from smaller units (individual letters) to larger ones (words, clauses and sentences). In other words, we use strategies to decode written forms in order to arrive at meaning. Then, reading, according to Hornby (1995) means to look at and to understand the meaning of written or printed words or symbols.

According to Suryana (2008) in her book about Genre Reading Comprehension, Descriptive text is a text which is used to describe a particular person, place or thing. Description reproduces the way thing look, smell, taste, fell, or sound; it may also evoke moods, such as happiness, lowliness, or fear. It is used to create a visual image of people, place, even of units, of time-days, time of day, or seasons. It may be used also to describe more than the outward appearance of people. It may tell about their traits of character of personality. She found that descriptive text has social function, generic structure, and linguistic features.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a case study research. The population of this research is all of the eighth grade students of SMPN 11 Mataram. The total number of population is 139 students and it is divided into 6 classes (VIII A-F). In this study, the writer used purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique in which elements are chosen based on purpose of the study (Sugiyono: 2013).The writer then chose the students from class VIII F in which the total number of students is 22 as the participants because they had the worse quality in learning than those in the other classes at the eighth grade students of SMPN 11 MATARAM.First, the reading test wasused to see the average reading achievement and the score obtained by the students in determining topic, identifying main ideas, understanding vocabularies, making inference and referenceof reading descriptive text. Second, the researcher designed the questionnaire which was used to collect basic descriptive information about students' perception toward comprehending English descriptive text. The questionnaire covered some aspects that might ask students' perception toward comprehending English descriptive text. And the last, the researcher conducted interview to get the data precisely from each of the students relating to their problems.

IV. RISULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Result.

Based on the calculation result of reading test, the students' mean score was 31.32. The researcher found out the range of students' individual score, then identified the category of students' achievement in reading test, whether it is excellent in score range between 75-100, 58-74 as good, 41-57 as fair, 24-40 as unsatisfactory and unacceptable in range score 0-23. Based on the table above, the researcher found that the students' mean scores were categorized into unsatisfactory with the range score about 24-40.

To analyze the students' level of reading scores in reading descriptive text, they were divided into 5 categories. There were 0% (0) students categorized as excellent, 0% (0) students categorized as good, 18.18% (4) students categorized as fair, 59.09% (13) students categorized as unsatisfactory, and 22.73% (6) students categorized as unacceptable. Therefore, it can be concluded that the largest number of students of SMPN 11 Mataram in comprehending English descriptive text is unsatisfactory category consisting of 59.09% (13) students.

The researcher classified the difficultiesfaced by the students in the element ofreading test to determine the students' difficulties in comprehending English descriptive text. Students' difficulties are classified into 5 types of difficulties: determining topic, finding main idea, making inference, vocabulary, and reference.

The data collected shows that the total number of difficulties faced by students in comprehending English descriptive text is three hundred and eighty eight (388).

In conclusion, the most dominant difficulties faced by students in comprehending English descriptive text are in making inference (25.52%). It was followed by main idea (19.85%). The next followed by reference (19.08%), then vocabulary (16.18%), and the last is topic (17.53%).

4.1.3. Finding from Questionnaire

The results of the data collection about the students' perceptions in comprehending English descriptive text are displayed in table 4.1.3.

The questionnaires were administrated to 22 students of SMPN 11 Mataram in class VIII F consisting of 12 statements of students' perceptions. Each number of questionnaires was written in Bahasa Indonesia to avoid any misinterpretation and to ease the respondents in completing the questionnaire. After obtaining the data from the questionnaire, the data was calculated. The writer used questionnaire in order to collect the data about the information from the students. The result was analyzed using Likert Scale. The statements were designed to elicit participants' agreement or disagreement. Participants responded ranging from 1 to 5 and were scored using Index Formula for percentage (%) to get the result of analysis appropriately.

Table 4.1.3.The Frequency of Students' Perception in ComprehendingEnglish Descriptive Text.

No	Statements	Answer				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Descriptive text is the hardest part of reading		77.27%			
2	grammar adds difficulties in understanding text	80.91%				
3	difficult to translate the meaning of word in english into bahasa Indonesia	87.27%				
4	the existing vocabulary in the text is difficult to understand		76.36%			
5	difficult to understand punctuation such as (,), (.), (?), (!), thus affecting the meaning of the text being read				33.64%	
6	Difficult to understand the main idea contained in the text of reading		76.36%			
7	I lack concentration when read the text		69.09%			

8	There is no topic / title reading in the text so I havedifficult understanding the contents of the reading	80%				
9	The material about descriptive text has been taught by teacher in class		78.18%			
10	It took me a long time to understand the text I had read		76.36%			
11	I have difficult understanding pronouns in reading text.		72.73%			
12	I have difficult in understanding simple present tense in descriptive text	80%				

Based on the data obtained from the students' perception it can be seen than from 12 indicators measured, there were found that four "strongly agree" in which the dominant answers were number 2, 3, 8 and 12 with the total number of percentage ranging from 80-100%. This means that the students have bad perceptions toward four "strongly agree" items. As shown by item number 3 (87.27%). This means that they had difficulty in translating the meaning of the word from English into Indonesian, followed by number 2 (80.91%). They assumed that grammar sometimes adds difficulty in understanding text, the number 8 (80%) shows that it is also difficult to comprehend reading text that does not have a topic / title in the text. In addition, on the item number 12 the writer found the same total percentage thatis (80%). In this aspect they have difficulties in determining the tenses used in their reading.

Seven answers that came from "Agree" were number 1,4,6,7,9,10 and 11 with the total number of percentage ranging from 60-79.99%. The number 9 shows that 78.89% students choose "agree". It means that they agree that the material about descriptive text has been taught by the classroom teacher. Furthermore the percentage of students who choose "agree" for number 1 shows that 77.27% students stated that Descriptive text is the hardest part of reading. For the questions number 4, 7, and 10

also found the same total percentage that 76.36% choose "agree". In this case they have difficulties in understanding the vocabulary from the text (4), the difficulty of understanding the main idea contained of the text (7), and they take a long time to understand the text they have read (10). For the number 11, they have assumed that there is difficulty in understanding pronoun 72.73% and then, that is 69.09% students found that difficult to concentrate when reading the text.

The last number which had a total percentage was number 5. The writer found that 33.64% students choose "neutral" Which means that it is not difficult for them in understanding punctuation such as (,), (.), (?), (!), Thus affecting the meaning of the text being read. In other words, the students had a good perception of the one thing that has been described above.

4.1.4 Finding from Interview

The findings from interview are based on the statement from questionnaire.All of them said that they know what descriptive text is, because the descriptive text has been taught by the teacher. The students' perception toward reading English descriptive text is all the same that reading descriptive text is difficult to be understood. They find it difficult because they cannot translate the meaning of English words into Indonesian and it is difficult to understand the meaning of words.

4.2Discussion

4.2.1 The students' difficulties in comprehending English descriptivetext.

The students' difficulties in comprehending English descriptive text. According to scores gained, it was obtained that the students' mean score was 31.32. It showed that the students' difficulty in comprehending English descriptive text was in unsatisfactory category based on the classification of the students' score range. Furthermore, table 4.1.2 described that there were 0 students (0%) classified into excellent, 0 students (0%) classified into good, 4 students (18.18%) classified into fair, 13 students (59.09%) classified into unsatisfactory, 6 students (22.73%) classified into unacceptable. From the data above the researcher can conclude that the

largest number of students of SMPN 11 Mataram in comprehending English descriptive text is unsatisfactory category consisting of 59.09% (13) students.

Based on the result of the test, the students' difficulties in comprehending English descriptive text will be described and explained as follows:The first most of students group of test item students' difficulties in comprehending descriptive text is the item of make inference. According to Kopitski (2007) sometimes the students are difficult to find the conclusion of the text because the meaning of the statement is not written on the text. In this test there were 99 (25.52%) the total of incorrect answer made by the eighth grade students in this classification of difficulty.

The second most difficult group of test item students' difficulties in comprehending descriptive text is test item of finding main idea. According to Vaner (2002) the main idea is more difficult to find, the students may get confused to see what the main idea of a passage is, and where the main idea is located. In this test there were 77 (19.85%) the total of incorrect answer made by the eighth grade students in this classification of difficulty.

The third most difficult group of test item students' difficulties in comprehending descriptive text is test item of finding reference. According to Rainbolt and Dwyer (2011) in identifying reference, the students difficult to understand of what the pronouns in the sentences are used such as the pronouns that are use to show people, place, or situations. In this test there were 74 (19.08%) the total of incorrect answer made by the eighth grade students in this classification of difficulty.

The next, most difficult group of test item students' difficulties in comprehending descriptive text is test item of vocabulary (synonym). Hedge (2000) noticed vocabulary is another major component of reading ability with which language learners will experience difficulty. In this test there were 70 (18.05%) the total of incorrect answer made by the eighth grade students in this classification of difficulty.

The last most difficult group of test item students' difficulties in comprehending descriptive text is test item of determining topic. In this test there were 68 (17.53%) the total of incorrect answer made by the eighth grade students in this classification of difficulty.

The researchers' concluded that the students' difficulties in comprehending English descriptive text come out from reading comprehension skills and vocabulary mastery.

4.2.2 The students' perception toward English descriptivetext.

The dominant answer is "strongly agree" with four statements, followed by "agree" with seven statements and the last is "disagree" with one statement. It means that the most of students' agree with the statements made by the researcher. It can be concluded that the students have bad/negative perceptions in reading descriptive text.

The data obtained from interview with some students, it shows that students have bad perceptions in reading English descriptive text too. The students' perception thatreading descriptive text is difficult to be understood because they cannot translate English words into Indonesian and it is difficult to understand the meaning of words in the reading tex.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

This chapter deals with the conclusion and suggestion of the research.

5.1Conclusion

In line with the result of the data analysis and discussion, the researcher draws these following conclusions:

The students 'mean score was 31.32. It can be said, the majority of the students are difficulties in comprehending English descriptive text. Therefore, it can be classified into "unsatisfactory" level of students' level in reading. The students' difficulties in comprehending English descriptive text were classified into 5 groups based on thetypes of reading questions.There are difficulties in making inference about 25.52%, difficulties in finding main idea about 19.85%, difficulties in finding inference about 19.08%, difficulties in vocabulary about 18.05%, and difficulties in

determining the topic about 17.53%. It means that the students at the eighth grade of SMPN 11 Mataram are difficult in comprehending reading reading skill and vocabulary mastery in descriptive text.

The students in SMPN 11 Mataram had bad/negative perception toward comprehending English Descriptive text. They said that descriptive text is difficult to be understood because they cannot translate English words into Indonesian and it is difficult to understand the meaning of words in the reading text.

5.2Suggestion

Referring to the conclusion above, the researcher proposes the suggestion to the students and the teacher as follows:

1. In this part the writer would like to give suggestions for the teachers, students, and other researcher in dealing with students reading achievement.

2. The students should study hard and develop their reading ability especially in reading descriptive text. It means that they should increase or check their ability and understanding about what they have learned in the classroom.

3. English teacher should give students more opportunity to practice their reading especially in finding topic, main idea, inference, vocabulary, and reference. Moreover, they have to be more selective in choosing the materials that will be taught and use different kinds of techniques in teaching in order that the students consider that English is not a difficult subject at all.

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