

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND-GRADE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN COMPREHENDING DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS AT SMA PGRI 1 PADANG

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Abstract

Descriptive text is a text which describes something or someone to make clear impression of person, place or thing. Descriptive text has two generic structure; identification and description. This research was aimed at describing students' ability in comprehending descriptive texts. Descriptive method was used as the design of the research. The population was second-grade students of SMA PGRI 1 Padang. The total population was 285 students, and the total sample was 55 students. The sample were selected by using stratified cluster random sampling technique. Multiple choice reading test was used as the instrument. Based on data analysis, it was found that students' ability in comprehending descriptive text was moderate. It was indicated that 29 students out of 55 students (53%) had moderate ability in comprehending descriptive texts, 30 students out of 55 students (54.5%) had moderate ability in comprehending identification, and 28 students out of 55 students (50.9%) had moderate ability in comprehending description. Referring to the findings, it can be concluded that the second-grade students' ability at SMA PGRI 1 Padang in comprehending descriptive texts was moderate. Therefore, the researcher proposed several suggestions. First, teachers are suggested to give more exercises about comprehending descriptive text to expand students' knowledge. Second, students are expected to study harder and learn more about identification and description of descriptive texts. Last, further researchers are expected to analyze the factors which cause the moderate ability that students have in comprehending descriptive texts, so their ability can be improved.

Key Words : descriptive text, comprehend, ability

Introduction

English is an international language used by people in all over the world. It is used by people in many countries,

including Indonesia. English is used in several kinds of communication aspects, such as education, politic, economy, technology, science and culture. In Indonesia, English has been

introduced and taught to students since elementary level to university level. It is one of primary subjects which students have to pass in order to continue their study to the higher levels. In learning English, there are four language skills that students need to master. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing.

As mentioned above, reading is one of language skills. Harmer (2003:68) believes that reading is part of language acquisition process in which language acquisition process is a process or development in using language because reading provides opportunities to study language including studying vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and the way of sentences, paragraphs and texts organizing.

In addition, Lipzieg (in Sholikin, 2012:1) explains that reading is a process which consists of many different parts involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. It means that reading is a process which involves many things; recognition and comprehending the words, reading fluency and reader's

psychological condition in understanding a reading material.

Reading is one of the most important skills in our daily life. Students need to read books to understand the subjects, read questions on exam, etc. Therefore, poor reading skill affects students' success in school. However, it is not only for the purpose of completing test and subject. Reading skill is also useful for students to read texts in English for their future careers. Due to the importance of reading skill as explained above, students are expected to have good ability in reading and to get information from the text that they read. To achieve this purpose, students need to comprehend the text.

There were several types of the text which are taught to the second-grade students at SMA PGRI 1 Padang, such as spoof, narrative, hortatory exposition, etc. When the researcher did an informal interview during teaching practice toward some of the second-grade students of SMA PGRI 1 Padang, she found out that some students have difficulties in comprehending descriptive text.

Therefore, the researcher assumed that their ability in comprehending descriptive text was low, but as far as the researcher knew, this phenomenon has not been proved yet, scientifically. Based on the fact, the researcher was interested in conducting a research entitled "*An Analysis of the Second-Grade Students' Ability in Comprehending Descriptive Texts at SMA PGRI 1 Padang.*"

Concerning with the explanation above, the problem of this research was as follow "How is the ability of the second-grade students of SMA PGRI 1 Padang in comprehending descriptive texts?" especially, the problem was "how is the ability of the second-grade students of SMA PGRI 1 Padang in comprehending identification and description of descriptive texts". Then, the general purpose of this research was to describe the ability of the second-grade students of SMA PGRI 1 Padang in comprehending descriptive texts. In detail, the purpose of this research was to describe the ability of the second-grade students of SMA PGRI 1 Padang in comprehending

identification and description of descriptive texts.

Methodology

Descriptive method was used as the design of this research. According to Gay (1987:189), descriptive method involves collecting data in order to answer questions about the current status of subject of the study. Descriptive method does not control subject being studied. It measures what already exist about the subject.

The population of this research was the second-grade students of SMA PGRI 1 Padang. The population was distributed into two majors of class. They were IPA (exact science) and IPS (social science). IPA consisted of 4 classes and IPS consisted of 6 classes. The total population were 285 students, and each class in average consisted of 28 students.

To select the sample, stratified cluster random sampling technique was used because the population consisted of two strata, exact science (IPA) students and social science (IPS) students. Both of these strata had differences in term of students' worksheet in studying English. Based on the sampling

technique that was used, the researcher wrote the name of each class on small pieces of paper. Next, the small papers were rolled and put into two boxes (exact class and social class). Then, the two boxes were mixed up and a piece of paper from each box was taken by closed eyes. XI IPA-3 and XI IPS-2 were selected. Therefore, all members of these classes became the sample of this research.

Then, reading comprehension test was used as the instrument of data-gathering. The students were asked to answer comprehension questions based on 3 descriptive texts given. Each text consisted of about 3-5 paragraphs and had 9-10 questions. The total questions were 30 items and each item had 5 choices. The researcher gave one point for each correct answer, so a correct answer got 1, and a wrong answer got 0. The minimum score of try out that a student got was 9 and the maximum score was 29. The researcher allocated 45 minutes for students to do the test.

The researcher collected data by using reading comprehension test with the following steps :

- a. The researcher administered the test

- b. The researcher explained test direction
- c. The researcher collected the answer and checked it one by one
- d. The researcher checked the students's answer sheet by giving score 0 for the wrong answer, and score 1 for the correct one. The highest score of real test was 24 and the lowest score of real test was 7.

To analyze data, the researcher used descriptive analysis to measure students' ability in comprehending descriptive texts. Students' scores in answering reading comprehension test were analyzed to know the number of students who had high, moderate and low ability. The steps were as follows :

- a. The researcher presented the raw scores of each sample
- b. The researcher calculated Mean (M) by using formula suggested by Arikunto (2012:299):

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where:

M = mean

$\sum X$ = total scores of total students

N = total students

- c. The researcher calculated Standard Deviation (SD) by using formula suggested by Arikunto (2012:299) :

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum X^2}{N} - \left(\frac{\sum X}{N}\right)^2}$$

Where :

SD = standard deviation

$\sum X^2$ = the sum of all the squares

$(\sum X)^2$ = the square of the sum

N = total students

- d. The researcher classified students' ability based on Arikunto's ideas (2012:299). The classifications are as following:

$>M + 1SD$ = High ability

$(M - 1SD) - (M + 1SD)$
= Moderate ability

$< M - 1SD$ = Low ability

- e. The researcher calculated the percentage of students who had high, moderate and low ability by using the

following formula

(Arikunto, 2012:298):

$$P = \frac{R}{N} \times 100 \%$$

Where:

P = Percentage of students ability

R = The sum of the students who have high, moderate or low ability

N = total students

- f. Finally, the researcher drew conclusion based on the results of data analysis

Findings and Discussions

1. Findings

a. Students' Ability in Comprehending Descriptive Texts

Based on the result of data analysis, the researcher found out that the lowest score was 7 and the highest score was 24. Next, the researcher got 16.45 for mean and 5.90 for standard deviation. Students' ability was categorized as high if their scores were higher than 22.35. It was categorized as moderate if their scores were in the range of 10.55 to 22.35, and it was categorized as low if their scores were lower than 10.55. Then, the researcher found that 11 students (20%) who had high ability, 29 students (53%) who had moderate ability, and 15 students (27%) who had low ability in comprehending descriptive texts. In order to be clear, it can be seen in the following table:

Table 1.1
The Classification of
Students' Ability in Comprehending
Descriptive Texts

classification of ability	Frequency of students	Percent age
High	11	20%
Moderate	29	53%
Low	15	27%

b. Students' Ability in Comprehending Identification of Descriptive Texts

Based on the result of data analysis, the researcher found out that the lowest score was 1 and the highest score was 4. Next, the researcher got 3.07 for mean and .86 for standard deviation. Students' ability was categorized as high if their scores were higher than 3.93. It was categorized as moderate if their scores were in the range of 2.21 to 3.93, and it was categorized as low if their scores were lower than 2.21. Then, the researcher found that 17 students (30.9%) who had high ability, 30 students (54.5%) who had moderate ability, and 8 students (14.5%) who had low ability in comprehending descriptive texts. In order to be clear, it can be seen in the following table:

Table 1.2
The Classification of
Students' Ability in Comprehending
Identification of Descriptive Texts

Classification of Ability	Frequency of Students	Percentage
High	17	30.9%
Moderate	30	54.5%
Low	8	14.5%

c. Students' Ability in Comprehending Description of Descriptive Texts

Based on the result of data analysis researcher found out that the lowest score was 3 and the highest score was 20. Next, the researcher got 13.4 for mean and 5.30 for standard deviation. Students' ability was categorized as high if their scores were higher than 18.7. It was categorized as moderate if their scores were in the range of 8.1 to 18.7 and it was categorized as low if their scores were lower than 8.1. Then, the researcher found that 12 students (21.8%) who had high ability, 28 students (50.9%) who had moderate ability, and 15 students (27.3%) who had low ability in comprehending descriptive texts. In order to be clear, it can be seen in the following :

Table 1.3
The Classification of Students' Ability in Comprehending Description of Descriptive Texts

Classification of Ability	Frequency of Students	Percent age
High	12	21.8%
Moderate	28	50.9%
Low	15	27.3%

2. Discussions

a. Students' Ability in Comprehending Identification of Descriptive Texts

As stated in the first chapter, identification is the element of descriptive texts which identifies the special participant or subject of the text (Rahma *et. al.*, 2011:132).The identification items of real test were distributed on number 1, 9,18 and 19.As already stated previously, students' ability in comprehending identification of descriptive texts was moderate. It means that there were many students had difficulty in comprehending identification of descriptive texts. Most of students had mistake on questions number 9 in text II and number 19 in text III. For example:

9. What kind of musical instrument is *Sasando*?
- Bamboo instrument
 - Wooden instrument
 - A string instrument
 - A modern instrument
 - Tube instrument

The correct answer for this question is *c. A string instrument*. In fact, 21 students answered *a. Bamboo instrument*, 24 students

answered *c. A string instrument*, and 6 students answered *d. A modern instrument*.

Based on the result of analysis, students did mistake by choosing option *a. Bamboo instrument* because the main material of *Sasando* is Bamboo as stated in text “*Sasando*”. Therefore, they assumed that *Sasando* is a bamboo instrument. Next, students did mistake by choosing option *d. A modern instrument* because it is estimated that students did not comprehend the text, especially identification part. As it is known, there is no word “modern” in the text.

19. What is the writer’s opinion about Yogyakarta?

- a. The most crowded place
- b. The biggest place
- c. The nicest place
- d. The most beautiful place
- e. Interesting place

The correct answer for this question is *c. The nicest place*. In fact, 4 students answered *a. The most crowded place*, 2 students answered *b. The biggest place*, 32 students answered *c. The nicest place*, 12 students answered *d. The*

most beautiful place, and 2 students answered *e. Interesting place*.

Based on the result of analysis, students did mistake by choosing option *a. The most crowded place* because it is estimated that students did not read and comprehend the text well, especially identification part. As it is known, there is no word “crowded” stated in text “Yogyakarta”. Next, students did mistake by choosing option *b. The biggest place* because it is also estimated that students did not comprehend the text. By contrast, it is stated in the text that Yogyakarta is a small city, not big. Then, students did mistake by choosing option *d. The most beautiful place* and *e. Interesting place* because it is estimated that they assumed that Yogyakarta is beautiful and interesting place as it is stated in the text that there are many tourism places there.

Therefore, it is indicated that many students had difficulty in comprehending identification of descriptive texts. It is proved by statements above.

b. Students' Ability in
Comprehending Description of
Descriptive Texts

As stated in the first chapter, description is the element of descriptive texts which describes parts, qualities and the characteristics of the special participant or subject of the text (Rahma *et. al.*,2011:132).The description items of real test were distributed on number 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25. As already stated previously, students' ability in comprehending description of descriptive texts was moderate. It means that there were many students had difficulty in comprehending description of descriptive texts. Most of students had mistake on questions number 4 in text I, number 15 in text II and number 24 in textIII.

For examples:

4. The following are what Jack Dorsey does, **EXCEPT** _____
- The co-founder of *Facebook*
 - A computer programmer
 - The chairman of *Twitter*
 - The CEO of square
 - An innovator

The correct answer for this question is *a. The co-founder of*

Facebook. In fact, 23 students answered *a. The co-founder of Facebook*, 7 students answered *b. A computer programmer*, 5 students answered *c. The chairman of Twitter*, 4 students answered *d. The CEO of square*, and 11 students answered *e. An innovator*.

Based on the result of analysis, students did mistake by choosing option *b. A computer programmer*, *c. The chairman of Twitter*, *d. The CEO of square* and *e. An innovator* because it is estimated that they did not comprehend the question. It is clearly stated that the question asks students to choose which one not included of what Jack Dorsey's job.

15. What is the function of palmyra leaf ?
- As the resonator
 - As the frame of the instrument.
 - To knows the technique of how to play it
 - To create sounds
 - To produce various lengths of strings

The correct answer for this question is *a. As the resonator*. In fact, 24 students answered *a. As the resonator*, 17 students answered *c. To knows the technique of how to*

play it, 4 students answered *d. To create sounds*, and 7 students answered *e. To produce various lengths of strings*.

Based on the result of analysis, students did mistake by choosing option *c. To knows the technique of how to play it* because it is estimated they did not comprehend the third paragraph of text “Sasando” well where the answer is stated. Then, students did mistake by choosing option *d. To create sounds* and *e. To produce various lengths of strings* because as it is stated in the text that there is explanation about wedges which has function to produce various lengths of strings in the previous sentence. Therefore, the students assumed that it is the answer.

24. What transportation is there to get around Yogyakarta city at the day?
- Motorcycle
 - Car
 - Cab
 - Bus
 - Ship

The correct answer for this question is *d. Bus*. In fact, 4 students answered *b. Car*, 27

students answered *c. Cab*, 16 students answered *d. Bus*, and 8 students answered *e. Ship*.

Based on the result of analysis, students did mistake by choosing option *b. Car*, *c. Cab* and *e. Ship* because it is estimated that students did not comprehend the text well. As it is known, there is no word “car, ship, or cab” stated in text “Yogyakarta”.

Therefore, it is indicated that many students had difficulty in comprehending description of descriptive texts. It is proved by statements above.

Conclusions

After interpreting the result of data analysis, it can be concluded that generally, the ability of the second-grade students of SMA PGRI 1 Padang in comprehending descriptive texts was moderate. It was proved by the fact that there were 29 students out of 55 students (53%) had moderate ability. Specifically, it can be concluded that:

- The ability of the second-grade students of SMA PGRI 1 Padang in

comprehending identification was moderate. It was proved by the fact that there were 30 students out of 55 students (54.5%) had moderate ability.

2. The ability of the second-grade students of SMA PGRI 1 Padang in comprehending description was moderate. It was proved by the fact that there were 28 students out of 55 students (50.9%) had moderate ability.

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