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A STUDY ON THE ABILITY IN COMPREHENDING NARRATIVE TEXTS BY THE THIRD YEAR STUDENTS OF SMPN 17 PEKANBARU

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Abstract

This research was descriptive research. The specific objective of this research is to find out the ability of the third year students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru in comprehending narrative texts. The research was conducted in the academic year 2012 / 2013 at the third year students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru. It is in Pembangunan Street. The data collected from October to December 2012. Before the test was given to the students, it had been tried out to the 35 students at SMPN 17 Pekanbaru in X₃ class at different time to prove that the test is reliable and valid. After the test was tried out, the real test was given to the students. The subjects of this research were 35 students of class X₂ at SMPN 17 Pekanbaru. After collecting the data, the writer analyzed the result to find out the ability of the third year students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru in comprehending narrative texts. From the result of the data analyzing, it was found that there were 24 students from 35 students were at good level. The mean score of the students' ability in comprehending narrative texts of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru was 69.71 and the percentage of the mean score was 68.57%.

Keyword: students' ability, comprehending narrative texts.

INTRODUCTION

In English, there are four language skills that should be mastered by foreign language learners as basic competency in English skill, they are listening, writing, speaking, and reading. These skills are one unity that has influenced to one another. Therefore, in mastery of English we cannot separate one language skill from the others. Reading is one of important skills in learning English. Reading is classified as a receptive skill because reading is the process of grasping

the meaning of the words or writer's idea about the topic. Students should have good understanding about the topic itself. Furthermore, grasp means comprehending. Burnes and Page (1985) defines that reading is an interactive process. The process means that the reader engages in an exchange of idea with an author via text. The writer's message can be received if a reader has skills to understand the text. Actually, the aim of teaching reading is to comprehend and to react to what is written. However, this competence is not easy to learn, because the students should have full understanding about the text. In fact, many students still find difficulties to comprehend the author's ideas. The difficulties may caused by several factors, such as attitude, interest, background knowledge, environment, and teacher. Even though, reading is very important in learning English, many students do not pay much attention in reading class.

Based on the syllabus of English teaching for the third year students of SMP Negeri 17 Pekanbaru, the focus is on three genres. They are report text, narrative text, and procedure text. The writer focuses on narrative text. The writer chooses narrative text because when the writer did his teaching practice in this junior high school, the writer found that most of the third year students are not able to comprehend narrative text. The factors why the students could not comprehend narrative text effectively and efficiently might be uninteresting materials and unfamiliar text. The students tend to involve in the reading activities if they are interested and familiar with the text given. They will be motivated to read more and more. As a result it will influence their reading ability.

Concerning the background stated above, the third year students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru have some problems in comprehending narrative text. There are some problems that the students find when they are studying reading. The problems can be caused by some aspects that may influence the students in comprehending reading text. It can be cause of the teacher incapability, such as: technique, roles, or performance, the school environment, and the students have limited vocabularies, the understanding of the structure, the difficulty of the material, and the limited time in teaching-learning process.

Based on the problem above, the writer wants to know whether:

- Why do most of the students have difficulties in comprehending the narrative texts?
- Should the students understand more about vocabulary?
- Should the students understand more about structure?
- Should the students understand more about the material?
- Does it cause of the teacher technique?
- Should the students need more time in teaching-learning process?

The general objective of this research is to know the ability in comprehending narrative texts by the third year students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru.

There are some components reading comprehension which should be focused on comprehending a reading text. King and Stanley (1989) state that there are five components that may help the students to read carefully:

1. Finding Factual Information

Factual information requires readers to scan specific details. There are many types of question of factual information such as question type of reason, purpose, result, comparison, means, identity, time, and amount in which most of the answer can be found in the text

2. Main Idea

Reading concerns with meaning to a greater extent than it is with form. An efficient reader understands not only the ideas but also their relative significance, as expressed by the author, in other words, some of the ideas are super ordinate while other subordinate.

3. Reference

In order to avoid repeated words or phrases, the author use reference words and being able to identify the words or phrases to which they will help the reader understand the reading passage.

4. Inference

Making inference from reading text. Inference is a skill where the reader has to be able to read between lines. King and Stanley divide into two main attentions, draw logical inferences and make accurate prediction.

5. Restatement

Restatement is the kinds of question test which use to measure the reader's ability in analyzing the relationship of ideas within single sentences. It means that the last few question of reading comprehension ask the reader to choose which of the four possibilities best restated the meaning of given sentence.

In this research, the writer used finding factual information, main idea, and finding references. Inferences and restatement were not used because both were not suitable to this research and the teaching goal in reading comprehension for junior high school.

Based on the School Based Curriculum there are so many kinds of English texts. According to Rahmawan (2007) the generic structure and language feature dominantly used, texts are divided into several types. They are narrative, recount, descriptive, report, explanation, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, procedure, discussion, review, anecdote, and spoof.

Narrative text is one kind of genres taught for the third year students at Junior High School. Narrative is a text focusing specific participants. Its social function is to tell stories or past events and entertain the readers. The information that the writer gets from <http://bos-sulap.blogspot.com/2010/09/jenis-jenis-english-text.html>, states that the basic purpose of narrative text is to entertain, to gain, and to hold a readers' interest. However narratives can also be written to teach or inform, to change attitudes / social opinions. Narratives sequence people / characters in time and place but differ from recounts in that through the

sequencing, the stories set up one or more problems, which must eventually find a way to be resolved.

There are many types of narrative. They can be imaginary, factual or a combination of both. They may include fairy stories, mysteries, science fiction, romances, horror stories, adventure stories, fables, myths and legends, historical narratives, ballads, slice of life, personal experience.

According to Diana (2003), a narrative text usually has description of features and rhetorical steps.

1. Plot

The plot answers the questions “What is happening in the story?” and “What is the sequence of events?” Some stories have simple and straightforward plots. Others have complex plots that make the reader think and ask questions: Who solves problems? Stories that flow well keep the reader involved and interested. Additionally, Rebecca (2003) says that plot is the sequence of events showing characters in action. This sequence is not accidental but is chosen by the author as the best way of telling his or her story. If the writer has chosen well, the plot will produce conflict, tension, and action that will arouse and hold the reader’s interest. Children want what most adults want in literature: action, happenings, questions that need answers, answers that fit questions, glimpses of happy and unhappy outcomes, discovery of how events grow and turn. According to KTSP 2006, plot (rhetorical step) is more than the sequence of actions or conflict.

Narrative order in fiction, the order in which events are related, may follow several patterns, but the most common pattern in young children’s literature is the chronological arrangement. If a story relates events in the order of their happening, their story is in chronological order, perhaps moving with the characters from one place of action to another and yet chronological. Order is easy for children to follow if within their experience; chronological order is therefore more frequent.

Rising action begins with the situation that must be shown and explained. This explanation for the situation and the characters’ condition is called exposition. It is placed in the beginning. In most stories for children, it is woven into early section so that attention is caught immediately and held. Then, this early action grows into a suspense that holds them to read. Early readers like the suspense of “What’s going to happen?” The writers for children must decide how much suspense the child can sustain and how much reassurance is needed to balance suspense. The peak and turning point of the conflict, the point at which we know the outcome of the action, is called the climax. In a progressive plot, suspense pulls the reader through the rising action to the central climax, where conflict is

resolved in a manner foreshadowed and inevitable; the last questions are usually answered in a denouement, with its closed ending.

2. Characterization

Characterization addresses the questions “Who are these people?” and “Are they believable?” Characters need to be authentic for the reader to connect with them. Readers seek characters whose humanity touches theirs. Characters are also easy to relate to and believe in. Characters come to life for the readers through what they say, their actions, and what others say about them.

3. Setting

Setting informs the reader of where the story is taking place. It answers the questions “Where am I?” and “What will I see if I walk around here?” More frequently, the setting falls into the background, and the reader is not particularly aware of it. Readers know immediately, however, when the setting is not well drawn, because they cannot feel the sense of where they are.

Based on Anderson in Putra (2007) narrative texts divided into:

1. Fairy tales are folk narratives that include elements of magic, magical folk or the supernatural. They often retain the structures and repetitive refrains prevalent in folk tales.
2. Folk tales serve to share the wisdom and experience of ordinary folk. Animals frequently feature in folk tales, alongside, or instead of, human, both of whom succeed or fail in response to their ability to be quick-witted.
3. Myths are “explanation’ stories that seek to explain the origins of natural and supernatural phenomena, human/superhuman characteristics and the spiritual side of life. Examples include the Greek and Norse myths.
4. Legends usually refer to individual characters, great heroes or king who lived in the periods before written records. While based on truth, these have often been embellished over time.
5. Fables are often brief with few characters, an element of the fabulous and very overt morals. Animals are most often used as the characters.

Generic Structure of Narrative:

1. Orientation: Introducing the participants and informing the time and the place of the story. Usually answers who, when, and where. E.g. Mr. Wolf went out hunting in the forest one dark gloomy night.
2. Complication: Describing the rising crises which the participants have to do with. The complication usually involves the main character(s) (often mirroring the complications in real life).
3. Resolution: Showing the way of participant to solve the crises, better or worse, happily or unhappily. Sometimes there are a number of

complications that have to be resolved. These add and sustain interest and suspense for the reader.

Wing Jan (2003) also explains the language used in narrative text. They are as follows:

1. Action verbs: Action verbs provide interest to the writing. For example, instead of The old woman was in his way try The old woman barred his path. Instead of She laughed try She cackled.
2. Written in the first person (I, we) or the third person (he, she, they).
3. Usually past tense.
4. Connectives, linking words to do with time.
5. Specific nouns: Strong nouns have more specific meanings, eg. oak as opposed to tree.
6. Active nouns: Make nouns actually do something, eg. It was raining could become Rain splashed down or There was a large cabinet in the lounge could become A large cabinet seemed to fill the lounge.
7. The use of adjectives and adverbs: Writing needs judicious use of adjectives and adverbs to bring it alive, qualify the action and provide description and information for the reader.
8. Use of the senses: Where appropriate, the senses can be used to describe and develop the experiences, setting and character:
 - a. What does it smell like?
 - b. What can be heard?
 - c. What can be seen - details?
 - d. What does it taste like?
 - e. What does it feel like?
9. Imagery
 - a. Simile: A direct comparison, using like or as or as though, eg. The sea looked as rumpled as a blue quilted dressing gown. Or The wind wrapped me up like a cloak.
 - b. Metaphor: An indirect or hidden comparison, eg. She has a heart of stone or He is a stubborn mule or The man barked out the instructions.
 - c. Onomatopoeia: A suggestion of sound through words, eg. crackle, splat, ooze, squish, boom, eg. The tyres whirl on the road. The pitter-patter of soft rain. The mud oozed and squished through my toes.
 - d. Personification: Giving nonliving things (inanimate) living characteristics, eg. The steel beam clenched its muscles. Clouds limped across the sky. The pebbles on the path were grey with grief.
10. Rhetorical Questions: Often the author asks the audience questions, knowing of course there will be no direct answer. This is a way of involving the reader in the story at the outset, eg. Have you ever built a tree hut?

11. Variety in sentence beginnings. There are a several ways to do this, eg. by using:
- a. Participles: "Jumping with joy I ran home to tell mum my good news."
 - b. Adverbs: "Silently the cat crept toward the bird"
 - c. Adjectives: "Brilliant sunlight shone through the window"
 - d. Nouns: "Thunder claps filled the air"
 - e. Adverbial Phrases: "Along the street walked the girl as if she had not a care in the world."

Conversations/Dialogue: these may be used as an opener. This may be done through a series of short or one-word sentences or as one long complex sentence.

METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive research, which has only one variable that is the ability of the students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru in comprehending narrative texts. Gay (1987) says that the descriptive research involves collecting data to answer question concerning to the subject of the study. The writer took the samples by using cluster sampling that was by pulling the lottery in order to get satisfactory result. Gay (1987) says that cluster sampling is sampling in which groups, not individuals, are randomly selected. Cluster sampling involves identify and define the population, identifying each group of the population and selecting group for the sample and completely chance basis. The procedure of the writer followed to take the try out class and the sample class like in following:

1. The writer takes 7 pieces of paper and numbered them from number one to seven that represent the number of the classes.
2. Randomly the writer takes one piece as the try out and one piece as the sample class.

The chosen classes were IX.₃ as the try out which has 35 students and IX.₂ as the sample class which has 35 students.

In this research, the writer will collect the data using an instrument assessing students' ability in comprehending narrative texts. The test is designed in multiple choice format that contains 30 items. Each narrative text consists of six items of multiple choices. Thus there are 30 items included in the test. The writer will take 60 minutes the time determined to learn reading at Junior High School. The texts will be taken from English Textbooks.

Before the test was given to the students, it has been being tried out to the students at SMP N 17 Pekanbaru in one class at different time to prove that the test is reliable and valid.

Heaton (1991) says that the items with difficulty level below 0.3 and above 0.7 will be excluded from the test and changed with the new items that are appropriate. Using the following formula gets the index of difficulty:

$$FV = \frac{R}{N}$$

Where: FV = difficulty level (facility value)

R = the number of correct answer

N = the number of the students

For the reliability for the whole test, the formula used is:

$$r_{ii} = \frac{N}{N-1} \left(1 - \frac{m(N-m)}{N.sd^2} \right)$$

Where: r_{ii} = The reliability of the test

N = The number of items in the test

m = The mean score of the test for all the tests

sd = The standard deviation of all the tests' scores

(Heaton, 1991)

For standard deviation, the following formula was used:

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N}}$$

Where: SD = Standard deviation

$\sum d^2$ = Total of all squared result

N = number of students

(Heaton, 1991)

Tinambunan (1988) says that the reliability of a test is considered as follow:

Coefficient 0.00 – 0.20 : the reliability is low

Coefficient 0.21 – 0.40 : the reliability is sufficient

Coefficient 0.41 – 0.70 : the reliability is high

Coefficient above 0.70 : the reliability is very high

In order to get the description of the answers given by the students, the data was analysed by using Wayan and Sumarnata's formula (1983) as quoted by Fianti (2004):

$$P = \frac{X}{N} \times 100$$

Where: P = individual score

X = correct answer

N = number of items

After all the students' scores were obtained, the students' ability in comprehending narrative text can be seen. To know the average score of the students' ability in comprehending the texts, the writer presented the data by using the formula:

$$m = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

Where: m = Mean/average

$\sum fx$ = The number of the score

N = Total number of students

(Heaton, 1991)

The percentage of the classification of the ability of the third year students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru in comprehending narrative texts can be calculated by using the formula:

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

Where: P = Percentage

F = Number of frequency

R = Number of respondents

(Hatch and Farhady, 1982)

Haris (1974) categories the levels of the ability into groups as in the table below:

The Classification of the Students' Level of Ability

No	Ability scores	Ability classification
1	81- 100	Excellent
2	61- 80	Good
3	41-60	Moderate
4	21-40	Poor
5	0-20	Very poor

(Haris, 1974)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The writer tried out the test to 35 students of the third year students of SMP N 17 Pekanbaru in class IX.₃ on November 22nd 2012. The writer tried out the test in order to find the reliability of the test and the difficulty level of each item.

The difficulty level each item was found by dividing the number of correct answers by the number of students taking test. Heaton (1991) stated that the test is accepted if the score is between 0.30 – 0.70. So, the items that difficulty levels are not in category are rejected and should be revised. In this research, there are eight items that should be revised. Four items were too easy (items number 1, 2, 14, and 15) and four items were too difficult (items number 8, 10, 26, and 27).

Reliability is necessary characteristic of any good test, for it to be valid at all, a test must be reliable as a measuring instrument (Heaton, 1991). To find out the reliability of the test, we need to find out first the mean and the standard deviation. After obtaining the mean and standard deviation, the reliability was calculated.

In this research, it is found that the mean of the score of the test is 62, the standard deviation is 44.11, and the reliability is 0.98. If we refer to the classification above, we can see that the reliability of the test is very high. After revising the test items, the writer administered the real test to the respondents.

The real test is conducted to 35 students of the third year student of SMP 17 Pekanbaru in class IX.2. After collecting the data, the writer analyzed the result to find out the ability of the third year students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru in comprehending narrative texts.

In order to find out the individual score of each student, the writer divided the number of the correct answers with the total number of items and then multiplied it by one hundred. The percentage of the students' ability in comprehending narrative texts can be seen in the table below.

The Percentage of the Classification of the Students' Ability in Comprehending Narrative Texts

No	Classification		Frequency (Person)	Percentage
	Score	Level of Ability		
1	81-100	Excellent	5	14.29%
2	61-80	Good	24	68.57%
3	41-60	Moderate	5	14.28%
4	21-40	Poor	1	2.86%
5	0-20	Very Poor	0	0%
Total			35	100%

The table above shows that there are 5 students are in *excellent* level (14,29%), 24 students are in *good* level (68,57%), 5 students are in *moderate* level (14,28%), 1 student is in *poor* level (2,86%) and no student is in *very poor* level (0%). It means that the students' ability in comprehending narrative texts is in *good* level because more than half of students are in this level. They still got difficulty in comprehending narrative texts because still there is a student in *poor* level. In addition, just few students are in *excellent* level.

The mean score of the second year students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru in comprehending narrative texts is 69.71. Therefore, it can be stated that the students' mean score is *good* level.

The mean score of the second year students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru in comprehending narrative texts in finding factual informations is 68.28. Therefore, it can be stated that the students' mean score is *good* level. The students' ability in finding factual informations can be seen in table below.

The Classification of the Students' Ability in Finding Factual Informations

No	Classification		Frequency (Person)	Percentage
	Score	Level of Ability		
1	81-100	Excellent	5	14.29%
2	61-80	Good	16	45.71%
3	41-60	Moderate	11	31.43%
4	21-40	Poor	3	8.57%
5	0-20	Very Poor	0	0%
Total			35	100%

The percentage of the students' scores and their level of ability classification in all level varied. From 35 students, 5 students (14.29%) were in *excellent* level, 16 students (45.71%) were in *good* level, 11 students (31.43%) were in *moderate* level, 3 students (8.57%) were in *poor* level, and no student was in *very poor* level. From the table above, we can conclude that the students' ability in finding factual informations is in *good* level because 45.71% students are in this level.

The mean score of the second year students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru in comprehending narrative texts in finding references is 65.71. Therefore, it can be stated that the students' mean score is *good* level. The students' ability in comprehending narrative texts in finding references can be seen in table below.

The Classification of the Students' Ability in Finding References

No	Classification		Frequency (Person)	Percentage
	Score	Level of Ability		
1	81-100	Excellent	6	17.14%
2	61-80	Good	10	28.57%
3	41-60	Moderate	14	40%
4	21-40	Poor	4	11.43%
5	0-20	Very Poor	1	2.86%
Total			35	100%

The percentage of the students' scores and their level of ability classification in all level varied. From 35 students, 6 students (17.14%) were in

excellent level, 10 students (28.57%) were in *good* level, 14 students (40.00%) were in *moderate* level, 4 students (11.43%) were in *poor* level, and 1 student was in *very poor* level (2.86%). From the table above, we can conclude that the students' ability in finding references is in *moderate* level because 40.00% students are in this level.

The mean score of the second year students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru in comprehending narrative texts in finding main ideas is 75.14. Therefore, it can be stated that the students' mean score is *good* level. The students' ability in finding main ideas can be seen in table below.

The Classification of the Students' Ability in Finding Main Ideas

No	Classification		Frequency (Person)	Percentage
	Score	Level of Ability		
1	81-100	Excellent	6	17.14%
2	61-80	Good	21	60%
3	41-60	Moderate	7	20%
4	21-40	Poor	1	2.86%
5	0-20	Very Poor	0	0%
Total			35	100%

The percentage of the students' scores and their level of ability classification in all level varied. From 35 students, 6 students (17.14%) were in *excellent* level, 21 students (60%) were in *good* level, 7 students (20%) were in *moderate* level, 1 student (2.86%) was in *poor* level, and no student was in *very poor* level. From the table above, we can conclude that the students' ability in finding main ideas is in *good* level because 60% students are in this level.

The students' mean scores in comprehending narrative texts can be seen in table below.

The Students' Mean Scores in Comprehending Narrative Texts

No.	The Classification of the Question	Mean Score	Level of Ability
1	Finding Factual Informations	68.28	Good
2	Finding references	65.71	Good
3	Finding Main Ideas	75.14	Good

Table above shows that the mean score of the students' for each classification of questions: finding factual informations, finding references, and finding main ideas are in *good* level. The most difficult aspect in comprehending narrative texts is in finding references with the score of 65.71. Then the easiest aspect is in finding main ideas with the score 75.14.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study is to find out the ability of the second year students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru in comprehending narrative texts. Based on the result of the data analysis in chapter IV, the writer makes some conclusions. Among 35 students, 5 students (14.29%) were in *excellent* level, 24 students (68.57%) were in *good* level, 5 students (14.28%) were in *moderate* level, 1 student (2.86%) were in *poor* level and no student was in *very poor* level. The mean score of the whole students in comprehending narrative texts is 69.71. In conclusion, the ability of the second year students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru in comprehending narrative texts was *good* level. In **finding factual informations**, from 35 students, 5 students (14.29%) were in *excellent* level, 16 students (45.71%) were in *good* level, 11 students (31.43%) were in *moderate* level, 3 students (8.57%) were in *poor* level, and no students were in *very poor* level. In **finding references**, 6 students (17.14%) were in *excellent* level, 10 students (28.57%) were in *good* level, 14 students (40%) were in *moderate* level, 4 students (11.43%) were in *poor* level, 1 student (2.86%) was in *very poor* level. In **finding main ideas**, from 35 students, 6 students (17.14%) were in *excellent* level, 21 students (60%) were in *good* level, 7 students (20%) were in *moderate* level, 1 student (2.86%) was in *poor* level, and no student was in *very poor* level. Finally, the ability in comprehending narrative texts by the third year students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru is in *good* level.

SUGGESTIONS

After doing the research on the ability of second year students of SMPN 17 Pekanbaru in comprehending narrative texts, the writer would like to give three suggestions. First, the English teachers are suggested to find various narrative texts from the reading materials such as magazine, newspaper, internet, etc. They should give more explanation and more exercises in comprehending narratives texts, especially in finding factual informations, finding references, and finding main ideas. They also should teach narrative genre well by using appropriate methods and strategies in order to improve the students ability in learning English. Actually, there are many kinds of strategies that teachers can apply in teaching reading, especially in teaching narrative genre. They should able to select a suitable strategy for the students. Futhermore, English teachers should be able to use all of the facilities which are provided by school because it can influence the students' achievement in learning.

Second, the students expected to improve their ability in answering the questions which covering about finding factual informations, finding references, and finding main ideas of narrative texts especially in fairy tales. The students should motivate themselves to read more reading materials, especially narrative texts. Practice makes perfect. The ability of the students in comprehending narrative texts in finding factual informations, finding references, and finding main ideas as the reflection that the students can comprehend the generic

structures of narrative genre. Narrative is one of genre that have to be master by them.

Finally, the school should provide facilities that can be used by English teachers to explain about the genre easily in order to make students interest to learn and understand about the lesson. For example language laboratory, computer, in focus, internet access, etc.

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