An Analysis of the Reading Comprehension Difficulties Faced by Young Learners

by Daniar Sofeny

AN ANALYSIS OF THE READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES FACED BY YOUNG LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT The purposes of this study were to know the student's difficulties in reading comprehension, to know how the difficulties in reading occur, and to know why the difficulties in reading comprehension occur. The research used a qualitative descriptive method to describe the detail of students' difficulties in reading comprehension. To find out the result of the analysis that had been conducted and to describe the student's difficulties, the instrument the researcher used in this research are observation, interview, and documentation. The data sources were obtained from the second graders of Attawfikiyah Islamiyah School. The result showed that the students have difficulties finding the meaning of the words because their mastery of vocabulary is lacking. The students are difficulty also to get the main idea of the text. Thus, the students become do not like reading English texts and also difficult to answer the question of the reading text exercise. The next result from observation showed that there was a lack of facilities in supporting the teaching and learning process, especially for reading material. It can be concluded that the student's difficulties in reading comprehension can occur when they lack English vocabulary, do not know the effective techniques in reading text, and lack facilities for the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: reading comprehension, difficulties, young learners.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the four language skills covered in the subjects of the English language. Reading has its role as the successor part of learning English. (Wiryodijoyo, 2003, p.1). By mastering the reading skill, people who want to study English will find a fact that reading can bring to the improvement of their English skills. In English subjects at Attawfikiyah Islamiyah School, students are taught to read, listen, write, and speak. According to this curriculum, it is understandable that reading is applying one of all which should be taught and can be mastered by each student in the class. In other words, reading in learning English is part of an important subject, which should be taught to students.

The students are unable in getting the message from the text and they will fail to answer the question related to the text. In fact, many students get difficulties comprehending English reading text. Getting general information, specific information, vocabulary, grammatical, and the main idea of a paragraph of a reading text. Also, the lack of interaction between teachers and students so which makes the students have difficulties in comprehending a text and will influence the students in study, especially reading because teachers rarely interacted with students. One of the problems experienced by students is the teaching method that the teacher used in teaching.

Besides that, the process of learning the reading method at Elementary School often concentrates on giving a task to students to translate the text that makes the students passive to communication and input understand how to read the rightly. When an English teacher is teaching she does not give the way or theory know to way or theory know to way read the text, so in the teaching process, the students are difficulties identifying the text through their reading well. To solve the problem, there is a need to address the issue of the root of what kinds of reading comprehension difficulties are faced before going to an offer of a solution. Therefore, the research is aimed to discover the reading comprehension difficulties faced by young learners especially students in Attawfikiyah Islamiyah School.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been many researchers on difficulties in reading comprehension. The first research is "Reading Comprehension Difficulties Among EFL Learners in Higher Learning Institutions" written by Al-Jarrah & Ismail. This research concludes that the reading comprehension difficulties faced by Arab EFL learners in the selected institutions could affect their English language proficiency and academic performance. To find solutions to these difficulties, there is a need for shared efforts of English language teachers, instruction policymakers, public and private bodies responsible for educational policy learning and implementation, and the EFL learners.

Another research is by Putrianti (2018) entitled "Analysis on the Students' Language Problems in Reading Comprehension of SMAS Islam Nur Ihsan" The finding of this research is that second-grade students of SMAS Islam Nur get difficulties with language problems in reading comprehension; they are vocabulary, structure, and spelling. Based on the findings above, it is suggested to language learners be harder in learning reading comprehension, especially in vocabulary, structure, and spelling.

There are four aspects of reading comprehension that students should understand well based on Nuttal theory, such as determining the main idea, understanding vocabulary, making inferences, and detailed information. The meaning of the main idea is a statement that tells the author's point about the topic in the text. According to Longan said that finding the main idea in the text is key to understanding a paragraph or short selection. Usually, the main idea is located in the first sentence but it can be in the middle or in the last sentence. Therefore, it makes the student difficult to find the main idea. That is the cause the students may get confused to see what the main idea of a passage is, and where the main idea is located. The students are expected to understand every word in the text. When reading the students develop their knowledge by reading a text such as by looking for the meaning of new words in the dictionary and guessing the meaning of the context. Making inferences means that the students are expected to be able to understand the text and to find conclusions from the statements in the text. The students as readers need to practice combining instructions from the text with their background knowledge to make conclusions from the text. This means that the instructions in the text will help the students to build assumptions and draw conclusions from the text being read. So the students can answer questions in the text. But in its application, the students have difficulty finding conclusions in the text. The last type of question that is usually found in reading tests is a detailed question or information. This question is used to check students' ability to understand the material that is directly stated in the text.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this research, the researcher used a descriptive design with a qualitative method. Descriptive design was used because in this research there was no treatment given to the students. the researcher only focuses on describing data of student's difficulties in reading texts and doing analysis based on the collected data could be performed. The researcher only describes data related to students' reading comprehension issues. As found in this research, the researcher would merely outline the challenges facing the students.

The data of the research were from the results of observation, and interviews. The data sources were obtained from the second-grade student of Attawfikiyah Islamiyah School, specifically three students, and one teacher. The researcher conducted a thorough interview to elicit the most detailed information needed regarding the students' difficulties understanding the text are reading. The research uses a cell phone to record the information from the interview. Additionally, the researcher employed non-participant observation in this research. The researcher maintains an eye on how the students are learning in class during the observation

since it can help the research by showing when the students are understanding what students reading.

The researcher used an interactive analysis model to analyze the qualitative data. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2018), the interactive analysis data consisted of three steps, such as data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The collecting of knowledge through data visualization promotes action and conclusion-making. Due to the fact that the data gathered using the qualitative research method often takes the form of a narrative, this step entails giving a set of ordered facts that enables the possibility of making conclusions. The presentation of the data leads to a conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings

The student's difficulties found in comprehending reading texts in the second grade of elementary school at Attawfikiyah Islamiyah School were as follows

Lack of Vocabulary

Based on the result of the interview with the students who got difficulties comprehending reading text, most of the students did not know the meaning of the words. It made them got difficulties comprehending the reading text. The student's difficulties in comprehending reading texts were caused by a lack of mastering vocabulary They found unfamiliar words and did not recognize the meaning of the words, which made them so confuse with the text. They got difficulties getting information and everything about the text. Besides that, based on the researcher's observation most of the students did not bring dictionaries when learning English. Of course, it made it difficult for the students to translate several words in the text. The dictionary is also very important for students in learning English. It helps the students to find the meaning of the words if they did not know them. Therefore, a teacher has to remind the students to bring a dictionary.

Based on the researcher's observation of teaching and learning activities. The teacher did not ask the students to memorize the vocabulary. Whereas giving a task to memorize the vocabulary makes the students get the new vocabulary and enriches their mastery of vocabulary. It will help the students in comprehending reading texts.

Unable to Comprehending the Reading Text

The researcher found another difficulty encountered by students was the inability in comprehending read text faced by students at the second grade of Elementary School at Attawfikiyah Islamiyah School. Here, the data obtained from the field in the report is based on the interview with students who got difficulties comprehending reading text and observation of students' classroom activities.

The difficulty of students in comprehending reading texts in the second grade of elementary school at Attawfikiyah Islamiyah School is a lack of vocabulary mastery. It made the students unable to comprehend the reading text correctly. The students did not memorize the vocabulary in their lesson. In fact, memorizing vocabulary is important to help students to enrich their knowledge of vocabulary. Lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and the acquisition of a second or foreign language and lack of vocabulary knowledge is an obstacle to learning. Therefore, as a teacher, we need to teach vocabulary to help students when to comprehend reading texts.

Unable to Understand the Technique in Reading Comprehension

The other students' difficulties are the students' unable to understand the technique in reading comprehension. The students in the second grade of elementary school at Attawfikiyah Islamiyah School have the least of knowledge to use the technique in reading comprehension. By reading, the students were required to improve their knowledge. When the students

answered the questions in the exercise, they got difficulties and their scores were low. It was a common cause of their difficulties in finding the main idea, especially in a limited time.

Lack of Facilities

Based on the researcher's observation, in Elementary School at Attawfikiyah Islamiyah School, lacks facilities. Facilities have an important role in the teaching and learning process because they facilitate comfort and convenience in the classroom. In addition, students can take advantage of the facilities offered by the school to improve their learning capacity and activity. The entire capabilities also assist in the accomplishment of learning objectives.

The facilities found lacking were the library and laboratory. In the library, there is still a lack of books available, the library is rarely used because the room is rarely open. The books about English reading text and dictionaries have the least available. The dictionaries should be available to facilitate the students in reading comprehension. The language laboratory is not available in the elementary school at Attawfikiyah Islamiyah School. The facilities that facilitate teaching and learning arecrucial when learning English. For instance, the language laboratory can offer a comfortable classroom so that the students like studying the educational process.

Discussion

Based on the observation in the second grade of Elementary School at Attawfikiyah Islamiyah School many students did not like English subject because students did not have background knowledge, and ability. In the world of education English has been made a compulsory subject in Junior High School and Senior High School, but the problem in Elementary School at Attawfikiyah Islamiyah School especially in second grade still many students did not like the English subject because English subject was difficult for them and English was different with Indonesia from words, grammar, pronunciation. So the students feel afraid of learning English subjects because they were afraid of making mistakes in studying English, especially reading.

The teacher always explained the material, for example, in reading material, the teacher explained about reading text but some students did not hear the teacher explain the material, some of the students chatted with a friend at his side and some students slept, because the students didn't like these subjects, so that they couldn't focus on the materials that explained the teacher, and although there are some the students heard or saw the teacher explained the material but when the teacher asked about the material student couldn't answer, and no one the students who are asked about the material being explained teachers.

Students who are comprehending reading text should be a mystery the vocabulary because it is related to the unfamiliar vocabulary. Zuhra (2015) stated students' difficulties were influenced by their weaknesses in mastering vocabulary. In learning activities especially in learning reading English, a large knowledge of vocabulary is very important for the students in comprehending reading texts. Besides that, background abilities and the students' interest to read is important.

Yuhana (2013) stated that background knowledge of vocabulary is important in comprehending reading text. Comprehending reading texts need a large vocabulary. The students always found an unfamiliar word in each of the texts. If the students felt confused in reading, it made them got difficulties. According to Perera students' difficulties are presented by unfamiliar vocabulary. Students who have a lot of vocabulary that will easily learn the English language as learning vocabulary is one important component. Mastery of vocabulary is generally regarded as an important portion of the process of learning a language or developing a capability in a language that is already mastered.

The student's difficulties are presented by unfamiliar vocabulary. This is also faced by the students in the second grade of Elementary School at Attawfikiyah Islamiyah School, they

got difficulties recognizing the words in the text and to retells the content of the text Almost all of the students did not understand the meaning of the contents the text.

Another problem for students in learning English, especially reading comprehension is difficult to translate and understanding the meaning of the word. Besides, the students have difficulty translating some of the words in the text, of course in this case the students need a dictionary, but some students at Elementary School at Attawfikiyah Islamiyah School do not have a dictionary. So they didn't answer all questions.

Based on an interview with the students, the researcher found that the students faced difficulties caused they had a lack of vocabulary mastery. Therefore, the students did not understand the meaning of words and the content of the text. It made the students feel confused. On another hand, the researcher also found that the lack of students' motivation in reading English text also influenced their ability in comprehending the text.

The result of the interview showed that most of the students did not like reading English texts because they did not know the meaning of the words. Here, the role of teachers is very important to motivate students who got difficulties learning English. For example, made the student master vocabulary. Students are often taught new words as a portion of the subject and many adults consider the formation of vocabulary as interesting and educative. With the above explanation mastery, vocabulary is the most basic thing that must be mastered in learning English students which is a second for all the students and people of Indonesia.

Gideon (2017) argues skimming technique is helpful for students Since most of the students agreed that the skimming technique increased their interest in reading comprehension. It facilitated them to find the main idea in the text, and saved their time in reading and understanding the text. This technique makes the students not bored reading the texts, because they may have a lot to read but not much time. Therefore, it is necessary to guide the students in applying the proper technique to obtain the information from the text appropriately and quickly.

Lack of students' motivation in learning reading, both for themselves and teachers. If the lack of motivation in learning English, especially reading the learning process will be not successful because there is the attraction of students studying these subjects, otherwise, if students are interested in the subject of English, especially in reading courses students will learn the subject well. The teacher's role here is very important to motivate students who lack interest in learning English, especially reading.

According to Parera, the type of student's difficulties in reading comprehension is a lack of facilities. The facility is one part of the success of teaching and learning activities. This facility such as language laboratory, in-focus, tape recorder, dictionary, and other media. If the school has good facilities, it will give a good influence on the teaching and learning process. The existence of facilities give a large influence on the teaching and learning process. In the reading material, the dictionary is very important to help the students because there is a new vocabulary that the students did not know before. Therefore, if students always bring their dictionary, they are able directly to open the dictionary to find the meaning of the words that they did not know. Dictionary is important to be available in the library.

Facilities of learning include one of the factors that influence the achievement of learning as available at the school and home that will make the students diligent to study and help the students to teach a maximal reading comprehension skill. The facility of learning which is available in Junior High School SATAP 3 Betara is not sufficient for the students to learn activities. If all of that is in the school, the teachers will be a passion about teaching because of the lack of facilities that have schools and teaching only use the book, of course, the learning process is not effective and the students will get bored with the media only book, and in the material reading, the dictionary is very need due to the limitations of the mastery of vocabulary that students have, because in reading text there are many difficult vocabulary or

new vocabulary. When students learn English a lot of students do not bring a dictionary, so students can search for the meaning of a word in the text.

        Thus, that is the difficulties which are experienced by students. The major difficulty is in their mastery of vocabulary. Although, vocabulary is not listed in the curriculum like other learning materials the role of vocabulary is very important and gave a large influence on study comprehending reading text. Therefore, as a teacher, we must be taught to students to master vocabulary and give motivation to them to like read English texts. The teachers must be taught concern the technique of reading comprehension to make the students be easier and enjoy reading.

CONCLUSION

        Based on the result of the research about students' difficulties in comprehending reading texts in the second grade of Elementary School at Attawfikiyah Islamiyah School, the researcher can be concluded that students have difficulties finding the meaning of the words because of their mastery of vocabulary is lack. They always feel confused and bored when reading English texts. Second, the students' difficulties when comprehending reading texts are unable to understand the technique in reading comprehension. This makes it the students difficult to get the main idea. Thus, the students become did not like reading English texts, and also difficult to answer the question of the reading texts exercise. The last, result of observation, is a lack of facilities in the teaching and learning process, especially in reading material. There are no language laboratories and a dictionary is not provided in the library. There are very important to succeed in the teaching and learning process.

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