

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' PROBLEMS IN FINDING MAIN IDEA OF READING TEXT

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ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis masalah siswa dalam menemukan *main idea* dan untuk mengetahui persepsi siswa terhadap tes membaca dalam menemukan *main idea*. Subjek penelitian ini adalah kelas VIII A MTsN 1 Kotabumi. Peneliti menggunakan tiga instrumen pengambilan data: tes membaca, wawancara dan kuesioner. Hasil dari tes membaca menunjukkan bahwa hanya ada 5 siswa yang mendapat nilai 61-70 dan 8 siswa yang mendapat nilai 31-40. Berdasarkan hasil yang didapat dari wawancara terdapat 6 masalah yang siswa temukan dalam menemukan *main idea*: kurangnya minat siswa, kurangnya pengetahuan kosa kata, kalimat yang panjang, miskin strategi membaca, kebingungan tata bahasa, dan tidak tahu bagian paragraf. Hasil dari kuesioner dapat disimpulkan bahwa siswa kelas VIII A masih kesulitan dalam menemukan *main idea* karena mereka tidak mengetahui arti dari *main idea* dan banyak kata-kata sulit yang membuat mereka bingung untuk menemukan *main idea* pada teks bacaan.

This research was intended to analyze the students' problems in finding main idea and to trace the students' perception toward a reading test in finding main idea. The participants were class VIII A MTsN 1 Kotabumi. The researcher used three data collecting techniques: reading test, interview, and questionnaire. The result of reading test showed that there were only 5 students who got score 61-70 and 8 students who got score 31-40. Based on the result of interview there were six students' problems faced in finding the main idea: lack of students interest, lack of vocabulary knowledge, length of the sentence, poor reading strategy, grammatical confusion, and ignorance of paragraph component. The result of questionnaire can be concluded that the students class VIII A still get difficulties in finding main idea because they do not know what main idea is and many difficult words make them confused to find main idea of reading text.

Keywords: *main idea, problems, reading*

INTRODUCTION

Reading plays an important role in developing knowledge. Through reading students can absorb all the information, experience and ideas provided in books. Afflerbach (2007: 12-13) as quoted by Dewi (2013) says that reading is a dynamic and complex process that involves skills, strategies, and prior knowledge. Reading is also an active process of predicting what is likely to come next. When someone is reading, her brain processes the visual information from our eyes. It uses our critical thinking to make an image in our brain based on the text.

Reading may also open the students' minds by using and developing their critical thinking. In reading the reader needs the comprehension. Reading comprehension is very important for the students at Senior High School. According to Cooper (1986:11), comprehension is a process in which a reader may construct meaning by interacting with the text. When reading, a reader should have knowledge about understanding the reading passage.

According Davenport (2007: 61) as quoted by Dewi (2013), states that common types of question found in reading comprehension include: 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). From the types of question found in reading comprehension, identifying main idea is focused on the objective in this research.

Main idea refers to the essence of the paragraph, or rather what the author is trying to get across to the reader. In the other words, the main idea may important that the author develops throughout the paragraph. The function of the entire paragraph is to explain, develop, and support the main idea. The main idea of paragraph tells us what the author wants to know about the topic. The writer in one or more sentences within the paragraph usually directly states the main idea.

Once the people can find the topic, they are ready to find the main idea. The main idea is the point of the paragraph. It is the most important thought about the topic.

According to Dwiarti (2005) at SMU Kosgoro Sekampung East Lampung. She was found there are four problems that the students facing in finding main idea of the text, they are: 1) lack of interest toward reading; 2) lack of background knowledge; 3) lack of vocabulary; 4) unaware on the parts of the paragraph.

Therefore, the objectives of this research are (1) to find out students' problems in finding main idea, (2) to find out students' perceptions toward a reading test. Therefore, this research is expected to find out whether there are any problems or not in determining the main idea and students' perceptions toward a reading test. This research was conducted at the second grade of MTsN 1 Kotabumi.

METHODS

This research was non-experimental research. In this research, she used qualitative case study. The researcher tried to find the problems of students in finding main idea and to find students perception toward a reading test. The data were collected by administering reading test, interview and giving questionnaire.

The participants of this research were the students Class VIII A in MTSN 1 Kotabumi. The researcher used purposive sampling in collected participants of this research. The researcher chose the students eight a class as the participants because they had good enough quality in study than the other class in MTSN 1 Kotabumi. The researcher used the students in eight a class that consists of 36 students as the participants.

In order to collect the data, the researcher conducted the following: 1. reading test, 2. interview, 3. questionnaire. First, the reading tests was used to see the score got by the students in finding main idea and in order to see the influence of the text characteristic toward students' problems in finding main idea of reading text. Second, interview was used to get the data precisely from each of the students relating to their problems. The result of interview was analyzed in order to find the students' problems in finding main idea. The result of interview was also interpreted by describing clearly. In this process, the researcher interviewed the students who had low score in reading test. And the last, The researcher designed the open questionnaire which was used in order to collect basic descriptive information about students' perception toward a reading test. The questionnaire covered some aspects that might cause students' perception toward a reading test.

The procedures of this research as follows: determining research problems, determining and selecting the participants, administering the reading test for the students, interviewing the students, administering the questionnaire to the students, and analyzing the result of the reading test, interview, and the questionnaire. In analyzing the data from reading test, questionnaire, and interview the students, the researcher employed the qualitative research. There are three steps in analyzing and interpreting the data. Therefore, the researcher followed those steps in this research: making the abstraction of all data to be treated in one unit, unifying the data, and interpreting the data substantive theory.

RESULTS AND DISSCUSSION

This study intends to discuss the research question, what are students' problems in finding main idea and what are students' perception toward a reading test.

To answer to the first research question in chapter 1, that is, "What are students' problems in finding main idea?". The researcher distributed the interview consisting of 6 questions. It was aimed to find out the students' problems in finding main idea of reading test. The interview was administered outside of the classroom to avoid the interference from other students and to maintain the concentration of the students being interviewed. In this process, the researcher interviewed the students who had low score in reading test. In reading test, if the students got low score it means that the students had trouble in reading test especially in finding main idea. The result of students' problems is explained in the following table:

Table 2. Distribution of Interview

No	Students' Problems	Frequency
1	Lack of Students Interest	19
2	Lack of Vocabulary Knowledge	25
3	Length of the Sentence	17
4	Poor Reading Strategy	19
5	Grammatical Confusion	18
6	Ignorance of Paragraph Components	21

The table 2 above shows us the distribution of students' problems in finding the main idea. It can be seen that there are 19 students (61, 2%) lack of students' interest, then 25 students (80, 6%) lack of vocabulary knowledge. And then, there are 17 students (54, 8%) had problem in identifying the main idea of the passage with very long sentences. After that, there are 19 students (61, 2%) poor reading strategy. And then, there are 18 students (58, 0%) had problem in sentence pattern. Then, the last there are 21 students (67, 7%) had the problem in ignorance of paragraph components.

In accordance with the previous researches explained in Chapter 2, Mc Whorther (1989: 345-349) classifies the factors that influence comprehension into three general categories, that is: text characteristic, reader characteristic, and reader's purpose. Here is a piece of students' problems in finding main idea of reading text:

1. Lack of Students Interest

Interest is probably not directly influence the damage in identifying the main idea of the text, but it does influence the students in getting the effort in accomplishing the task. It is liked that someone will do something he/she has no interest toward with less attention. As Brown (1787:269) says, unless reading is the most interesting thing you ever do, you are not reading up to your full attention. So, it is not that the text is provided with unknown vocabulary, complicated ideas, or other feature that break you down, but that of you are not fully pay attention to it. From the result of interview, there were 19 students less interest in reading activity. The less of interest is much influenced the inability of the students in reading. The students said that reading is a difficult task, It happend because the text containing many difficult words and it makes the students feel bored when they reading it caused they do not know what they read is. The students in Class VIII A only read the text if the teachers assign tasks to them. The students' less of interest in reading makes them is not serious to identify the main idea of the reading test. Guthrie, at al (2007) states that If students' reading interests are weak, their competency grows little and their quality as readers diminishes.

2. Lack of Vocabulary Knowledge

Reading comprehension and vocabulary are closely related. The ability to decode or identify and pronounce words is self-evidently important, but knowing what the words mean has a major and direct effect on knowing what any specific passage means. Students with a smaller vocabulary than other students comprehend less of what they read and it has been suggested that the most impactful way to improve

comprehension is to improve vocabulary. Vocabulary refers to the words we must understand to communicate effectively. Educators often consider four types of vocabulary: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening vocabulary refers to the words we need to know to understand what we hear. Speaking vocabulary consists of the words we use when we speak. Reading vocabulary refers to the words we need to know to understand what we read. Writing vocabulary consists of the words we use in writing. Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the reading process, and contributes greatly to a reader's comprehension. A reader cannot understand a text without knowing what most of the words mean. Students learn the meanings of most words indirectly, through everyday experiences with oral and written language. Other words are learned through carefully designed instruction. Hedge (2000: 193) noticed vocabulary is another major component of reading ability with which language learners will experience difficulty, but the degree of difficulty will vary with the demands of the text, the prior knowledge of the reader, the degree of automaticity a learner has achieved in general word recognition, any specialist lexical knowledge a student might have, and the learner's first language. In line with the statement above, we can conclude that vocabulary is one of the major components of reading skill which is too difficult for the students' second or foreign language. Without understanding the meaning of the words or having a limited vocabulary knowledge, it will make the students difficult to understand about the content of the text. Thus, activating prior knowledge and applying word recognition are very useful in reading.

3. Length of the Sentence

The third problems, the students had problem in identifying the main idea of the passage with very long sentence. From 31 students, 17 of them said that they had problem in identifying the main idea of the passage with very long sentences. This is because they had to consider anything that appeared on the print, so the longer the sentence, the more difficult it would be, and the relationship of the various parts of the text would be difficult to short out. This is also the reason for the students to get the long sentence more difficult compared to the short sentence.

4. Poor Reading strategy

The other factor that also inhibiting the students in getting main idea of the text was poor reading strategy that was employed by the students in their attempt to accomplish the task. The students were erroneously think that anything appears in the print must be true valuable, and worth reading. The students, therefore, read the whole passage to get the main point. They also believed that to comprehend the text, nor to find the main idea of the text, they must first comprehend every word in the text. This assumption lead the students in spending more time looking up for word, they stop at each unfamiliar words, afraid to go on for fear of missing something. The idea that some words in a text maybe ignored or skipped was certainly strange to the students. Indeed, we need to understand enough of the text to suit our purpose inreading, but we do not need to read or understand every word. Students are required to understand completely when necessary but it is wasteful to read with the same amount of care. So when applied to reading the overall overview of the text, a reader better to do it by picking out the main points

rapidly, and discarding what is not essential or relevant to that general picture. Based on the result of interview, from 31 students, there were 19 students poor of reading strategy. When they can not find the main idea, they just rely on their feeling to answer the question. And 17 students revealed that to comprehend a text, they must first comprehend every word in the text.

5. Sentence Pattern

And in this research, the fifth students' problems in finding main idea is sentence pattern. Obviously the grammatical forms that beyond the level of students' knowledge can make reading difficult and the overall meaning of the text seems to be impossible to received for the students. According to Fender (2001), noticed grammatical knowledge is important to the comprehension of texts in that is essential to coherence building, as well as to word integration for establishing propositional meanings that enable text model construction and integration.

In line with the statement above we can conclude that without understanding the sentence pattern or grammatical confusion, it would make reading difficult and the overall meaning of the text seems to be impossible to received for the students. The result of this study, the reasercher was found in Class VIII A at MTsN 1 Kotabumi where there were 18 students still confused in grammatical. The students confuse interpreted a words that have the suffix "Ly", and then there were 13 students was understand if there are additional suffix on the word it means that is correlation with grammar.

6. Ignorance of Paragraph Components

And the last that was found to be a problem for the students in finding the main idea is the ignorance the paragraph components or unaware of paragraph pattern. Oshima et al (1981) states that, there are three main structural parts of paragraph. they are: topic sentence, supporting sentence, and concluding sentence. The most important thought that the author develops throughout the paragraph is located in topic sentence, supporting sentence, and concluding sentence. The result of interview showed that some of the students knew that main idea is located in topic sentence and knew where the sentence is likely to be found. But the students seem did not know about the other parts of the paragraph.

The unawareness of these parts of the paragraph prompt the students to an action where they tried to gather all details, being concerned with all the sentence in the text, and finally not be able to get the general idea because they were concentrating too hard on specific. Based on the result of interview there were 21 students do not know the parts of paragraph, and then there were only 10 students know about it, although they are not confident with their own knowledge about the part of the paragraph. The students in Class VIII A do not know how to deal with the main idea, because the students still less in understanding where the located of the main idea and how to find the main idea.

The researcher also distributed the questionnaire to the students in order to find out the students' perception toward a reading test. The researcher found there is one points that is answered from the students' perception toward a reading test as follow:

The students said that reading test in finding the main idea it is a difficult task. They said that the text given by the researchers is hard to understand, because many difficult of words that they do not know. The students in Class VII A still confused in finding the main idea in reading test, it caused of limited of students knowledge in interpreted the meaning of word in English into Bahasa Indonesia. They feel confused in determine the main idea because they do not know the meaning of main idea is.

Reading comprehension and vocabulary are closely related. The ability to decode or identify and pronounce words is self-evidently important, but knowing what the words mean has a major and direct effect on knowing what any specific passage means. Students with a smaller vocabulary than other students comprehend less of what they read and it has been suggested that the most impactful way to improve comprehension is to improve vocabulary. Vocabulary refers to the words we must understand to communicate effectively. Educators often consider four types of vocabulary: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Listening vocabulary refers to the words we need to know to understand what we hear. Speaking vocabulary consists of the words we use when we speak. Reading vocabulary refers to the words we need to know to understand what we read. Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the reading process, and contributes greatly to a reader's comprehension. A reader cannot understand a text without knowing what most of the words mean. Students learn the meanings of most words indirectly, through everyday experiences with oral and written language. Other words are learned through carefully designed instruction. Hedge (2000:

193) noticed vocabulary is another major component of reading ability with which language learners would experience difficulty, but the degree of difficulty will vary with the demands of the text, the prior knowledge of the reader, the degree of automaticity a learner has achieved in general word recognition, any specialist lexical knowledge a students might have, and the learner's first language.

In line with the statement above, we can conclude that vocabulary is one of major component reading skill which it is too difficult for the students' second or foreign language. Without understanding the meaning the words or have a limited vocabulary knowledge, it will make the students difficult to understand about the content of text. Thus, activating prior knowledge and applying word recognition are very useful used in reading.

CONCLUSIONS

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

1. The Students' Problems in Finding the main idea

Based on the result and discussion explained in chapter IV it has been found that, there are six problems the students face in finding the main idea of reading text in Class VIII A at MTSN 1 Kotabumi, that is: 1). there were 19 students who lack of the students interest, 2). there were 25 students who lack of vocabulary knowledge, 3). there were 17 students who had problem in identifying the main idea of the passage with very long sentence, 4). there were 19 students who are poor reading strategy, 5). there were 18 students who have the problems in

sentence pattern, and 6). there were 21 students who ignore paragraph components.

2. The Students' Perception toward a Reading Test

The students' perception toward a reading test is that finding main idea is a difficult task. They say that the text given by the researchers hard to understand, because many difficult of words that they did not know. The students in Class VII A still confused in finding the main idea in reading test, it caused of limited of students knowledge in interpreted the meaning of word in English into Bahasa Indonesia. They feel confused in determining the main idea because they do not know the meaning of main idea is. Reading comprehension and vocabulary are closely related. The ability to decode or identify and pronounce words is self-evidently important, but knowing what the words mean has a major and direct effect on knowing what any specific passage means. Students with a smaller vocabulary than other students comprehend less of what they read and it has been suggested that the most impactful way to improve comprehension is to improve vocabulary. Vocabulary refers to the words we must understand to communicate effectively. vocabulary is one of major component reading skill which it is too difficult for the students' second or foreign language. Without understanding the meaning the words or have a limited vocabulary knowledge, it would make the students difficult to understand about the content of text. Thus, activating prior knowledge and applying word recognition are very useful used in reading.

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

1. The students must practice simple materials. This is particularly important because they may feel insecure when they are asked to stop giving equal attention to every word. The material should contain no language difficulties at all.
2. The students need to be introduced more to parts of the paragraph, so they can stop classifying which one is major points and which is specific information.
3. And the last, the English teacher must revive students' interest toward reading. The teacher needs to introduce interesting materials such as stories to meet students' attention.

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