

**ANALYZING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION ON
DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT SMP PANGERAN ANTASARI MEDAN**

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Abstract

This research investigates the reading comprehension of descriptive texts among students at SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan. The study employs a descriptive research methodology to assess students' abilities to comprehend and analyze descriptive text. Data were collected through tests and interviews. The subject of the study was 32 students of SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan. The results indicate a varied level of proficiency among students, with a significant number demonstrating excellent comprehension in multiple-choice tests while showing weaker performance in true or false assessments. The research identifies vocabulary and prior knowledge as key factors influencing reading comprehension. Interviews with teachers support these findings, highlighting differences in students' abilities based on their background and support systems. The study emphasizes the need for enhanced vocabulary learning and more effective reading strategies to improve comprehension skills.

Keywords : Reading, Comprehension, Descriptive text

INTRODUCTION

Background of The Research

In this era of expanding globalization, scientific and technical advancements cannot be overlooked as crucial aspects in the acquisition of foreign languages, particularly English. However, there are many students whose proficiency in studying English is inadequate. Typically, there are four essential English skills that one must become proficient in. Listening is the act of perceiving a signal in the form of a voice through the listener's senses (ears). Reading is the act of perceiving information through the sense of sight (the eyes). Writing is the act of receiving and transmitting a signal through a series of sentences or words. Speaking is the act of transmitting a signal through the sense of speech or perception. Oral cavity. Among the four skills, reading is a crucial aspect of achieving mastery of the English language due to its ability to facilitate the acquisition of information and knowledge (Barus, 2017).

Reading is the act of processing information from text and previous knowledge to create understanding. Reading is an essential skill that everyone should have. It is an educational exercise that enhances students' knowledge. It helps students acquire expertise in the use of English. Reading is a sophisticated cognitive activity that involves understanding the meaning of words and written messages. Reading involves interpreting printed or verbal symbols in meaningful ways. This phenomenon arises from the interaction of graphic symbols that represent language, reader language skills, cognitive abilities, and global knowledge. Reading is the ability to understand text at a deeper level. The following tasks focus only on reading comprehension, requiring the individual to understand a variety of text elements, including key concepts, information details, references, conclusions, and dictionaries (Adelia Hutahuruk et al., 2022).

One of the four key parts of the text that should be highlighted is the descriptive text, which refers to the act of explaining or describing an event or occurrence. Essentially, a description text is a type of text that students should become proficient in, as its purpose is to elucidate or depict an occurrence or happening. However, the truth is that a significant number of high school students require improvement in their ability to comprehend and analyze descriptive language. This can be attributed to several factors, including the insufficient engagement of students in activities such as reading, spelling, and selecting appropriate terminology, both in the title and the content of the book. Furthermore, the student's lack of attentiveness toward the teacher's explanation of the subject matter regarding descriptive texts is another contributing aspect that needs improvement in reading comprehension (P et al., 2017).

Reading comprehension is the process a reader goes through to find information and understand that information in a book they are reading. According to (Linse, 2005), understanding reading means reading to learn, have fun, or understand something. (Zimmerman, 2014) says that understanding reading is simply being able to understand what you have read. Additionally, one meaning of reading comprehension is that it is a set of steps that a reader takes to find information and understand that information in a reading text. Suwandi, writing in (Supriyono & Abu Ahmadi, 1991), defines interest as the state of liking or disliking an action. When someone wants to learn how to do something, they will put in even more effort. The same thing happens when someone is interested in reading. If someone is interested in reading, he will try harder to understand what he reads.

Obtaining the skill of reading and regularly engaging in reading activities is crucial, as it familiarizes students with a wide range of knowledge, facilitates the acquisition of new information, and enables effective written communication with others (Auzia Ramadhanti Azahrah, 2021). Students are required to acquire proficiency in the English language through exposure to several forms

of written material. During English lessons, the students engage with a substantial amount of text, resulting in reading being the primary focus of teaching and learning activities in the classroom. This emphasis on reading also impacts the development of other skills. There are many reasons why reading skills are good for students, the first one can build new words for students. When students read texts, they will find lots of new words and from this benefit, they will increase their word stock in their brains. Besides, they'll also learn the meaning of those words. Second, students can improve their understanding of language structures like English. Third, they get some information from written text and get a lot of ideas from it.

Therefore, the researchers focused on conducting research at the VIII-I Grade of High School Pangeran Antasari Medan. The research is looking to assess students' comprehension of reading by evaluating their capacity to interpret descriptive reading materials.

Identification of The Research

Based on the above background, some problems can be identified as follows:

1. Some students have a lower capacity to comprehend significant information that is presented in descriptive texts.
2. Students are only capable of reading texts but they can't comprehend them.

Research Problem

Based on the background description above, in the writing of this article, the author gives the formula for the problem as follows:

1. How is students' reading comprehension on descriptive text?
2. What challenges do students face in reading and comprehending descriptive text?

The Objective of The Research

In writing this article, the author has research purposes among others as follows:

1. To find out students' reading comprehension on descriptive text.
2. To outline the challenges students encounter when comprehending descriptive text.

Significance of The Research

In writing this article, there are three benefits namely for English Teachers, Students, and Researcher, among others as follows:

1. For English Teachers

The English teacher should assign assignments to the students to enhance their proficiency in reading the language.

2. For Students

Students should practice reading more to improve their comprehension and sentence structure skills. Furthermore, it is crucial for students to regularly participate in reading exercises in order to improve their spoken communication skills.

3. Next Researcher

This article can be a useful reference for future academics looking for new ideas when conducting research on this topic. Moreover, they can choose to use this article as their main reference for research literature.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

Method of this research is categorized as descriptive research. The objective is to assess the knowledge of students who lack comprehension of descriptive literature. According to (Pambudiyatno et al., 2021), descriptive research is the process of gathering data to either test hypotheses or provide answers to inquiries regarding the present condition of the research issue. The study aimed to get a comprehensive assessment of the student's ability to comprehend descriptive text.

Population And Sample

The study was performed at Pangeran Antasari Medan High School, located at Jl. Veteran No.1060/19, Helvetia, Labuhan Deli District, Deli Serdang District, North Sumatra, 20116. The research took place on May 2024. Class VIII was taken as population and the sample was selected through purposive sampling technique in which the research selected class, VIII-I, which consists of 32 students.

Research Instrument

Research instruments are instruments that are commonly used in research activity, such as measurement and data collection by test. The researchers used a set of tests and interviews. The instrument of research is also a means to be created to accommodate and process the various data collected for research (Sappaile, 2007).

Data Sources

1. Primary Data

The researchers utilized descriptive text passages that were assigned to students by their instructors. The researchers formulated a total of thirty inquiries by the reading material supplied to them. These inquiries comprised ten true or false statements, ten multiple-choice questions, and ten essay questions.

2. Supporting Data

Supported by data obtained from interviews with English teacher collected by the researcher after the class is completed.

Procedure for Collecting Data

A researcher uses systematic procedures to collect data from start to finish. The researchers will provide a test to know student comprehension of the reading material. The researcher will conduct observations and employ data analysis techniques to find out the level of comprehension exhibited by students about the material they read. At the end, the researcher will engage in a conversation with the teacher to find out the accurate data.

Techniques for Analyzing Data

The researcher uses the minimum completeness criteria (KKM) set by the school, which is 71, and accuracy is achieved when at least 70% of the students have reached the minimum accuracy criteria. (KKM). Student learning results can usually be seen in individual learning outcomes.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

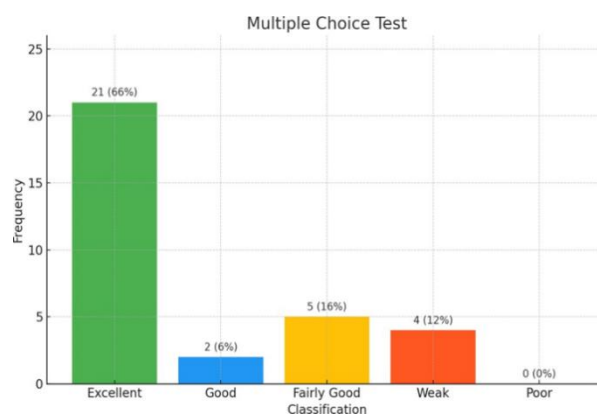
After giving a reading test, the researcher found a student's score by figuring out the average score for reading comprehension of the test's descriptive text and determining the median score for each indicator. The data the researcher found is as follows:

Finding

Reading Comprehension Test Result

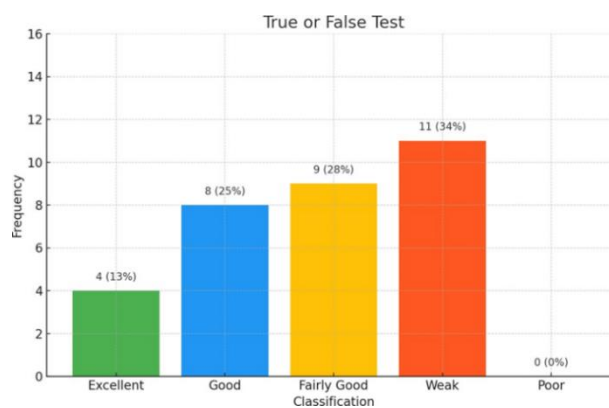
The students' Reading Comprehension of Descriptive Text. The researcher carried out the research to the second-year students of SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan, the result was analyzed to make sure how the students' reading comprehension of descriptive text. In this research, the researcher took 32 students as the sample to find out the students' reading comprehension of descriptive text. In analyzing the students' reading comprehension of descriptive text, the researcher used the test. The test is 10 multiple choice, 10 true or false statements, and 10 short answer questions, the students were asked to answer based on paragraph.

Table 3. 1 The Multiple Choice Test Finding 1



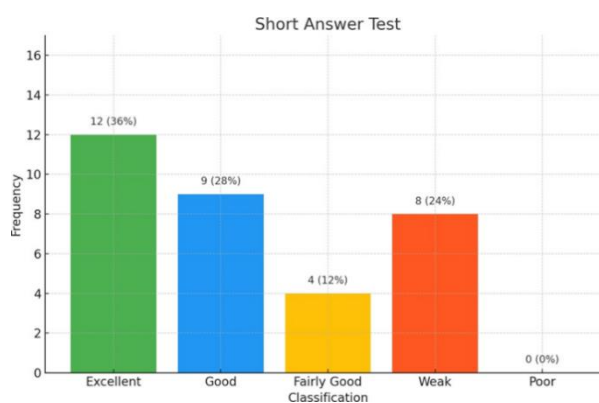
In the multiple choice test, there were 21 students (66%) obtained an excellent grade, 2 students (6%) achieved a good level, 5 students (16%) had a fairly good grade, and 4 students (12%) achieved a weak level. The average score on the multiple-choice test is 97. Therefore, we can classify the students' mastery of descriptive text at SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan as excellent.

Table 3. 2 The True or False Test Finding 2



In the True or False statement test, there were 11 students (34%) who scored excellent, 8 students (25%) scored good, 4 students (13%) scored fairly good, and 9 students (28%) scored poor. The average score in the True or False Statements test is 65. Therefore, we can classify the mastery of student descriptive texts at SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan as weak.

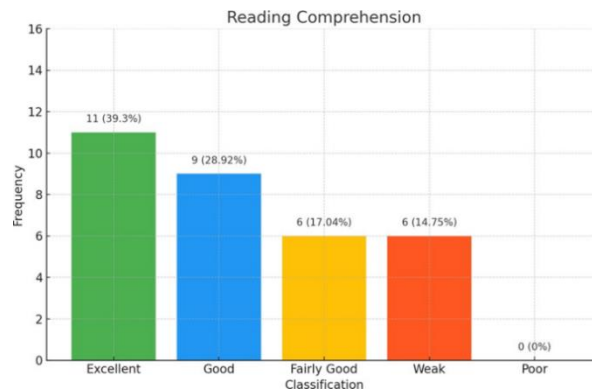
Table 3. 3 The Short Answer Test Finding 3



In the Short Answer test, there were 12 students (36%) who scored excellent, 9 students (28%) scored good, 4 students (12%) scored fairly good,

and 8 students (24%) achieved poor. The average score on the double-choice test is 90. Therefore, we can classify the mastery of student descriptive texts in High School Pangeran Antasari Medan as good.

Table 3. 4 The Percentage of the Students' Reading Comprehension on Descriptive Text



According to the data, the average student mastery score in descriptive texts was estimated by the researcher to be each indicator. Of the students, 11 (39.30%) achieved an excellent level, 9 (28.92%) achieved a good level, 6 (17.04%) obtained a fairly good level, and 6 (14.75%) received a weak level. The mean score of the student's reading comprehension on the descriptive text of the tests is 93. Therefore, we can conclude that the descriptive text test of SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan students exhibits an excellent level.

The researcher findings indicate that there is an issue with students who are unable to answer the True or False statements accurately, resulting in a fairly good score on the test. Consequently, students are required to enhance their vocabulary by studying it either in school or at home. If individuals lack comprehension of word meanings, they can employ a dictionary or seek assistance from their friends or teachers.

The Result of Interview

Researcher conduct interviews to gather data regarding the learning process and students' comprehension of the provided material. The interview method was used to corroborate the data gathered during prior observations

by the researcher. As stated by (Kriyantono & Rakhmawati, 2020) interviews are a method of gathering data and information through direct interaction with individuals, to obtain comprehensive and detailed data.

The results of the interviews were analyzed to obtain specific information related to the reading understanding of students in the second grade of SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan. This interview is conducted by the teachers. The opinion of English language teachers in learning English in understanding reading their descriptive texts. This section covers discussions about understanding students' reading in descriptive text. The discussion was based on how students understood reading in the second grade of SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan.

The interviews showed that in general teachers see some variation in the ability of students to read. Some students can know and analyze descriptive text well, but some also find it difficult to understand the overall meaning of the text. Usually, the main difficulty students face is in understanding unfamiliar vocabulary. Besides, some students also have difficulty linking text information with previous knowledge. Students who have a good background and family support tend to have better reading skills. They are more familiar with different types of text and have a wider vocabulary.

Discussions

This section discusses the test results and interviews conducted on students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts at SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan. The debate focused on how students at SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan understood descriptive texts, and the researcher discovered that students had outstanding reading comprehension skills. The KKM at SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan is 71.

The results of research and data analysis show that students' evaluations of descriptive texts can be divided into five categories: Excellent, good, Fairly Good, Weak, and Poor. The students of SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan have exceptional qualifications, with an average knowledge score of 93.

Students have mostly mastered the indicators for determining the answer to Multiple Choice Questions. According to (Dina Kristina S et al., 2022) a Multiple Choice Question is a type of test with only one correct or most accurate response. With an average score of 97 and a high degree of qualifying mastery. Based on the average score achieved, it can be concluded that the majority of students can select the most accurate response from among the available options. This is evident from the calculation of the correct answer score obtained by the typical student with an excellent qualification.

Students lack mastery of the True or False Statements indication. The average student score is 65, indicating a low level. Based on the average score, it may be concluded that the majority of students continue to have trouble judging whether the given statement is True or false. According to (Suprijanto & Arikunto, 2016), an objective test consists of a question statement with two alternative answers: true or false. Students must select one of the possible responses to the statement. The poor level of understanding of the descriptive text for True or False Statement indications is typically caused by a student's inability to comprehend the substance of a descriptiveness test reading. According to the findings, this study and earlier research show that Reading Understanding is the process of linking text and prior student understanding of text subjects (Klauda & Guthrie, 2008).

Most students can answer short answers questions well. With an average score of 90 and a good level of qualification. It can be concluded that most students can answer short-answer questions very well. This can be seen from the calculation of the scores found in Table 3.3.

The data in Table 3.4 shows the percentage of students' understanding of the descriptive text. It indicates that, on average, students scored 93, which exceeds the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM). The KKM for English subjects at SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan is 71. According to the provided statistics, 11 students have achieved the minimum passing grade (KKM), with a

percentage of 39.30% of the total. Additionally, 6 students have not reached the minimum passing grade, with estimates of 14.75%.

After analyzing the data gathered through the test, the researcher discovered that students had a lower level of enthusiasm toward the process of learning English, particularly when reading descriptive text. This circumstance resulted from the fact that only a few students were able to translate and comprehend the substance of the descriptive text readings. As a result, students were unable to comprehend and complete the test properly. In addition to focusing on the objectives of this study, the researcher discovered that students were less able to understand the text's content, making them apprehensive about selecting the proper answers to the test item.

Based on the interview with an English teacher at SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan in May 2024, the researcher found that students' comprehension of reading descriptive texts differed. Some students can evaluate the material effectively, while others struggle to grasp the text's overall meaning, particularly with unfamiliar vocabulary. Another challenge is integrating the text's information with prior knowledge. Students with a strong familial background and support tend to have higher reading abilities, are more familiar with various forms of text, and have a larger vocabulary.

The researcher also observed that students who had access to reading material and were highly motivated demonstrated substantial improvement in their reading comprehension. In contrast, students who have limited access to learning resources and a lack of family support frequently demonstrate a lower comprehension of their capacity to read descriptive texts. It demonstrates the significance of the family's role and the availability of reading materials in supporting students' reading abilities.

The research findings indicate that eighth-graders at SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan lack enthusiasm for learning English, particularly when reading descriptive texts. Only a few students are capable of analyzing and translating texts effectively, while the majority struggle to comprehend unfamiliar words

and connect textual information with prior knowledge. Family support and access to reading materials have a significant impact on students' reading comprehension. Both motivation to learn and interest are crucial in enhancing students' comprehension and reading skills. Balancing reading proficiency with critical comprehension is the key to enhancing reading skills.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

Conclusions

This research shows that grade VIII students at SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan have varying understandings of descriptive texts. Although many students scored well on multiple-choice tests, they struggled with true or false statement tests. Factors affecting reading comprehension include family support, access to reading materials, learning motivation, and interest. Adequate family support and access to learning resources can improve students' reading comprehension. The importance of learning interest also stands out in enhancing students' reading skills.

Overcoming difficulties in students' reading comprehension requires a holistic approach that involves increasing access to reading materials, family support, and developing students' motivation and interest in learning. Encouraging the use of dictionaries and group discussions can help students overcome obstacles in understanding descriptive texts.

Suggestion

Knowing new words and understanding complicated sentence patterns are the main problems that students have with understanding descriptive texts. Reading skills depend on a student's educational background and the help they get from their family. Students who have had a good education tend to have better reading skills. To help students understand better, teachers should consider more interactive and contextual teaching methods to enhance students' interest and understanding of descriptive texts. It is important to

improve students' reading skills by giving them regular reading assignments and extra help when they are having trouble. Therefore it is suggested for future researchers to study the effective teaching methods or media to improve students' reading comprehension so students will not face the difficulties in understanding descriptive text.

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