INDONESIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT'S ABILITY IN COMPREHENDING NARRATIVE TEXTS

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Article Info	Abstract
	This study aims to investigate students' ability to comprehend narrative text. This study was conducted at one school in Riau Island province. The name of the school is deliberately anonymous considering the research ethics. Eighty students were recruited and participated in this study while 28 of them were selected as the sample using purposive sampling. To attain data, five sets of narrative text questions were employed. Each set comprises eight questions that indicate reading components; factual information, main ideas, meaning of certain words, references, generic structure, language features, and social functions. Data were calculated by using Microsoft Excel 2016. The findings show that the mean score of their ability in comprehending components of reading was 47% while comprehending narrative texts at 53% so their total at 50% and categorized into medium level. The finding of research also showed that the lowest ability for students was in answering questions about finding the meaning of certain words at 43%. It is suggested that students must do more practice in reading, then they should learn more about the eight components of reading comprehension of narrative texts such as factual information, main ideas, vocabulary, references, inferences, generic structure, language features, and social functions. Then learn reading strategies such as schema, skimming and scanning.

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is an essential skill in English language acquisition. Proficiency in reading not only constitutes a fundamental aspect of English language skills but also facilitates access to a breadth of knowledge relevant to the global discourse. Brown (2003) asserts that reading constitutes a crucial competency for attainment across all facets of education, serving as an indispensable tool for linguistic analysis and comprehension among learners in general. Meanwhile, Metsapelto et al. (2017) delineate reading as a cognitive process encompassing the comprehension, deconstruction, and interpretation of acquired or received information, thereby serving as a means of knowledge acquisition. Then Johnson (2008) cited in Astarilla & Warman (2016) argues that reading is the process that extracts meaning from text. In addition, Lems et al (2010), stated that reading is an interactive process that involves the text being read with the reader's strategy and background knowledge. It is imperative for students to adeptly comprehend textual content to facilitate the efficient extraction of requisite information, thereby enabling the effective acquisition of both broad and nuanced knowledge from it.

Meanwhile, Woolley (2011) stated reading comprehension is the process of interpreting texts for meaning. Additionally, it is believed that the reader's capacity for formulating theories, norms, schemas, and mental models is correlated with their understanding of the subject matter. Astarilla & Warman, (2016) also stated, reading comprehension is the relationship of readers' prior knowledge with information from the text they read. In conclusion, reading comprehension is an essential process through which readers actively engage with text to extract meaning. This interaction enables students to effectively gather information and acquire knowledge during the educational process.

The school under investigation persisted in implementing the 2013 curriculum despite its phased transition to subsequent educational frameworks. In this curriculum, students study various types of reading materials, one of which is Narrative texts. In Narrative text, students must be able to analyze social functions, generic structures, and language features, and also able to capture contextual meanings to be applied in personal life. Nevertheless, numerous students encounter challenges in comprehending what they have read, frequently experiencing confusion and a lack of clarity regarding the ideas or perspectives conveyed within texts. However, when reading in their mother tongue, the majority of students can grasp the intended meaning of the text. if there is a misinterpretation in comprehension may lead to inaccuracies in conveying the essence of the text. Consequently, they often struggle to provide accurate responses in reading assessments, thereby impeding their attainment of the targeted language acquisition goals within the curriculum.

In order to effectively comprehend the texts, students are expected to understand the components of reading so they can benefit from their reading endeavours. To comprehend narrative texts well, students must master the components of reading and components of

narrative texts. According to King and Stanley (1982), there are five aspects of reading comprehension that students must recognize to comprehend a text well. These aspects are: Finding factual information means specific details about what is told in the text, usually in the form of a WH question. Determining the main ideas contains the reason or purpose of writing and the message the writer wants to convey to the reader. Understanding the meaning of certain words by relating the close meaning of the word to the topic of the text being read. Then, identifying references by recognizing the word to which they refer, and making inferences means a conclusion. Meanwhile, the components of narrative texts based on curriculum 2013 can be divided into three components, that is: generic structure such as orientations, complication, and resolution. Then, language features, and social functions

However, the ability experienced by students at one school may differ from what is found in other schools. Baradika (2021) also conducted this problem to analyze reading comprehension among students. He found that students had a low ability in recognizing the type of generic structure, and components of comprehending the text. Then, Soyan (2019) and Larasati (2019) explained in their journal that most of the students still made many mistakes in identifying the main idea, the meaning of words, references, making conclusion, determining generic structures, language features, and social functions of the texts. Meanwhile, based on research conducted by Azhari (2020), students had the lowest ability in vocabulary. Moreover, a study conducted by Jarah and Salina (2018) found that determining generic structures was the main problem of students. Then, Hidayati (2018) said the highest difficulty for students in Aceh was finding the main ideas. Another study conducted by Ganie et al. (2019) found a similar case in Medan where the students still have problems finding information from the texts because of a lack of vocabulary, lack of catching main ideas, having hard to pronouncing, and not being interested in reading.

These arise because of their biological source, environmental and instructional (Davoudi et al. 2015). Furthermore, Đuc and Lan, (2023) found other factors of students' difficulty that lead to ineffective reading in their research such as a lack of background knowledge, inadequate lexical or vocabulary knowledge, grammatical knowledge, lack of efficient reading strategies, like inability to skimming and scanning texts, limited vocabulary, weak reading abilities, and difficulty maintaining focus. Additionally, their research highlights that inadequate reading habits, low interest, and motivation are factors that impede reading comprehension. Westwood (2001) also stated that several factors can influence an individual's reading ability, such as factors from students' background (interest, motivation, and learners' prior knowledge), teaching technique, and learners' environment. Therefore, the writers are interested in researching this problem in one school in Riau Island to find out how the ability of students in this school to comprehend narrative texts. Knowing their ability hopefully, can help teachers or researchers find alternative ways to solve their problems and increase their ability to master English skills, especially in reading comprehension.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach using a test as the instrument. The design is used to describe and interpret data in students' ability to comprehend narrative texts. The findings then were calculated and analysed using Microsoft Excel 2016 and then synthesised. The instrument of this study was a reading test, involving 40 multiple-choice questions. These questions are indicated by reading comprehension dimensions (finding factual information, main ideas, meaning of certain words, inferences, and references) and narrative texts (determining generic structure, language features, and social functions).

Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at one school in Riau Island Province. The name of the school is deliberately anonymous considering the research ethics. The population of this research was all students in eleventh-grade students in the academic year 2022/2023. After discussing with the teacher, the writers used the purposive sampling technique to choose XI science class as a sample because these participants had been recommended by the English teachers from this school.

Data Analysis Technique

After the data were collected, the writers calculated the validity and reliability of the test by using the Microsoft Excel 2016 version and showed all of the items were valid very high and reliable level. To measure the validity of the test items, the writer used the formulas of product-moment below:

$$rXY = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[(N\sum X^2) - (\sum X)^2][(N\sum Y^2) = (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

rXY = correlation coefficient between variable X and Y
N = number of subjects
$\sum X$ = number of test items
$\sum Y$ = total score of test items
$\sum xy$ = multiplication of items score and total score
$\sum x2$ = quadrate of number of test items
$\sum y2$ = quadrate of total score of test items
N = number of samples

(Bachman, 2004 and Tuckman, 1978)

The criteria of validity test can be seen as below:

a.   If rXY > r table, the instrument is valid
b.   If rXY < r table, the instrument is not valid

Then, to find the reliability of the reading test in this research used this formula below:

$$Rii = \frac{N}{N-1} \cdot \left(1 - \frac{m[N-m]}{N \cdot x^2}\right)$$

Where:
Rii   = the reliability of the test
N   = the number of items in the test
m   = the mean score on the test
x2   = the standard deviation of test

(Hughes, 1989)

According to Cohen (200), the reliability of a test is considered as follows:
Coefficients > 0.90   : very high reliable
Coefficients 0.80 – 0.90   : high reliable (very good for classroom test)
Coefficients 0.70 – 0.79   : reliable (good for classroom test)
Coefficients 0.60 – 0.69   : Minimally reliable
Coefficients < 0.60   : unacceptably low reliable (suggestion need for revision test)

Table 1

Validity of Test

Number of Items	r value	r table	Number of Items	r value	r table	Status
1	0.387	0.373	21	0.374	0.373	Valid
2	0.380	0.373	22	0.486	0.373	Valid
3	0.430	0.373	23	0.385	0.373	Valid
4	0.563	0.373	24	0.375	0.373	Valid
5	0.423	0.373	25	0.411	0.373	Valid
6	0.480	0.373	26	0.411	0.373	Valid
7	0.405	0.373	27	0.509	0.373	Valid
8	0.450	0.373	28	0.478	0.373	Valid

Number of Items	r value	r table	Number of Items	r value	r table	Status
9	0.483	0.373	29	0.392	0.373	Valid
10	0.441	0.373	30	0.414	0.373	Valid
11	0.407	0.373	31	0.396	0.373	Valid
12	0.514	0.373	32	0.405	0.373	Valid
13	0.434	0.373	33	0.434	0.373	Valid
14	0.423	0.373	34	0.389	0.373	Valid
15	0.413	0.373	35	0.378	0.373	Valid
16	0.430	0.373	36	0.414	0.373	Valid
17	0.392	0.373	37	0.425	0.373	Valid
18	0.398	0.373	38	0.378	0.373	Valid
19	0.383	0.373	39	0.390	0.373	Valid
20	0.378	0.373	40	0.378	0.373	Valid

Next, in calculating the students' scores used a formula by Wayan and Sumartana (1986, as citied in Ritmawati, (2021)) to calculate the students' scores;

$$M = \frac{X}{N} \; x \; 100\%$$

Where:
M = the individual score
X = the number of correct answers
N = the number of all items

After that, classified their scores based on Arikunto (2013) to know students' ability in comprehending narrative texts. The classification can be seen in the following table.

Table 1
The Classification of Students' Score

Score range	Category
80 – 100	Excellent
60 – 79	Good
50 – 59	Medium
00 – 49	Poor

FINDINGS

In this study, 28 students of eleventh-grade science class took a reading test in June 2023. To find out the student's individual score, the writers divided the number of correct answers by the total number of items and multiplied it by one hundred.

Table 3
Individual Score

Number of Students	Percentage	Level
5	18%	Excellent
4	14%	Good
3	11%	Medium
16	57%	Poor
Total: 28 Students	100%	

Table 4 illustrates that students scored differently on the test. Sixteen students (57%) were categorised as the poor levels making it the highest proportion. To add on, 18% of students were at excellent level, 14 % at good level, and 11 % at Medium level respectively. In short, the majority of students were not able to answer all questions correctly which indicates their low abilities.

Then, the percentage of students' ability and their level of ability in reading comprehension narrative text were calculated using the eight components of reading comprehension narrative text after computing their reading test scores.

Table 4
The Recapitulation of Students' Abilities in Comprehending Narrative Texts

No	Types of Questions	Percentage	Classifications
1	Finding factual Information	48%	Poor
2	Finding main Ideas	44%	Poor
3	Finding the meaning of certain words	43%	Poor
4	Identifying references	54%	Medium
5	Identifying inferences	45%	Poor
6	Determining generic structures	57%	Medium
7	Determining language features	57%	Medium
8	Determining the social functions	54%	Medium
	Total	50%	Medium

Table 4 demonstrates a considerable variation in the number of students' ability to answer questions about components of reading comprehension in narrative texts. Their mean of ability falls into the medium level, it was 50%. The highest ability was obtained by students in determining generic structure and language features with the percentage at 57% (Medium). Meanwhile, the lowest ability was in finding the meaning of certain words with 43% (Poor). Overall, their percentage showed most students seem to have difficulty in comprehending narrative texts and they need to improve their skills in comprehending narrative texts.

This study focuses on an analysis of students' ability to comprehend narrative texts at one school in Riau Island Province. In comprehending narrative texts, the mean score of the students was 50.18 (medium level). Only 9 students could answer the question with excellent and good scores, and 3 students with medium scores. Meanwhile, the other students got poor scores.

Based on the result of data analysis, the writers found that the students have abilities in four aspects with medium levels. They were in identifying references and determining the social function had a percentage of 54%, and determining the generic structures and language features both had 57%. Followed by four aspects with poor levels, were finding the meaning of certain words at 43%, finding main ideas at 44%, identifying inferences was 45%, and finding factual Information at 48%. After analyzing the data, the writer found the average percentage of students' abilities was 50% (medium).

DISCUSSION

Referring to Table 4, the first type of question - finding factual information - obtained the percentage of ability at 48% which had a poor category. According to Vander (2001), factual information is difficult to find in the texts, the students may get confused to see what the factual information of a passage is, and where the factual information is located because it is related to their prior knowledge. Ganie et al (2019) found the same case in Medan where the students still have problems finding information from the texts because of a lack of vocabulary, lack of catching main ideas, being hard to pronounce, and not being interested in reading. These arise because of their biological source, environmental and instructional (Davoudi and Yousefi, 2015). In finding factual information the students are required to answer the question about fact and detail in texts. Thus, the students still have to improve their ability to comprehend this aspect.

The second type was finding the main ideas with the total percentage at 44% which had a poor category. Hidayati (2018) found the lowest ability had by students in Aceh was in finding main ideas because most students have difficulties in catching main ideas which may appear in the middle or at the end of a sentence, but it is occasionally seen in the first

sentence. In addition, Antoni (2014) cited in Samad et al. (2017) states students struggle to comprehend the meaning of the content and might not completely understand all the ideas presented in the text due to their limited vocabulary so they have trouble comprehending certain phrases, and time limitation for the section.

The third aspect was finding the meaning of certain words with the percentage of ability at 43% which had a poor category and was the highest challenge for students in this school. It is in line with the results found by Azhari (2020) showed finding the meaning of vocabulary or words was one of the components of reading which is too difficult for students. It might be caused by a lack of vocabulary and lack of fluency in reading because more reading will get many vocabularies (Stanovich, 1989). Therefore, Nuttall (2000) said that superordinate, synonyms, antonyms, and terms with numerous connotations are examples of words that can make it difficult for them to understand the text since they were unable to make the connection between the text and their prior knowledge. This could be the result of a lack of in-depth knowledge of English derivation and demonstrates a strong relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension (Jarrah and Salina, 2018). For that reason, Huong (2022) suggested teachers should encourage students to use the method of "guessing the content through background knowledge" known as "schemata" to increase their ability in vocabulary mastery. Moreover, having enough vocabulary is important because it will support their understanding of the texts well.

The fourth aspect was identifying references with a total percentage of 54% and categorized medium ability. According to Rainbolt and Dwyer (2012) cited in Febrianti & Fetriani (2023)when recognizing references, students find it difficult to comprehend what and how pronouns in sentences are used to show individuals, places, or situations.

The fifth aspect was identifying inferences with the total percentage of ability at 45% which had a poor category. Larasati (2019) found the most difficult for students was in identifying inferences because they could not understand what the texts were about and did not know the meaning of the words. It caused them to make mistakes in evaluating and rearranging the conclusion of the texts. This also relates to Kopitski (2007), who states that readers who want to make inferences, must practice integrating clues from the text with prior knowledge.

The sixth aspect was determining the generic structures with a total percentage of 57% and categorized as medium ability. Even though this aspect is categorized as the easiest aspect for them, the other students had a low ability to determine it correctly because they had difficulties recognizing text structure, because of inattention, word difficulty, and grammatical knowledge (Jarrah and Salina, 2018). The students' ability in this indicator should be improved because by knowing the generic structure, they can understand the storyline such as how the story begins and how the story ends.

The next aspect was determining language features with a total percentage of 57% and categorized as medium ability. Although this was one of the easiest aspects for students, it was indicated that the students still had difficulty in determining the language features. Furthermore, the findings that Jarrah and Salina (2018) found that reading comprehension is related to the capacity of students to identify and correct syntactic errors. This relationship was mediated by grammatical knowledge, vocabulary, and memory so that the result of their test in terms of finding the meaning of certain words can affect their ability to determine the language features. Koda (2005) also adds that reading comprehension and grammatical knowledge are significantly correlated. As a result, for EFL students to understand the meaning of phrases in passages, grammar expertise is necessary for them. Meanwhile, for Indonesian students, it is hard to do because there is a significant difference in the grammar structure of Indonesian and English. This indicator is crucial and should be mastered by students to improve their skills in comprehending narrative texts.

The last aspect was social functions with the total percentage at 54% and categorized as medium ability. Azhari (2020) also said that students still have a low ability to determine social functions such as finding it hard to know what was the writer's message or point of view that he wanted to the reader know.

The percentages of ability above showed that students should be familiar with the information in the texts and should increase their knowledge of the subject matter. Their inability to make the relation and lack of vocabulary may become the factors that make them have a low ability to understand the implicit information from the texts and determine the meaning of the texts. This is in line with the findings from Đuc and Lan's (2023) study, which indicates that the reasons behind their problems include a lack of ability to skim and scan the reading material, poor reading skills, a lack of vocabulary knowledge, losing focus, poor reading habits, and a lack of interest or motivation for reading. The teacher must be attentive when selecting the teaching technique because to comprehend reading text, the students need to master reading techniques such as schema, skimming and scanning. If not, they will spend time to understand the details of the information so that they often miss the main idea of the text. Finally, they will concentrate more on the expense meaning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the mean score of 50.18 among the 28 students indicates a moderate level of performance. However, a significant portion of the students failed to achieve satisfactory scores, reflecting a persistent challenge in comprehending narrative texts and attaining the desired language acquisition goals within the curriculum. These results underscore the imperative for students to undertake substantial efforts to improve their performance, particularly through increased reading practice. Engaging in extensive

reading endeavours enables students to enhance their vocabulary acquisition, thus bolstering their comprehension skills.

Additionally, it is incumbent upon teachers to redouble their efforts in fostering students' enthusiasm for reading comprehension. This can be achieved through various means, such as implementing innovative teaching strategies like schema activation, skimming, scanning, mind mapping, or employing the I-Think approach. Diversifying instructional methods not only mitigates monotony but also enhances students' aptitude for learning. Therefore, teachers must remain proactive in exploring and implementing effective pedagogical approaches to optimize students' reading comprehension abilities.

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