STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN COMPREHENDING THE ANALYTICAL EXPOSITION TEXTS AT GRADE XI A OF SCIENCE PROGRAM IN SMAN 3 SUNGAI PENUH

Efa Silfia, Mohd. Ansyar, M. Zaim
Language Education Program, State University of Padang
efa.silfia@yahoo.com

Abstrak: *Artikel ini ditulis untuk menemukan kesulitan-kesulitan siswa dalam memahami teks bacaan analytical exposition. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan adanya kesulitan untuk siswa memahami teks analitikal ekposisi berdasarkan pada 8 (delapan) indikator. Ini menunjukkan bahwa dari masing-masing indikator dalam memahami teks analitikal eksposisi, mereka adalah sebagian besar siswa dari siswa dapat mengidentifikasi topik, sebagian dari siswa dapat mengidentifikasikan ide pokok dari sebuah teks dan menemukan arti kata dalam konteks, sebagian kecil dari siswa dapat mengidentfikasikan acuan kata dan inferensi/kesimpulan, dan sebagian besar siswa juga dapat menentukan tujuan komunikasi sebuah teks, struktur teks dan penggunaan bahasa dalam teks analitikal exposisi. Ini ditunjukkan bahwa siswa mempunyai kesulitan dalam bebagai aspect dari pemahaman membaca teks analitikal eksposisi. Kemudian, interview menunjukkaan banyak siswa mempunyai kesulitan untuk mengidentifikasi arti kata dalam konteks, acuan kata, dan kesimpulan/inferensi. Ini disebabkan mereka tidak tahu apa yang diceritakan dalam teks, penggunaan bahasa apa di dalam teks, tidak memahami teks, kurangnya kosa kata, dan malas untuk membaca teks dengan seksama.*

Key words: *Reading Comprehension, analytical exposition text*

Introduction

Reading becomes very important in the educational field because students can get more information widely and it can increase knowledge without going anywhere. Reading is also an essential skill for English students because they must have ability to understand and comprehend the texts assigned to them

by the teachers. By having the ability of reading, students will ease to understand English texts and to get knowledge of what they read. Basically the purpose of learning to read is to comprehend what it has been read. Comprehension is the process of understanding ideas from text to the reader's mind or comprehension is how the students understand and get the messages from the printed words. Basically, the main goal of reading is comprehension of what is being read. The comprehension is an interactive process. This statement is also supported by Nunan (1999: 33) and Murcia (2001:154) who say that reading is an interactive process and readers required to understanding the symbols in reading and to interpret what they read Last, Lines (2005: 69) also point out that reading is a set of skills that involves making sense and deriving meaning from the printed word.

In term of understanding reading comprehension, many students had difficulties in comprehending English texts, especially for the second year students of SMAN 3 Sungai Penuh. It was disclosed after doing observation and interview with one of the teachers at second grade SMAN 3 Sungai Penuh. Even though they have learned English for years, they could not comprehend English texts which could be influenced by many factors, such as grammar, vocabulary, background knowledge and technique. Then, students also still get difficulties in finding the topic of what is mainly discussed, main idea, detailed information and reference. It is because students could not activate their background knowledge to the topic discussed to dig the new ones from the text. They probably have lack vocabulary and tend to find out the meaning of word by word from dictionary and translated them into Indonesian while reading the text. This situation makes them bored in reading and passive in the teaching learning process. Moreover, students also have lack of grammar mastery. As an example, most of them cannot differentiate whether the meaning of sentence in active form or passive one, whether the event is in the past or at present or future. These facts in reading comprehension can be seen from the result of students' reading comprehension quiz.

In reading, students are as the readers must have comprehension because it is an important the process of constructing meaning from the text. This process involves decoding the writer's words and using background knowledge to construct an approximate understanding of the writer's message as the process of comprehending. According to Grellet (1981:7), "reading comprehension is an activity to understand a written text. It means extracting the required information from it as efficient as possible to do this, there are two ways that students must do." Sheng (2000:12) also describes that comprehension is a process of negotiating, understanding between the reader and writer. In this same view, Chen (2011: 32) states that to achieve reading comprehension, readers must concurrently process different levels of the text. Then, Irwin (1986: 79) defines that comprehension in reading as the process of one's prior knowledge and the researcher cues to infer the author's intended meaning. In addition, Giles (1987: 95) states that comprehending reading matters involves the correct association of meaning with word, symbols, the evaluating of meanings which are suggested in context, the selection of the correct meaning, the organization of ideas as they are read, the retention of these ideas and their use in some present or future activity.

The informal interview with the English teacher of SMAN 3 Sungai Penuh, it was found that most of the students get low score in learning English especially reading, it seems difficult for them to comprehend the text, find the topic, main ideas, etc. Based on the result on a reading quiz given by the teachers, the students' marks are still under the minimum standard of KKM. The minimal KKM for English at XI A Grade Students of IA Program in SMAN 3 Sungai Penuh is 70. Ideally, 75% of the students should achieve the KKM. In fact, only 63,61% of the students could be incomplete the reading quiz and 36,39% of the students are complete. It could be seen from the average of the students quiz of reading result at XI A Grade Students of IA Program in

SMAN 3 Sungai Penuh Academic Year 2012/2013.

Related the problems above, many students had difficulties in comprehending English texts, especially for the second year students of SMAN 3 Sungai Penuh. It was disclosed after doing observation and interview with one of the teachers at second grade SMAN 3 Sungai Penuh. Even though they have learned English for years, they could not comprehend English texts which could be influenced by many factors, such as grammar, vocabulary, background knowledge and technique. Then, students also still get difficulties in finding the topic of what is mainly discussed, main idea, detailed information and reference. It is because students could not activate their background knowledge to the topic discussed to dig the new ones from the text. They probably have lack vocabulary and tend to find out the meaning of word by word from dictionary and translated them into Indonesian while reading the text. This situation makes them bored in reading and passive in the teaching learning process. Moreover, students also have lack of grammar mastery. As an example, most of them cannot differentiate whether the meaning of sentence in active form or passive one, whether the event is in the past or at present or future. These facts in reading comprehension can be seen from the result of students' reading comprehension quiz.

Considering the problems above, the students should have strategy to read the text. It is very important in compreheding the text. There are two strategies to comprehend reading; they are scanning and skimming. According to Arundel (2011: 2), " skimming is a method of rapidly moving the eyes over text with the purpose of getting only the main ideas and general overview of the content. Whereas scanning rapidly covers a great deal of material in order to locate a specific fact or piece of information." Then, According to Edward (1978: 54) skimming is reading to read something rapidly. The readers can accomplish the skimming technique when they want to read material in hurry. It is also used when high comprehension is not required. The scanning is reading technique when the readers want to locate a single facts or specific information without reading everything. In addition, Lunzer and Gardiner (1995: 25) says that the skimming is a rapid style used mainly to establish what a text is about before deciding where to read.

Considering the reading for comprehension, especially for grade XI of senior high school students, they have to be able to comprehend the texts and know the rhetorical steps or generic structure of the texts. There are some indicators of the reading comprehension to reach the purposes such as: 1) identifying the topic as the general subject of reading; it is also a general theme or message of the text from which the reader can identify the topic of what she/he is reading in the first step toward understanding the texts, 2) identifying the main idea as the "key concept" being expressed, knowing what the author's mean to help the students remember the content and what paragraph to develop, 3) detailing information to support, clarify, and explain the main idea. It may be words, phrases, or statements that explain or describe to support the main idea by telling how, what, when, where, why, how much, or how many, 4) guessing words and general information of the text as a

mean of the reader to develop students' guessing ability to the word which is not familiar to them by relating the close meaning of unfamiliar words to the text and topic of the text.

In school based curriculum or *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (KTSP, 2006), one of reading competence which should be learnt by students is to comprehend the meaning of short functional texts. Futhermore, in the curriculum 2006 competency standard of senior high school, there are many genres to comprehend, they are: analytical and hortatory exposition, report, discussion, explanation, procedure, review, spoof, etc. They are types of which have special characteristics of purpose. It means that they are not only expected to write a text in certain genre but they are required to be able understand some sort of texts.

However, one of genres that is taught at SMA level is analytical exposition text. Analytical exposition text is a spoken or written text that is intended to persuade the listeners or readers that something is the case. This statement is supported by Purwati and Yuliani (2006:114, in Cenrikawaty, 2008:13) who confirm that analytical exposition is designed to persuade the readers or listeners that something is the case. Moreover, Wahidi (2009:10) also adds that analytical exposition is a text that elaborates the writer's idea about the phenomenon surrounding us to convince the reader that something is the case. In the other hand, Gerot and Wignell in Almita (2008: 25) elaborate that analytical exposition text is the text that expands the writer's ideas about the phenomena surrounding us or text that states the introduction of a topic indicating the writer's position in persuadingthe readers or listeners that something the case. In addition, Cahyono and Purnama (2009:1) explains that an analytical exposition presents the argument in such a way that it sounds like the writer is an authority on the subject and so it does not use first person pronoun (e.g. I, we or us), extravagant language or cliches.

The analytical exposition text is one of genres stated in English curriculum for the second grade of SMA students in first semester. It is also one of the difficult genres that students learn in understanding text. It is caused that the students had difficulties in composing of analytical exposition text, i.e, in identifying thesis statement, arguments and reiteration (restatement) of this text. They still cannot understand what the text tells about, identify the topic and main ideas of this text, and identify generic structure and language feature of the analytical exposition text. Besides, for example, the students get difficulties in comprehending the texts especially in identifying generic structure and language features of analytical exposition text. In Cahyono and Purnama's opinion (2009:1), Martin and Rothery (in Almita, 2008: 23), analytical has generic structure generalize the generic structure of exposition genre is: Thesis, Argument, and Conclusion. In this structure, "thesis" is the part of the text in which the writer states his/her position on the issue, and "argument" is concerned with information provided to justify that position. Finally, "conclusion" is the part of the text where the thesis and arguments can be briefly restated.

However, the students get difficulties to identify the generic structure because they have lack ideas

to express and explore in argument of this text. They have no the possible new information to transform when they read the text and answer the question given by the teacher. As the result, they are found to behave difficulties to identify what the text tell about, explore the arguments and find the solution in the end of the text. Besides that, the students also have problems in identifying the language features of analytical exposition text. The students should pay attention to control word meaning, phrases, and sentences to get appropriate meaning from the texts. It is related to what languase the text uses such as using simple present tense, general noun, modals, adverbs, connective conjunction, etc. In fact, most of the students still don't know tense about simple present tense so that they could not differ whether it is simple present or the other tenses. And they also don't know modals, general nouns, adverbs, and conjuction used in the text because they could not understand about them. When the teacher explain to the students, they cannot memorize and differ such as modals and adverbs. All of these facts, it shows that the students still get difficulties to comprehend the text especially in analytical exposition text.

Method of the Research

The research was a descriptive research which mixes the quantitative and qualitative method (mixed method research). It was conducted in SMAN 3 Sungai Penuh. The subject of this research was XI A grade students of science program in SMAN 3 Sungai Penuh. There are about 27 students as the subject of the research. They consisited of 10 males and 17 females.

To collect quantitative data, the researcher used reading comprehension test, while to collect the qualitative data, the researcher used interview. Reading comprehension test is used to know the students in comprehending the analytical exposition text before giving the real test to the subject of the research, namely try out test. The form of the test is multiple choice tests. Then, the item numbers consists of 40 items. The test consisted of 5 texts and each text contains 8 questions. The questions from the text were based on the reading comprehension indicators. The item numbers will be tested the validity and reliability in try out.

For qualitative data, the interview was used. It was taken from 2 students from who got high score, 2 students in the middle, and 2 students who got low score. The questions of the interview consisted of 18 items. Then, they are based on reading comprehension indicators.

The data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. It was used formula of students' score, mean, and percentage. Then, the qualitative data was analized by using six steps: data managing, reading/memoing, description, classifying, interpretation, and writing the report.

Findings and Discussion

Considering the problems, most of the students had causes that were; they read literally without bringing in prior knowledge. Reading comprehension can be affected by prior knowledge about the subject. They had to possess rich prior knowledge about the topic of a reading often understand the reading better than classmates with low prior

knowledge. It is critical that they related their world knowledge to the content of a text in order to make sense of what they are reading.

Then, another problems or difficulties that also were caused the students' comprehension on reading analytical exposition text was their ability to recognize the indicators of analytical exposition text. The indicators were the social function, generic feature and language features of the text.

1. Identifying the Topic

Topic of the text is the one thing the whole text talk about. Usually topic is expressed by phares or some words (McWorter: 1986). Then, based on the data of this research on identifying the topic, most of the students had no difficulties in identifying about topic. the finding indicated that 80,8% of the students got high score while only 17% of the students got low score.

2. Identifying the Main Idea

Next indicator of reading comprehension was identifying the main idea. However, the students in this researrch still got difficulties in identifying the main idea of the text. it can be seen from the fact that only 68.8 % of the students got good score while 25.6 % of them got low score.

Then, the data from interview also showed that the students were asked to read a whole text, find the main idea and then make conclusion. They were not given oppotunity to develop the idea of the text. It supported the data from reading comprehension test. As the result, the students were not able to identify the main idea of the text. It was sometimes not stated right in

the text. As the reader, he or she should infer the implied meaning of the text to get the main idea of the text (Brown, 2004: 310).

3. Finding the Meaning of Vocabulary

Other indicator of reading comprehension was finding the meaning of vocabulary. This indicator required the students to answer the questions about detail or fact in the text. From the result of the reading test, there were only 57.8 % of students could answer this question (high score) and there were 39.8 % of them could not answer the questions (low score). This data indicated that half of the students got high score.

Thus, they needed to improving their vocabulary. This data showed that between the data from reading test and interview were similar. The data from interview supported the data from the reading comprehension test.

4. Identifying Reference

The next indicator was identifying reference. This indicator measured the students'comprehension the reference in the text. It was explained that 47% of the students got high score and there were 52% of them got low score. It could be said than less than half students were attempted in identifying reference in the text while more than half students were not attempted. Then, these data were supported by interview. It is found that most of the students always made mistakes in answering the questions especially in identifying the reference from the text. It was caused the students still confused in choosing the correct answer. Thus, the students needed more

explanation about the references of the text in learning reading.

5. Identifying Inference

Moreover, Inference was one of indicators in comprehending reading. This indicator also was important, because it could know how far students comprehended the text. in fact, students didn't use prior knowledge to make inferences about the text that they are reading. Inferences are evidence-based guesses. From reading comprehension test, the data showed 40.4 % of the students got high score while 58.8 % of got low score. Based on this fact, it can be concluded that identifying inference was still problems for the students.

6. Identifying Social Function

The next indicator for analytical exposition text was social function of the text. this indicator required the students to know what were the writer's messages or point of information that he wanted the reader to know. Based on the data on the reading comprehension test, there were 79.6 % of the students got high score while 18.3 % of them got low score. This fact indicated that comprehending the social function was not one of the students' problems in comprehending analytical exposition texts.

7. Identifying Generic Structure

Generic structure of the text was one of the indicators of analytical exposition text. This indicator was very important to know by the studentd because by knowing the generic structure of the text of the students could understand and comprehend the text well. Each genre can be identified by its social function as the communicative purpose of the text. It could be seen from the

beggining of the text to the end. Although this indicator was very important, data of the reading test data showed that there were 75.7 % of the students got high score while 23% of them got low s/core.

Furthermore, the data from interview showed that a few of student were not attempted in generic structure. Automatically, it made the students difficult in answering the questions. It was caused the student were lazy to read and comprehend the text and didn't know how to determine the component of analytical exposition text that they have read. Wahidi (2009: 28) states that knowing how text is organized influences the comprehension.

8. Identifying Language Features

The last indicator of analytical exposition was identifying language features. For identifying language feature question, the data showed that 90% of students got high score while there were 7.8 % of them got low score. However, almost students could answer all questions correctly.

Besides, the data from interview supported the data from the reading comprehension test. It was found that the students didn't have problems in identifying the language features or language uses in the analytical exposition text. This data indicated that understanding the language features in reading was not difficult for students.

Conclusion

Based on findings, it can be concluded that:

1. The students' reading comprehension of analytical exposition text was good. It was conducted at XI A grade of

Science Program in SMAN 3 Sungai Penuh.

2. The students had some problems in reading comprehension aspects. They are identifying the topic, identifying the main idea, finding the meaning of vocabulary, identifying reference and inference, identifying communicative purpose, identifying generic structure, and identifying language feature of analytical exposition text.

Suggestion

Based on the findings and conclusion of

this research, the researcher would like

to give some suggestion as follows:

1. In order to comprehend the analytical exposition text well, it is suggested for the students and teachers to discuss all aspects of text before coming to reading analytical exposition texts.
2. It is suggested for next researchers to find out the causes of the problems and other factors that can influence the students in comprehending analytical exposition text.
3. It is suggested that the teachers should guide their students how to comprehend English analytical exposition texts by using alternative medium in teaching especially analytical exposition texts. By using this medium the students not only get knowledge but also much information to improve their reading interest.

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