



Reading Ability of *International Class Students of PGSD 2019* of Universitas Negeri Padang

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Abstract

Reading ability is very crucial to the development of information, mastering knowledge, and attains language proficiency. This study is aimed to find out PGSD international class students reading ability and difficulty in reading English text, in helping them to know whether their reading ability support them to continue their study in this international class. This research is a descriptive research. The data were collected from 22 international class students of PGSD 2019 of Universitas Negeri Padang. In collecting data, the students were asked to do a reading test consist of 50 questions for 55 minutes. The result shows that the students have a low reading ability in reading English texts because lack of vocabulary, processing skills, reading strategies, background knowledge, discourse knowledge and cognitive skills. Furthermore, the students have difficulties in several reading aspects. The most difficult aspect is answering implied detail (77%), followed by determine specific information (69%), answering stated detail (64%), finding pronoun referents (64%), finding main idea (62%), answering transition questions (55%), answering vocabulary question (55%) and finding unstated detail (44%).

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INTRODUCTION

Using English as a medium of instruction for the students who do not use this language for daily communication will make the learning process not running well. Many obstacles will be faced by the students in understanding the courses dealing with their unfamiliarity of English. They will have difficulties not only in spoken (listening and speaking) but also in written language (reading and writing).

Concerning this problem, Graham (2006) says that those students are having listening problems because of misinterpretation, lack of vocabulary, and poor grammar. Likewise, in speaking, according to Ur (1996), the problem will occur because the students are afraid of making mistakes so they cannot express the idea fluently. Moreover, in reading, Westwood (2008) states that students have difficulty when comprehending text due to a lack of vocabulary, background knowledge, and weak verbal reasoning. Then, Jacob (1981) says that students hard to express and organize the idea in writing a text because they got difficulty in language use and lack of vocabulary.

PGSD is one of the departments at *Universtas Negeri Padang* that run the international class program for the students registered in 2019. In the teaching and learning process, this class uses English as a medium of instruction, so they are discussing, presenting, listening, reading and writing using English. The learning material such as textbooks, modules, announcements, articles, journals, and hand-out are using English not bilingual. Furthermore, their exercise, homework even examination are using English. From the statements above, it can be inferred that they have to have good English ability as same as the students who want to study abroad. Moreover, they have to pass several requirement to enter the international class program such as have good score in TOEFL.

On the other hand, this program is on the experimental stage, many of them enter this program just to fulfil the quota and ignore requirements, especially in English ability. It can be assumed that they do not have ability in English because their TOEFL score just between 400 and 450 (UPT Bahasa UNP, 2019). Of course, this situation will make them difficult in the learning process.

In the case of university students, who much more interact with written language, reading English texts will be more harmful to them, due to their low ability to catch the information from what they read. Westwood (2008) says, weak readers cannot connect the ideas as they read, and they remember very little of the detail after they read. Additionally, Sencibaugh (2007) claims that these readers do not think deeply about what they are reading, do not interact cognitively with the information, and do not monitor their understanding level. Often, they do not check back or re-read the material when the meaning is lost. The worst is they do not possess effective strategies to help them interpret and interact with the text that makes them failed to comprehend the course, which make them in danger as university students. Because they cannot comprehend the text given in their courses, and it will have an impact on their mastering of knowledge.

Meanwhile, Brown (2004) says that reading ability is very crucial to the development of information, mastering knowledge, and attains language proficiency. According to Ancheta (2018), usually reading difficulty faced by the non-native speaker is “hard to read and hard to comprehend”. They cannot get the information from textbooks, modules, announcements, articles, journals, and hand-out they read in English. They fail in doing assignments and homework; even they failed in exams because they cannot understand the test direction and the text given.

Concerning this condition, *international class students of PGSD 2019 of Universitas Negeri Padang* are assumed to face the same problem due to their unfamiliarity in using and reading English texts. So, it is important to do a research

in finding out their ability in reading English texts, to recommend them improving their English, which later will help them in mastering their knowledge.

METHOD

This study carried out by using descriptive research. According to Voordt (2002), a descriptive research is “about describing how reality is”. In this research, the researcher tried to answer the reading abilities and the reading difficulties of the students by analyzing the data descriptively. For this research, the population was PGSD students of international class at Universitas Negeri Padang year 2019. The total numbers of students are 22 students. All of the international class students of PGSD 2019 were the sample of this research. So, the sample is 28. Sugiyono (2015) says that if the total of the population is less than 100, all of the members in the population become the sample.

Reading test was used in this research. This research used extensive reading as the organizer of the assessment task. Impromptu reading plus comprehension task was used in this research. The reading test was taken from the TOEFL test used in UPT Bahasa Universitas Negeri Padang, which has been validated by ETS (Educational Testing Service); international test provider. The total question of the test is 50 questions. The questions consist of several passages followed by several multiple-choice questions. The type of questions are *finding the main idea, answering stated detail questions, answering implied detail questions, finding unstated detail, finding pronoun referents, determine where specific information, answering transition questions and answering vocabulary questions*. The test has been held for 55 minutes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

1. Students’ reading ability

The result of students’ reading ability is presented as follows:

STUDENTS’ READING ABILITY		
RESPONDENTS	SCORE	GRADE
R1	26	F/Failed
R2	28	F/Failed
R3	48	F/Failed
R4	40	F/Failed
R5	30	F/Failed
R6	42	F/Failed
R7	40	F/Failed
R8	34	F/Failed
R9	46	F/Failed
R10	38	F/Failed
R11	42	F/Failed
R12	42	F/Failed
R13	42	F/Failed
R14	24	F/Failed
R15	42	F/Failed

R16	28	F/Failed
R17	50	F/Failed
R18	36	F/Failed
R19	54	F/Failed
R20	40	F/Failed
R21	28	F/Failed
R22	64	D/Inadequate

Table 4.1. Students' reading ability

From the table above, it could be seen that the *international class students of PGSD 2019* have low reading ability in reading English text. They are failed in doing reading test. From 22 respondents, 21 students got the score below 60 and only 1 respondent who got 64 score but it still in the level of inadequate that is categorized in having low reading ability.

In conclusion, the result of the students reading ability can be seen in the chart below:

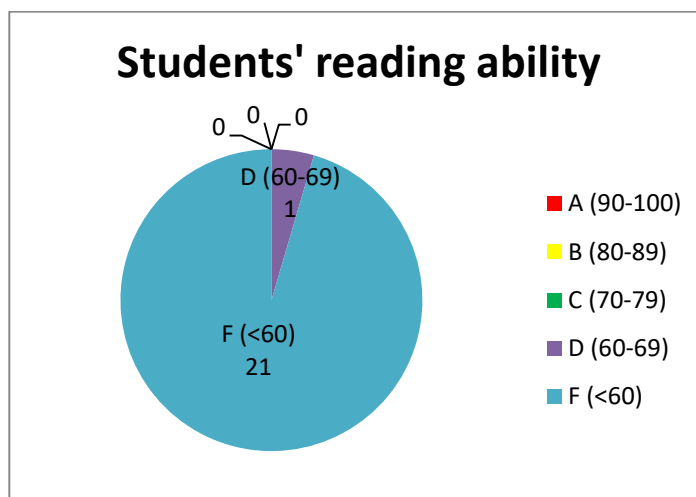


Chart 1. Students' reading ability

From the chart above, it could be seen that 21 international class students of *PGSD 2019* got a score below 60 or failed and were categorized into having low reading ability. Just 1 student who got score 64 or inadequate, but it is still in the category of low reading ability.

2. Students' reading difficulty

The result of students' reading difficulty is presented below.

STUDENTS' READING DIFFICULTY								
Aspects of reading	Main Idea	Stated Detail	Implied Detail	Unstated Detail	Pronoun Referents	Specific information	Transition question	Vocabul ary
Percentage of correct answer	38%	36%	23%	56%	36%	31%	45%	45%
Grade	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

Table 4.2. Students' reading difficulties

From the table above, it could be seen that for *finding the main idea*, the percentage of students' correct answer is 38%, grade F or failed. Then, answering *stated detail questions*, the students' percentage of the correct answer is 36%, failed. Then, for *answering implied detail questions*, the percentage of students' correct answer is 23%, failed. Next, in *finding unstated detail*, the percentage of students' correct answer is 56%, failed. Next, for *finding pronoun referents*, the percentage of students' correct answer is 36%, failed. Furthermore, for *determine where specific information*, the percentage of students' correct answer is 31%, failed. After that, for *answering transition questions*, the percentage of students' correct answer is 45%, failed. Last, for *answering vocabulary questions*, the percentage of students' correct answer is 45%, failed.

The percentage of students' reading difficulties can be seen in the following chart.

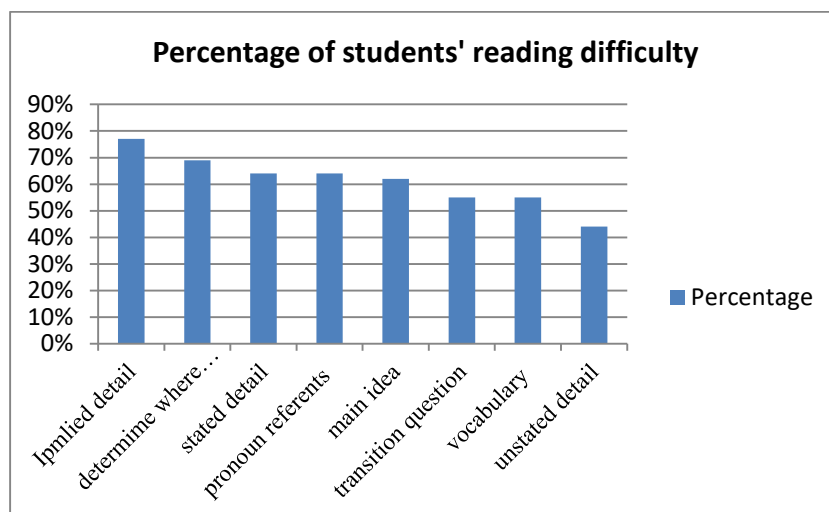


Chart 2. Percentages of students' reading difficulty

From the chart, it could be seen that the most difficult aspect is *answering implied detail* (77%), followed by *determine specific information* (69%), *answering stated detail* (64%), *finding pronoun referents* (64%), *finding main idea* (62%), *answering transition questions* (55%), *answering vocabulary question* (55%) and *finding unstated detail* (44%).

Discussion

The finding of this research was the international class students of *PGSD 2019* have low reading ability in reading English text. This result is similar to Ancheta's theory that explains the non native students are hard to read and hard to comprehend the English text. The students that have low reading ability cannot get the information and connect the idea from the text, so as Westwood (2008) categorized, this readers are weak readers. Furthermore, Westwood (2008) says that weak readers cannot connect the ideas as they read, and they remember very little of the detail after they read.

Related to this research, Nezami (2012) conducted similar research and found that Arab EFL university students showed insufficiency in reading comprehension. Moreover, Qrquez & Ab Rashid (2017) also conducted a study about reading comprehension difficulties and found that the students faced difficulties in comprehending English texts. Furthermore, Sencibaugh (2007) claims that these readers do not think deeply about what they are reading, do not interact cognitively with the information, and do not monitor their understanding level. Often, they do not check back or re-read the material when the meaning is lost. The worst is they cannot use effective reading strategies to help them interpret and interact with the text.

Furthermore, the respondents of this research have difficulty in several components that influenced their reading ability such as processing skills, lack of vocabulary. They also cannot use effective reading strategies and do not have background knowledge about the discourse. The result is in accordance to what Westwood (2008) says that non native students have difficulty when comprehending text due to a lack of vocabulary, background knowledge, inadequate use of effective reading strategies, and weak verbal reasoning.

In this research, the researcher also found that the students faced difficulties in several reading aspects such as lack of reading strategies, do not have background knowledge about formal discourse, and lack of vocabulary. This condition is similar to Shen (2013) research, that found reading difficulties in Chinese students. The students have difficulties in reading English academic texts due to insufficient vocabulary and lack of specialist knowledge. Moreover, Jayanti (2016) also found that non English speaker students' problems in reading English text are vocabulary knowledge, syntactic and semantic analysis of a text, making an inference, and strategy use. Then, Ancheta (2018) found difficulty faced by Gulf College students was weak in predicting outcomes and getting the main idea followed by inferring.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion of the research, it found that the international class of *PGSD* 2019 of *Universitas Negeri Padang* has low reading ability in reading English text. They have low reading ability because lack of processing skills, vocabulary knowledge, reading strategies, background knowledge, discourse knowledge, and cognitive skills. Moreover, the students faced difficulties in several reading aspects. They have difficulty because lack use of reading strategies. They also have a problem because the texts they read are too difficult or the text is not compatible with their current reading ability. Furthermore, they do not have background knowledge about formal discourse and lack of vocabulary that makes it hard to comprehend the text.

Based on the conclusion above, it is suggested to make a clear regulation on students' requirements to enter the international class program. The students who do not have enough ability in English will not allowed to enter this program, because they will face many problems in learning due to the use of English as the medium of instruction. In relation to the international class of *PGSD* 2019 problems on their reading ability, it is suggested to their lecturers to find out the best method in the teaching and learning process such as not only use English in their teaching, but

blend with Bahasa Indonesia, especially for their written text. It is also suggested to create module, workbook, and teaching material adjusted with the student's English ability or providing the bilingual text for them. For the international class of PGSD 2019, it is suggested that to improve their English ability by taking an English course, practicing English through reading the textbook, journal, or other academic manuscript and also often to attend an international seminar to encourage the needs of English.

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