Identifying Factors Contributing to Students' Obstacles in Comprehending Recount Text

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ARTICEL INFO	ABSTRACT
	The purpose of this study was to look into the difficulties that students face when reading recount texts, as well as the underlying factors that contribute to these difficulties. The primary data collection methods used in the study were observation and interviews. Classroom observation was used to collect data during the teaching and learning process, while interviews were used to determine the root causes of students' difficulties comprehending recount texts. The subjects of the study were six students in the eleventh grade at SMAN 1 Nisam, two of whom had high academic achievement, two with medium academic achievement, and two with low academic achievement. The study's findings revealed that students had a variety of difficulties comprehending recount texts due to both internal and external factors. Internal challenges included a lack of motivation, poor sentence structure comprehension, and insufficient vocabulary mastery. External factors such as insufficient parental attention and support, limited opportunities for home-based English learning and practise, and a lack of supporting materials such as English reading materials and dictionaries were also identified as contributing to the students' difficulties comprehending recount texts.

INTRODUCTION

In today's society, it is increasingly important for people to be fluent in multiple languages in order to communicate effectively with others (Wei, 2022). Among these languages, English has emerged as a critical tool for cross-national communication (Rahman & Saputra, 2021). The ability to communicate in English not only allows people to gain access to information on a wide range of topics such as education, social issues, religion, politics, and human rights, but it also allows people to interact with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Yuzar et al., 2022). Language development encompasses four major areas: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. While all four are important, reading is a fundamental skill that allows people to understand written texts and gain useful knowledge. Individuals can gain a deeper understanding of the material presented by reading by engaging in an interactive process of assigning meaning to written symbols.

According to Adams (2017), reading comprehension entails not only reading each word separately, but also comprehending the overall meaning of a passage. It is an extremely difficult process that requires readers to actively engage with the text and construct meaning based on their interactions with it. However, comprehension can be a difficult skill to master, especially for English as a second language students. Before engaging in any reading activities, teachers must help students develop the necessary linguistic background,

interests, and understanding. Despite numerous efforts to improve the teaching of reading in foreign language contexts, challenges remain. Students may struggle to comprehend text due to a lack of vocabulary, motivation, or reading habits. The recount text, which involves the reconstruction of past events, is one type of text that students struggle with. Recount text language features include a focus on specific independent participants, the use of simple past tense, the inclusion of temporal and spatial circumstances, a focus on the temporal sequence of events, and the use of material processes.

Reading Comprehension

Reading is a dynamic and interactive process that takes place between the reader and the text, with comprehension as the ultimate goal (Schallert, 2017). Reading comprehension techniques are critical for students to extract meaningful knowledge from written text (Perfetti et al., 2005). Texts are made up of various linguistic units that encode the intended meaning, such as letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs (Hedcock & Ferris, 2018; Tarigan, 2021). To decipher and derive meaning from the text, readers use a variety of knowledge, skills, and strategies. Reading is thus a multidimensional cognitive process that involves symbol decoding and meaning construction. Reading has become a fundamental means for many societies' general populations to access information and create new knowledge. Reading is also an important tool for language acquisition, communication, and idea sharing. Readers use various reading strategies, such as decoding and comprehension techniques, to aid comprehension.

According to Eason et al., (2012), expert readers not only read but also interact with the text. Reader knowledge, skills, and strategies include four core elements: linguistic competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategies competence. Linguistic competence includes the ability to recognise writing elements and understand how words are organised into sentences. Discourse competence, on the other hand, entails understanding discourse markers and how they connect various sections of a text. Understanding the various types of texts, as well as their typical structure and content, is referred to as sociolinguistic competence. Finally, strategies competence refers to the ability to effectively employ top-down strategies. Readers construct meaning by interacting with the text during the comprehension process (Munanda et al., 2020). In essence, the comprehension process involves the use of cognitive activity to comprehend the meaning of the text and extract information from the writer's message (Caravolas et al., 2019; Hjetland et al., 2020). The ultimate goal of reading is to grasp the overall meaning of the text.

Cornoldi and Oakhil (2013) defines comprehension as the act or power of understanding of the mind. The ability to use context and superior knowledge to aid reading and make sense of what one reads or hears is referred to as comprehension skills. Effective comprehension skills do not come easily and necessitate concerted efforts on the part of both teachers and students. Learners who enjoy reading should have no trouble improving their comprehension skills. Caravolas et al., (2019) defines comprehension as the ability to understand something. It is an active cognitive process in which meaning is constructed from incoming information and prior knowledge. In other words, readers must be able to comprehend the written source in order to extract the information provided by the writer. Reading is more than just getting the meaning; it is also about comprehending the material in order to understand the writer's ideas. Readers with good comprehension can summarise and retell the text in their own words. As a result, readers must pay close attention during reading activities in order to improve their comprehension.

Effective comprehension necessitates the ability to connect textual information to one's own knowledge. Understanding a text is a two-way street between the reader's prior knowledge and the text. Understanding words, sentences, and entire texts requires more than just linguistic knowledge. Thus, every act of comprehension entails knowledge of the world. As previously stated, comprehension of text is difficult,

particularly for English language learners in Indonesia. It necessitates specialised knowledge and skills, and many readers may struggle to grasp the author's concepts due to limitations in thinking and analysing the meaning of words and sentences (Smith et al., 2021. Grammar, cultural meaning, text organisation, and sentence connections must also be understood by readers (Hjetland et al., 2020). As a result, comprehension necessitates complete attention and concentration while reading.

Further, reading comprehension is a complex process in which a reader attempts to reconstruct a message encoded in graphic language by a writer. It entails a dialogue between the reader and the author. Finally, comprehension happens when the textual information activates expectations about what is in the text, and the interactive process continues until the reader is satisfied with the match between their prior knowledge and the text. The reading process revolves around comprehension of written text, and the reader's background knowledge, purpose for reading, and the text itself all interact to ensure that reading is a meaningful activity.

In sum, reading comprehension entails comprehending new information and ideas presented on the printed page and putting them to use through an interactive process between the reader and the author. It necessitates specific skills and knowledge, such as the ability to relate textual material to one's own knowledge, comprehend grammatical and cultural meaning, and appreciate textual organisation. Finally, effective comprehension is essential for successful reading activity.

The Level and The Significance of Comprehension

Reading comprehension is divided into four levels: *Literal Comprehension, Interpretation*, *Critical Reading*, and *Creative Reading* (Smith, 1969). The first level, Literal Comprehension, entails gaining a basic understanding of the text by relying solely on information that is explicitly stated. The second level, Interpretation, necessitates a higher level of thought because it requires readers to infer meaning from text that is not explicitly stated. The third level, Critical Reading, is distinguished by an evaluative approach to the material, which requires the reader to assess the accuracy, value, and truthfulness of what is read. Finally, Creative Reading is the most advanced level of comprehension, requiring divergent thinking skills to go beyond the literal, interpretive, and critical levels.

While Literal Comprehension is the lowest level of comprehension, it is essential for higher levels of comprehension. Readers at this level can only use information directly stated in the text and answer simple recall questions. To understand implied meaning, however, Interpretation necessitates the ability to solve problems and work at various levels of abstraction. Critical reading entails an evaluative approach that extends beyond the first two levels, whereas Creative reading entails the imaginative treatment of ideas that results in new insights, new ideas, and new patterns of thought. It can be asserted that students must be able to acquire all four levels of comprehension in order to maximise their reading comprehension. These levels are appropriate for readers of all ages, from primary school students to tertiary students. Teachers must be aware that the three levels are indistinguishable and must avoid focusing solely on literal comprehension. The categorisation of comprehension into these four strands is merely a guideline for developing reading assessments. According to studies, teachers typically ask literal comprehension questions, but reading comprehension entails more than just basic reading and recall skills.

Reading comprehension is essential because it allows the reader to extract meaning from the written word, acquire new knowledge, confirm existing knowledge, comprehend alternative perspectives, and even escape from the stresses of everyday life. According to Afflerbach et al., (2008), comprehension includes conscious strategies that aid in the understanding of written material's meaning. Proficient readers typically read for a specific purpose, such as obtaining information from a guidebook, fulfilling course requirements

by reading a textbook, seeking entertainment from a magazine, or enjoying the pleasure of reading a classic novel. Furthermore, successful readers think actively while reading. They make sense of the text and extract the most value from it by applying their accumulated experiences, world knowledge, vocabulary, language structure, and reading strategies. They can also recognise when there is a problem with comprehension and use appropriate techniques to solve it. In essence, comprehension is the primary reason for reading; reading without comprehension is not reading.

The English language contains many words with multiple meanings, so students must understand the author's intentions by drawing on their vocabulary, cognitive skills, and prior knowledge. To comprehend a text, students must have a large enough vocabulary to aid their understanding. As a result, vocabulary knowledge is an important component of reading comprehension and can be improved by reading frequently. To summarise, comprehension necessitates mastery of sufficient vocabulary or word meaning in order for students to extract information and knowledge from reading material.

Different Kinds of Comprehension

According to Kintsch and Kintsch (2005), reading comprehension involves several levels of comprehension. The first level of comprehension is literal comprehension, which entails understanding the explicit meaning of words and sentences. The second level is interpretation, which necessitates a more in-depth understanding of the text than the explicit meaning of the words and sentences. At this level, the reader can derive meaning from the text's implicit or suggested information. Finally, critical reading is the most advanced level of comprehension, requiring the ability to evaluate a text or passage and form an opinion about its accuracy, value, and truthfulness.

Recount Text

According to Hyland (2013), a recount text is a narrative that recounts past events or experiences, and may be based on personal recollection, historical events, or imagination. The structural elements of a recount text consist of an orientation, which introduces the setting and characters, followed by a chronological account of events, and concluded by a reorientation that provides closure to the narrative. The grammatical features of a recount text are characterized by a focus on specific participants, the use of material processes, temporal and locational circumstances, and the past tense (Israwati & Erlidawati, 2020). Therefore, it can be concluded that the primary purpose of a recount text is to inform or entertain the reader by retelling past events in a coherent and chronological manner.

Obstacle in Learning

According to Sadeghi and Izadpanah (2018), obstacles in learning refer to the circumstances in which students are unable to learn effectively. The difficulties encountered by students in the learning process are interpreted as constraints that impede their ability to comprehend the lesson material as outlined in the curriculum. There are two factors that contribute to difficulties in learning: internal and external factors. Internal factors are related to the students themselves and include physical factors (such as health and physical disabilities) as well as psychological factors (such as intelligence, talent, enthusiasm, and motivation). External factors are factors that are outside of the students' control and include family factors (such as parental involvement), teaching methods, curriculum materials, and societal factors (such as environmental factors). As such, it is evident that learning obstacles can arise from both individual and contextual factors, and are not solely dependent on the students themselves.

According to the researcher's observations, students in class XI SMAN 1 Nisam frequently struggle to understand recount texts. These barriers include a lack of concentration, motivation, concern about not understanding the text, and poor study habits. The researcher is interested in investigating the factors that contribute to these obstacles and hopes to answer two research questions: (1) what are the obstacles that students face when understanding recount text? and (2) what factors contribute to these stumbling blocks?

METHODS

This study aimed to provide a description of the obstacles faced by students in comprehending recount texts in class XI of SMAN 1 Nisam. Six students were selected as the research participants, consisting of two high-achieving students, two middle-achieving students, and two low-achieving students. Data was gathered through two research instruments: observation checklist and interview. The observation checklist was employed to observe the teaching and learning process, particularly the students' activities in comprehending English texts provided by the teacher (Carver et al., 2003). Meanwhile, the structured interview was conducted to obtain information regarding the factors contributing to the obstacles faced by the students in comprehending recount texts.
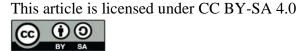
A structured interview is a research method that involves asking pre-determined questions in a consistent and standardized manner (Galetta, 2013). In this research, the researcher used a structured interview to gather information from the six students about the obstacles they encountered in comprehending recount texts. The structured interview included a list of questions that the researcher prepared beforehand to guide the interview process. The use of a structured interview in this research ensured that the researcher gathered relevant and consistent data from all the students. The pre-determined questions were carefully chosen to elicit responses that would help the researcher understand the factors that contributed to the students' difficulties in comprehending recount texts. The questions were also designed to be clear and easily understood by the students, regardless of their academic level. To conduct the structured interview, the researcher first explained the purpose of the interview to the students and sought their consent to participate in the study. The researcher then proceeded to ask each student the same set of questions in the same order, ensuring that the interview was conducted consistently for all the participants.

By using a structured interview in this research, the researcher was able to collect data that was both reliable and valid. The use of a standardized set of questions made it easier to analyze and compare the responses of the different students, and also minimized the potential for bias or subjectivity in the data collection process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The information obtained from the observation checklist and interview was used to analyse the students' difficulties in comprehending recount text. Based on the findings of the observations, it was discovered that the students were interested in the text provided by the teacher. They were intrigued by the title of the recount texts provided, despite the fact that they could not understand the text. The students responded to the teacher's explanation of the recount text, but not all of them paid full attention to the teacher's material. Some students are preoccupied with their own activities, so when the teacher inquires about the text, they become perplexed.

The students' difficulties understanding the text are also due to a lack of vocabulary mastery. They had to open the dictionary to find out the meaning of each word, which took a long time. Despite the fact that

the teacher had explained how to comprehend a recount text more easily, the majority of the students were still perplexed. The students are unable to deduce ideas from the text. As a result, the majority of them can read but not comprehend a text.

The researcher also used interviews to gather information about students' difficulties comprehending reading text, particularly recount text. The researcher currently asked the students a variety of questions. It was hoped that the students would be able to provide accurate information about their difficulties understanding English text. The researcher would obtain the data to answer the research question from the students' explanation.

The first question concerns their attitudes towards English learning, particularly reading material. It was discovered that the majority of respondents enjoy studying English as well as learning English reading comprehension.

The second question concerns their motivation in learning English, particularly in the reading section. Based on the interviews, the researcher discovered that the students lacked motivation to learn English. Students from the lower and middle levels stated that their parents paid less attention to their studies, particularly their English lessons. They had little time to study and review their lesson because they were preoccupied with other activities at home. Furthermore, the students lacked a strong desire to learn English. As a result, they rarely review the lesson, read English text, and hold a group discussion to solve their English problems, particularly in comprehending recount text. Students who lack motivation will have difficulty providing their best encouragement in learning. While one student with a high level of ability stated that he studied English without any instruction from his parents, he did so because he enjoys the language. Another comes from a family that places a high value on education; her parents are always concerned about her success and have always encouraged her to repeat and practise her English. As a result, she was motivated to learn English, which included comprehending English text.

The third question concerns their difficulties in learning and comprehending English text. Students with low academic achievement stated that they cannot fully comprehend the text provided; they do not understand the meaning of each word. As a result, they are unable to respond to text-related questions. The researcher discovered that their problem was misreading text from students with middle and high levels of ability. They were unable to comprehend correctly based on the author's intent. As a result, they may have different interpretations of the text at times, but they are familiar with some of the words used in the text.

The fourth question is about the factors that contributed to their difficulty understanding the recount text. All respondents stated that they found it difficult to understand the grammar of the recount text. Students struggled to explain the meaning of sentence structure in recount text, such as tenses. The past tense was always used in recount text. As a result, students must understand the tenses used in reading texts in order to identify when and what happened that caused some events in the stories or problems represented in the text. However, among the students who were unable to understand the tenses meaning used in the text were students with high academic achievement. They were unable to identify the form of verb two, so they were unaware of its meaning. Furthermore, the students struggled to connect separate events or paragraphs into a coherent whole text that became a comprehensive understanding.

Another factor that contributed to students' difficulties understanding a recount text was a lack of vocabulary. Based on the data from the interviews, the researcher discovered that all of the respondents, or two students from the low level, had a limited vocabulary. They had no idea what each word in the recount text meant. Students with middle and high levels of ability also struggle with vocabulary mastery. They do not know the closest meaning or synonym of a word, so it takes them a long time to understand a text given

to them. Mastering vocabulary is essential for mastering the other language skills required to comprehend English text.

The fifth question is about the resources available to help them learn, specifically reading comprehension. According to the findings of the student interviews, the researcher discovered that all of the respondents, or two students from the lowest level, did not have any supporting facilities such as a dictionary or a text book. They didn't mind because they could borrow from a friend when they needed it. Middle and high school students have a dictionary and a text book. When the teacher asks them to translate or comprehend an English text, they are more likely to consult an electronic dictionary or the internet. The researcher conducted this study to determine the obstacles encountered by students in class XI SMAN 1 Nisam in comprehending recount text and the factors that contributed to the students' difficulties in comprehending English text. According to the previous data analysis, the researcher discovered that most students had difficulty comprehending the recount text due to a lack of vocabulary. Students rarely read English texts, so when they do, it is difficult for them to understand it because many vocabularies are unfamiliar to them. Furthermore, they did not master the structure used in the recount text, making it difficult for them to easily comprehend the text.
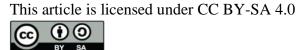
Discussions

The eleventh grade students at SMAN 1 Nisam encountered some difficulties in comprehending English text. Internal and external factors both pose challenges. First, a lack of motivation causes them to not take English seriously. Second, their parents pay less attention to their studies, particularly their English lessons. They also had little time to study and review their lesson because they were preoccupied with other activities at home. Furthermore, the students lacked a strong desire to learn English. As a result, they rarely review the lesson, read English text, and hold a group discussion to solve their English problems, particularly in comprehending recount text. Students who lack motivation will have difficulty providing their best encouragement in learning.

Another factor that contributed to their difficulties in comprehending English text was their difficulty understanding the grammar of the recount text. Students struggled to explain the meaning of sentence structure in recount text, such as tenses. They also have a limited vocabulary. They had no idea what the word in the recount text meant. Some students do not know the closest meaning or synonym of a word, so it takes them a long time to understand a given text. Next, the students lack resources such as dictionaries to help them learn, particularly how to understand English text.

Based on the findings, the researcher advises students to improve their ability to comprehend English text in a variety of ways, including developing their vocabulary mastery by watching English programmes on television, such as TV education. Furthermore, Dubiner (2017) suggested keeping a vocabulary notebook, giving each page or double page a title; e.g. sport, education, phrasal verbs, etc., and then recording each new word on a suitable page as you learn it. Aside from that, students should repeat the lesson because it helps them remember the materials and is always doing something useful to increase their comprehension, particularly in comprehending recount text. It is also critical to increase motivation and interest in learning English, particularly in text comprehension.

Furthermore, to solve the problem of understanding the structural sentence, students can read the text first, draught a sentence with the same pattern, and then attempt to make a formula from that sentence (Elsjelyn, 2014). Finally, before reading a text, ask yourself what you already know about the topic to improve your comprehension, and try to recall as much information as you can.

CONCLUSION

Comprehending a passage requires more than simply reading individual words, it involves understanding the overall meaning. It is a complex process that demands active engagement with the text to create meaning based on one's interaction with it. Despite being a difficult skill to acquire, it is particularly challenging for non-native English speakers. Therefore, teachers should assist students in building the requisite linguistic foundation, interests, and comprehension skills prior to engaging in any reading activities. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the challenges that students face when reading recount texts, as well as the underlying factors that contribute to these challenges.

The study discovered that students in class XI SMAN 1 Nisam encountered a variety of difficulties in comprehending recount text. Internal and external factors such as a lack of motivation, parental involvement, time constraints, and a lack of desire to learn all contributed to their difficulties. Furthermore, students struggled to understand the text's grammar and vocabulary, which hampered their ability to comprehend the text. Students, for example, found it difficult to identify and explain the use of different tenses in the recount text. The use of complex sentence structures also made understanding the meaning and context of the text difficult for students. Furthermore, the students' limited vocabulary made understanding the meaning of words used in the recount text difficult. Many students had no prior exposure to the words used in the text, which made understanding and interpreting the text's message difficult. Similarly, a lack of resources, such as dictionaries, limited their learning opportunities. It is critical to address these challenges by promoting motivation, providing necessary resources, and strengthening the students' English language skills. Students can improve their ability to comprehend recount texts and other English texts with consistent effort and support.

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