Reading Comprehension Test and Its Challenges In Students' Perspective

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Abstract: This research aimed at identifying the most difficult question category faced by students in reading tests and investigating the causes of student difficulties. This study used a qualitative method and was carried out at the first semester of the UNTIRTA year 2019 students in the C-Class English. Descriptive method was used for exposing the result in this research. The data was collected via the first half reading understanding test and an interview with the students. the data was collected. The document was used for the most challenging question category, resulting in some questions about vocabulary mastery being difficult for students to reply. It is also supported by the results of the student interviews, in which 17 out of 20 students, or 85 percent, believe that the vocabulary question category in part B is difficult. Interviews were also used to study the causes of the students' reading problems. After doing the analysis, the source of the problem for students is due to lack of vocabulary skills and having bad reading habits. Therefore, they have shown that students' ability to guess the meaning of some foreign vocabulary or words in their current context needs to be improved.

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension means that the readers should get the meaning, idea, information and value from the text not only read. It is in line with Grellet (2010: 3) said that the understanding of a written text included extracting the required information from the text effectively is called as reading comprehension.

Doing reading comprehend the text as exercise in reading subject is easy, because the students can helped by dictionary or discuss with their friends. Meanwhile, when the students do reading comprehension the text in test situation is different. Besides the difficulties of question in the test, the test situation has affected.

This research was proposed by the researcher which concern with the analysis of the difficulties that students faced, and what the causes of that. The researcher believed the issue is important to knowing in order to help the teacher in applying the suitable treatment of teaching and learning method for the students.

Following the background of the research, the researcher proposed the research questions as follows:

What is question category that students think difficult?

What make students difficult to answer the question?

THEORETICAL SUPPORT
Reading

Reading activity is an activity that collaboration between physic and mental process. Collaboration here means when doing reading not only physic that works, but also mind. Ahuja and Ahuja (2007: 4) stated that sensory and mental process are involves reading because the use of eyes and mind in same time. It also supported by Nunan (2005: 69) that stated the skills to making sense and deriving meaning from the printed words is reading. Reading makes the readers' eyes moving around and makes the readers' brain turn the idea and knowledge that the readers get. Meanwhile, reading is also the readers' active process to understanding written language to get information and knowledge. As it is stated by Grellet (2010: 8), reading is an active skill. Reading definitely has strategies such as guessing, predicting, checking, and asking oneself questions. Furthermore, Sabouri (2016: 229) said that the readers' constructing a meaningful illustration of a literature using reading strategies in order to make the process of reading more effective, this is called as interactive process in reading. The researcher can assume that reading is changed the written language to get information from the writer.

From those theories, it can be concluded that reading is not only a process to read aloud the written text but also to identify the text and make the readers' preexisting knowledge to comprehend the text relate to the text.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the skill of readers to get meaning from the writer's. It was based on their preexisting knowledge or opinion of topic the text. As it is stated by Scanlon, et al (2010: 276), comprehension is an active process, construct the readers understanding text combine with the readers' background knowledge related to the text.

Reading comprehension forces the readers to understand and making decision of the text relate with the writer means to the written text. As it is stated by Lems, et al (2010: 170), reading comprehension is a skill to build the readers personal meaning from the text given by the writer. It is also supported by Snow (2002: 11) that reading comprehension as process of the continuity extracting and constructing the meaning the text. Then, it is also supported by Kintsch cited in Sanford (2015: 167) stated that reading comprehension strengthens is constructing mental image from the text that given.

From those literature, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is process that have complexity, there are interaction between the students' preexisting and the content of the text.

In other word, reading comprehension is a process of transferring the meaning from the text then building the meaning from what an idea that already transferred.

Test

In order to know how learning process doing, the teacher must do evaluate about the subject. There are many ways that use to evaluate the teaching learning process. One of the ways is test. Test is a method that the students' progress of the subject measured. As it is stated by Brown (2003: 3), test is a process to get value of ability, knowledge and performance of a person. In this definition, Brown wants to show that test is one of an instrument to get the students can explore their knowledge. It is also supported by Ur (1996:33), the test is way to assume the level of the students' knowledge, it can be seen from the score of the test. Then, Ur (1996: 34) also stated that test is use as a means to motivate students to learn or review specific material. Through the test, the teacher does not only motivate and

measure the students' ability, but also improve the lesson in teaching learning process. To conclude, the test is an activity that can be hold for knowing and measure the students' level of knowledge and ability in current terms.

In test, there are two forms of test, Subjective test and objective test. Usually, the form of subjective test is essay. It means the tests need an explanation about the question. While in objective test the form is like multiple choice, false-true question, etc. So, the objective test is easier than subjective test in scoring system. It causes, objective test only has one right answer.

Knowing the forms of test is really important, because the formula to count the level of difficulty has some different point.

Question Type of the Reading Test

In reading comprehension test, there are some kinds of question. Related to the lesson plan and syllabus of Intensive Reading subject at the first semester of English Department UNTIRTA, there are at least four materials relate to the question type in reading comprehension test. However, the test focused on four reading question type; guessing main idea including supporting idea, vocabulary knowledge, making inference and summarizing.

METHOD

Qualitative research is a method of this research to find out the phenomenon that already happen naturally. It can be about characteristic, data, ethnography, cases, and others. According to Taylor, et all (2016: 7), the word of qualitative method indicates research that have data from the research which can be written of spoken words and also behaviour. Then, Ary, et all (2010: 419) stated that qualitative research find out the quality of any aspect that will be used as data from object research.

This research used descriptive qualitative research. According to Moleong cited by Sari (2017: 42), descriptive research is the method of study to get illustration and picture out the object as the fact.

descriptive qualitative research was used because appropriate with the goals of this study, to picture and interprets the facts and character about the difficulties in reading comprehension test that students at English department UNTIRTA 1st semester faced.

The subjects that the researcher chose are 20 students of English Department UNTIRTA 1st semester that had low score in reading comprehension final test.

In this research, document and interview were chosen by the researcher as techniques to collecting the information, data, and anything that this study need.

After collecting the data, the researcher use triangulation methodology. Triangulation of methodology was used to make the data credible. Triangulation of methodology is using two instruments or two techniques in collecting data. Then, the findings from two or more techniques should have same point or same conclusion.

After the researcher makes sure that the data are credible, the next step is analysis the data. So, to analyse the data of documentation of students answer sheet to find out the most difficult question, index difficulty of question item formula is needed. The type of test is mix, there are objective and subjective test. So, there are two formulas for two types of test.

According to Arikunto (2018: 233), the formula of index difficulty is:

$$P = \frac{B}{JS}$$

Where:
P: Proportions or index difficulty

Topic	VOCABULARY				
Question number	1 – B	2 – B	3 – B	4 – B	5 – B
Results	16/60	33/60	28/60	27/60	16/60
Level of Difficulty	16/60 = 0,28	33/60 = 0,55	28/60 = 0,46	27/60 = 0,45	16/60 = 0,26
	Difficult	Average	Average	Average	Difficult

B: Number of students who answer the item correctly
JS: Total number of students. (In this research, there are twenty students).

Second is analysing the subjective test. According to Saputra (2018), formula of index difficulty for subjective test is:

$$P = \frac{B}{JS}$$

Where:
P: Proportions or index difficulty
B: Total score from all of the students
JS: Ideal score or perfect score of the number from all the students

The criteria of index difficulty as follow:
< 0.30 = difficult
0.31 – 0.70 = average
> 0.71 = easy

Data analysis is a process to find out and set the result of data from document and interview to make the research easy to understand. The data were analysed by using two form because in this research aims to find two research objectives. The first is to find out the most difficult question and the last is to investigate the causes of the difficulties. Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014: 30) stated that data condensation, data display and data conclusion/verification is bound of activities in analysis data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
4.1 Table of students' answer to vocabulary question

This question is subjective test, so when the students got perfect answer, they would get 3 point. There were 20 students who chose, so total score were 60. While if the students did not get perfect answer, so the score related to the assessment rubric. Two numbers categorized as difficult and three number categorized as average. For number 1B and 5B from the total of score that is 60, only 16 score that students got. So, for both number had level of difficulty in 0,26 which less than 0,30 criteria as difficult question. While for number 2B, 3B, and 4B categorized as average because their level of difficulty ranged between 0,31 – 0,70.

4.2 Table of students' answer to summarizing question

Topic	SUMMARIZING		
Questions' number	2 – A	5 – A	8 – A
Results	20/20	15/20	16/100
Level of Difficulty	20/20 = 1	15/20 = 0,75	16/100 = 0,16
Total	Easy	Easy	Difficult

Three questions in Part A, number 2A, 5A and 8A, to sum up the type of question. They were objective tests for numbers 2A and 5A. Therefore, if the student gets the answer correctly and wrongly, they got the score and if the answer is incorrect, they have not received the score at all. While number 8A is subjective, students have 5 points if they have the perfect answer. Twenty students chose, so there was a total score of 100. In contrast, the score was related to the assessment section if the students were not perfectly answered. Here is a problem number, number 8A because the difficulty level was 0,16. Although for numbers 2A and 5A, their difficulty ranged between 0.71 – 1.0 was categorized as simple.

4.3 Table students' answer to main idea question

Three questions for main ide question type in part A which number 1A, 9A, and 10A. For number 1A, it was objective test. So, the possibility of the answer only correct and wrong, if the student got correct answer, they got the score and if wrong answer they did not get the score at all. While number 9A and 10A were subjective tests where the students got perfect answer, they would get 5 point. There were 20 students who chose, so the total score were 100. While if the students did not get perfect answer, so the score related to the assessment rubric.

Here all of the number categorized as average. It causes their level of difficulty ranged between 0,31 – 0,70 which was categorized as average.

4.4 Table of students' answer to inference question

Topic	INFERENCE			
Questions' number	3 – A	4 – A	6 – A	7 – A
Results	11/20	18/20	80/100	70/100
Level of Difficulty	11/20 = 0,55	18/20 = 0,9	80/100 = 0,8	70/100 = 0,7
	Average	Easy	Easy	Average

Four questions for inference question type in part A which number 3A, 4A, 6A and 7A. For number 3A and 4A, they were objective test. So, the possibility of the answer only correct and wrong, if the student got correct answer, they would got the score and if wrong answer they did not get the score at all. While number 6A and 7A were subjective tests where the students got perfect answer, they got 5 point. There were 20 students who chose, so the total score were 100. While if the students did not get perfect answer, so the score related to the assessment rubric.

Here two numbers categorized as average, and two numbers categorized as easy. For number 4A and 6A, they had level of difficulty ranged between 0,71 – 1,00. So, it made number 4A and 6A as easy question. While for number 3A and 7A categorized as average because their level of difficulty ranged between 0,30 – 0,70.

Topic	Main Idea		
Questions' number	1 - A	9 – A	10 – A
Results	9/20	39/100	50/100
Level of Difficulty	9/20 = 0,45	39/100 = 0,39	50/100 = 0,50
	Average	Average	Average

For the last objective in this research, the researcher investigated the students who got low score to know the causes, the reason they had difficulties in answering vocabulary question. To investigate the students, the researcher held interview for 20 students. In interview, the researcher asked about the background and opinion of their reading ability. Then, it appeared that most of students did not like reading activity, they only read something that they like to read, like novel or story. They did not even like to read about the material and science articles or text. Therefore, they have not many vocabularies mastery because they are rarely read new things that had new vocab. So, when the question in part B of reading comprehension final test is about guessing the meaning from the context. The students felt difficult to answer that question because they were not familiar with the vocabulary used in the context. Moreover, some of the vocabulary used also have double meaning, so the students should guessing meaning of the word that fit and suitable with the context. To conclude, the causes of the students difficulties in answer vocabulary question is they did not like reading activity so they felt lacked of vocabularies mastery.

The result is the most difficult question category in reading comprehension final test that the students face are category of vocabulary question. Then, the causes of the difficulties are the students had no

background in like reading activity so they lacked of vocabulary mastery.

Through this research, hopefully the result of this research could help the students in analyse their weak in reading comprehension in order to solve their problem, then the lecture can make ease in analyse the students' weak in order to use the best treatment in teaching learning activity in order to make sure students really understand the material.

CONCLUSION

Related to the findings and discussion, the students felt the most difficult category question is reading comprehension final test that is vocabulary question category. Based on the paper of students' result in reading comprehension test, most students got wrong and not perfect in answering the question about vocabulary, then, from the interview had done, the students really got difficulty and confused in answer the vocabulary question.

Furthermore, based on the interview, the researcher found some causes of the students' difficulty. First, many students had not interest in reading activity. They were too bored when they had to read something, except when they read something interesting like novel or story. While, in the reading comprehension test the text is article about communication not a story or novel. Second, the student felt there was any repeating word that made the students confused. Third, most students got confused to guessing the meaning of word in a context. In students view, the question words have more than one meaning and unfamiliar. So, the students felt difficult to guess what the word is actually mean in that context. Fourth, there were question that never discuss before during the learning process in the class. The last, the students still had a little in vocabulary mastery. There some words that were unknown by the students. To conclude, the students got difficulties

in vocabulary question category because they still lacked of vocabulary mastery.

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