

## STUDENTS' CAPABILITY IN UNDERSTANDING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF SMP N 1 JUWANGI BOYOLALI IN 2012/2013 ACADEMIC YEAR

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### ABSTRACT

*The objectives of this study are (1) to describe the students' capability in understanding descriptive text at the second year of SMP N 1 Juwangi Boyolali (2) to describe the problems faced by the second year students in understanding descriptive text, and (3) to describe the causes of problems faced by the second year students in understanding descriptive text. The study was done in SMP N 1 Juwangi Boyolali. As the sample the writer took 36 students at VIIIIC class. The writer conducted treatment to the students in the form of the test. The type of the test is multiple choice with four options and consists of 50 items. After collecting the data which consist of the result of the students test and analyzing them by using Sudijono's formula, the writer described the result of the study. The writer found that the capability of the students in understanding descriptive text can be divided into four level mastery, they are (1) poor level is about 19,44% (7 students), (2) fair level is about 27,78% (10 students) (3) good level is about 50,00% (18 students), and (4) excellent level is about 2,78% (1 student). The problems faced by the students in understanding descriptive text are (1) understanding in looking main idea of the text (2) understanding in looking detail information of the text (3) understanding vocabulary. The causes of the problems faced by the students are (1) the teacher is less in giving variation in teaching reading passage. (2) the students' vocabulary and grammar are still limited because several students have not habit to develop their reading skill individually and there is no supported facilities to develop the teaching learning process. In conclusion, the students' capability in understanding descriptive text at SMP N 1 Juwangi Boyolali is good.*

**Key Words:** students' capability, understanding, descriptive text

### A. Introduction

Learning English involves the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students should master these four language skills in order that they could use the skills to communicate or express their thought, feeling, and opinion in English. Reading is one of the skills in learning English. It is a part of language which plays an important role as a medium to get information and knowledge. Smith (1971) in Fauziati (2002: 139) states that it is important to learn reading since it (1) helps us learn to think the new

language, (2) helps us build a better vocabulary, (3) makes us more comfortable with written English, (4) can help us plan to study in English – speaking country.

English and Indonesian language are different. There is no guarantee that the students who have good understanding of Indonesian text will have good understanding of English text. When the students are reading Indonesian text they have mastered vocabulary and the structural system, but when they are reading English text, they are demanded to have adequate knowledge of the target language which have different system. Reading comprehension involves a variety of skills, which are a key to comprehend the text.

Based on the description above, students should master reading skill. Good achievement in reading comprehension is important to the students. Students will get many information and ideas which can enrich the student's vocabulary.

Reading comprehension is a thought process through which reader become aware of an idea, understand it in terms of their experiential background, and interpret in relation to their own needs and purposes (Kennedy, 1981: 192).

Reading is not only reading the text but also understanding the content of the text. The reader must know the information, message, or idea about the text. To consider the effectiveness of using language, each form of written texts is preferable created based on genre. In genre concept, there are 11 types of texts. Namely description, recount, narration, procedure, explanation, discussion, exposition, news item, report, anecdote, and review.

Descriptive text is a text which says what a person, a place or a thing is like. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing. Descriptive text has structure as follows: (1) Identification; identifying the phenomenon to be described. (2) Description; describing the phenomenon in parts, qualities, and characteristics.

Capability is abilities or qualities necessary to do something. The teacher must lead his or her students in developing reading the written texts. It is one of the ways for increasing the students' capability. The reading

skills and strategies that should be mastered are, (1) skimming: reading quickly to find the core of the text, (2) scanning: reading quickly to find the needed information, (3) reading for detailed information, (4) reading between the lines, (5) predicting: predicting what the happening, and (6) deducing meaning from the context.

Reading skill, especially to descriptive text is given in senior high school. SMP N 1 Juwangi is one of the regular senior high school in Boyolali. This school is located far away from the city but this school has many students and become a favourite school. Teaching learning process in this school is also limited by multimedia facilities but the teacher and the students have a big spirit and enthusiasm to learn so that they could get a good quality like the other school in the city. Based on the background above, the writer wants to identify the students' capability in understanding descriptive text and what are the problems faced by the second year students in understanding descriptive text.

The objectives of this research are (1) to describe the students' capability in understanding descriptive text of the second year students of SMP N 1 Juwangi Boyolali in 2012 / 2013 academic year, (2) to describe the problems faced by the second year students in understanding descriptive text, and (3) to describe the causes of the problems faced by the second year students in understanding descriptive text.

Simanjuntak (1988: 14) defines reading as the meaningful interpretation or printed or written verbal symbols. It means that reading is a result of the interaction between the perception of graphic symbols that represent language and the reader's language skills, cognitive skills and the knowledge of the world. In this process the reader tries to recreate the meanings intended by the writer.

Anderson (1999: 68) states reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning. The goal of reading is comprehension.

According to Kennedy (1981: 192), reading comprehension is a thought process through which the reader become aware of an idea, understand it in

terms of their experiential background, and interpret in relation to their own needs and purposes.

Comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text. Efficient comprehension, thus requires the ability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge (schemata) to improve the student's ability to comprehend the text., therefore have to help students change their inefficient reading habits (reading word by word, focusing too much attention on form, relying heavily on dictionary etc.) by teaching them efficient reading skills (Fauziati,2002: 138).

Anderson (1999: 74-77) states that there are some principles for teaching reading (1) expose the reader's background knowledge, (2) build a strong vocabulary base, (3) teach for comprehension, (4) work on increasing reading rate, (5) teach reading strategies, (6) encourage readers to transform strategies into skills, (7) build assesment and evaluation into your teaching, (8) strive for continous improvement as a reading teacher.

According to Mukarto (2007: 140) "descriptive text is used to describe something, someone, or place".A descriptive text has two main parts: (1) Identification, (2) Description. The structure of a text is called the generic structure. The language features of descriptive text use the following certain nouns, simple present tense, detailed noun phrase to give information about subject, action verbs, and figurative language such as simile, metafor, etc.

Nutall (1982: 31-32) defines there are four categories of skills and strategies of reading as follows:

- 1) Skills involving flexibility of technique: variations in reading rate, skimming, scanning, study reading.
- 2) Skills of utilizing information that is not strictly speaking part of the text itself: reference apparatus, graphicconventions, illustrations and diagrams.
- 3) Word-attack skills: how to tackle unfamiliar lexical items by using morphology, inference from context.

- 4) Text-attack skill: the process of interpreting the text as a whole, using all the clues available including cohesion and rhetorical structure.

There are three steps in reading, the first is Pre-reading activity. This stage is to introduce students with the topic, to motivate learners by giving a reason for reading and to provide some language preparation for the text (William,1984: 38). Second is While-reading activity. This stage, the activity is to help the learner in developing their reading skill. The students become more effective in reading ability. They should be flexible in their ways of reading which are appropriate to the given text. The learners interact with the text by the help of their relevant background and knowledge (Williams,1984: 38). And the last is Post-reading activities. In this stage the students need to consolidate or reflect upon what has been read. Learners need to relate the content or ideas of the text to their own knowledges, interests or views. The teacher will probably organize some kinds of follow up task related to the text (William,1984: 38).

## **B. Research Method**

This research is descriptive quantitative research. The writer carries out the research on the second year students of SMP N 1 Juwangi Boyolali. The time of the research is 2012 / 2013 academic year. The subject of this research is the second year students of SMP N 1 Juwangi Boyolali consist of 36 students.

The data of this research are taken from the percentage of the result of the test in the class which is described into written data. The writer describes the students' capability in understanding descriptive text and the problems faced by the second year students. The source of data of this research are events, informant, and document.

To get the data, the writer uses observation, interview and a test as the instruments. In this research the witer uses the objective test. The test consists of 50 items in the form of multiple choice type with four options. The test is the most effective instrument to reveal one's proficiency in certain object.

Test consist of reading comprehension about descriptie text. There are includes 50 items of multiple choice questions. It is done after the writer done the observation, interview, and collect the document. In this research, the writer employs the theory of Arikunto (1992: 221) in giving percentage to describe the students' capability in understandingdescriptive text and the problems faced by the second year students of SMP N 1 Juwangi Boyolali.

#### **D. Research Finding and Discussion**

##### **1. Research Finding**

The writer classifies the finding into some points of study that consist of the students' capability in understanding descriptive text, the problems faced by the second year students in understanding descriptive text, and the causes of the problems faced by the second year students in understanding descriptive text.

The writer gathers the data by doing test to describe the students' capability in understanding descriptive text. The type of the test in reading comprehension is multiple choice with four options A, B, C, D. The number of the item test is 50 items multiple choice questions. The time allotment is 22 minutes. The number of sample is 36 students. The writer takes class of VIIC as the sample because in SMP N 1 Juwangi Boyolali There is no special class which makes grade categorization based on their intellegence quality, so the sample has equal capability and represents the population.

The analysis of the students' score of the test is based on Arikunto's formula. Then each score is analyzed by using the formula from the level of mastery the material of reading comprehension. The result of the test is as follows.

**a. The Students' Capability in Understanding Descriptive Text Based on the Test**

Number Of Students	Scores	Level Of Mastery	Percentage
1	80 - 100	excellent	2,78 %
18	60 - 79	good	50,00 %
10	50 - 59	fair	27,78 %
7	0 - 49	poor	19,44 %

Based on the tabel above, there are 7 students who get poor level, 10 students who get fair level, 18 students who get good level and 1 students who get excellent level. It means the students in the poor level has score about 0-49, the students in the fair level has 50-59, the students in the good level has 60-79, and the students in excellent level has 80-100. In the poor level, the students have percentage score 19,44%, with the explanation from 36 students there are 7 students who get poor level. The result shows that the students have very low capability in understanding descriptive text because the score of the test is less than 50%. In the fair level, the students have percentage score 27,78% with explanation from 36 students there are 10 students who get fair level. The result shows that the students have less capability in understanding descriptive text because the score of the test is less than 60%.

The students who get good level are 18 students, they have scores about 60-79, so the level mastery of their score is good level and the percentage of their score is 50,00% because from 36 students there are 18 students who get good level. The result showsthat they have good capability in understanding descriptive text because their score of the test is more than 60%. So the students' percentage of the average score is good level. The students who get excellent level is only 1 student. He has score about 80-100, so the level mastey of his score is excellent. He has percentage of his score is 2,78% because from 36 students only one

student who get excellent level. The result shows that in this level the student has excellent capability in understanding descriptive text.

Based on the data above the students' capability in understanding descriptive text can be divided into four categories level of mastery. They are (a) poor level is about 19,44% (7 students), (b) fair level is about 27,78% (10 students) (c) good level is about 50,00% (18 students), and (d) excellent level is about 2,78% (1 student). In conclusion, the students' capability in understanding descriptive text is good because most of the students have good level (50,00%), there are 18 students who get good level from 36 students then only one student who get excellent level.

#### **b. The Problems Faced by the Students in Understanding Descriptive Text**

**Tabel 4.6. The Percentage of Indicators of Comprehension**

No	Indicators of Comprehension	Percentage of Correct Answers(%)
1.	Understanding the purpose of the text	86,11%
2.	Understanding in looking for the main idea of the text	57,63%
3.	Understanding in looking for detail information of the text	53,70%
4.	Understanding vocabulary	52,59%

Based on the data above the writer can conclude that there are 86,11% students who have good understanding of the purpose of the text, 57,63% for understanding in looking for the main idea of the text, 53,70% for understanding in looking for detail information of the text, and 52,59% for understanding vocabulary of the text.

The writer finds that most problems faced by the students found from four indicators of comprehension items, namely (a) understanding main idea of the text (b) understanding detail



information of the text (c) understanding vocabulary because the percentage of each indicator is less than 60%.

**a. The Causes of the Problems Faced by the Second Year Students in Understanding Descriptive Text**

The points of the causes of problems faced by the students in understanding descriptive text are as follows:

- 1) The students have limited vocabulary and grammar. In teaching reading, grammar and vocabulary is the most important aspect. Without mastering both of them the students can not understand what the text about. When the students find difficult word or unfamiliar word in the text the students feel confuse because they do not understand the meaning of the word. When the students find a complex sentences in the text they cannot comprehend them well. It is because the teacher only focuses on the definition, parts and question of the text. It is also related to the students' habit, they do not have habit to develop their reading skill and read many kinds of English text. The students also have less motivation in Studying English.
- 2) In the teaching reading, the teacher is still less in giving variation method. Based on the interview with the students, the teacher uses the same method to teach all kind of reading passage especially descriptive text. It makes students feel bored and not having anthusiasm in studying reading passage. This method is not suitable to be applied now. The teacher should change and give new variation in teaching reading passage. It is because in SMP N 1 Juwangi Boyolali multimedia facilities is still limited. There is no internet acces in that school so that it is hard to develop the teaching learning process without supported by multimedia facilities such like other school in the city.

**2. Discussion**

- a. The students' capability in understanding descriptive text can be devided into four level categories of mastery, They are (a) poor level is

about 19,44% (7 students), (b) fair level is about 27,78% (10 students) (c) good level is about 50,00% (18 students), and (d) excellent level is about 2,78% (1 student). In conclusion, the students' capability in understanding descriptive text is good because most of the students have good level (50,00%) there are 18 students who get good level from 36 students.

- b. The most problems faced by the students in understanding descriptive text are in understanding main idea, understanding detail information of the text, and understanding vocabulary. Then the writer also find 86,11% (excellent) students who correct in answering the purpose of the text question items, so 13,89% students have difficulties. There are 57,63% (fair) students who correct in answering main idea question items, so 42,37% do not understand it. There are 53,70% (fair) students who have understanding in looking for detail information of the text, so 46,30% students need more attention about it. There are 52,59% (fair) students who have understanding in vocabulary, so 47,41% students have difficulties.
- c. The causes of the problems faced by the students in understanding descriptive text come from the teacher is less in giving variation in teaching reading passage. Then the other causes is the students' vocabulary and grammar are still limited because several students have not habit to develop their reading skill individually and there is no supported facilities to develop the teaching learning process.

## **E. Conclusion and Suggestion**

### **1. Conclusion**

The writer finds that the students' capability in understanding descriptive text can be divided into four level categories of mastery, They are (a) poor level is about 19,44% (7 students), (b) fair level is about 27,78% (10 students) (c) good level is about 50,00% (18 students), and (d) excellent level is about 2,78% (1 student). In conclusion, the students' capability in understanding descriptive text is good because most of the

students have good level (50,00%) there are 18 students who get good level from 36 students.

## 2. Suggestion

After knowing the students' capability in understanding descriptive text, the writer wants to propose some suggestion. First, the teacher can choose the appropriate strategies for improving the students' capability, so that the students who have poor or fair level can improve their ability into good or excellent level. The teacher can focus on the indicators of comprehension which are difficult to be understood by the students. The variation of strategies and additional exercises can be added to solve the problems because reading material needs to be taught in interesting and fun ways in order to make the students like to learn and have habit to read regularly. The students or readers should increase their reading skill by reading habit and doing many exercises in order to increase their vocabulary, sentence structure, and the content meaning of reading passage to solve the problem. To the school, The school should promote their facilities for example library, multimedia room and internet.

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