The Difficulty Level For The Reading Texts Of SMA Pelita Rantepao

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ABSTRACT

In grading and selecting the teaching materials for reading, there is a tendency that teachers just refer to the levels as elementary, intermediate, and advance. They tend not to pay attention to the proficiency of the learners. Consequently, the achievement of the learners in reading course is low or high, because the materials are too easy or difficult for them. That is why a teacher must be able to select suitable materials in accordance with his learners' interest, fluency and comprehension. Based on the background above, the problems of this study can be formulated as follows: What is the difficulty level of the reading texts for the second year students of SMA Pelita Rantepao ? The research objective is to find out the difficult levels of the reading texts for the second year students of SMA Pelita Rantepao. The finding of this research will provide useful information, which is expected to be beneficial or give contribution to the users as well as the government and syllabus designer to teach reading texts. Research method used to this research is descriptive. The indicators that have been used to measure the difficulty level of reading text for the second year students of SMA Pelita Rantepao are as follows: If the mean score obtained by the students less than 44 per cent, the text is described as being at the Frustrational reading level, between 44 to 53 percent, the text is described as being at the Instructional reading level, and over 53 per cent, the text is described as being at the Independence reading level. The population of the research is the second year student of SMA Pelita Rantepao academic year 2009/2010. They consist of 97 students. therefore the writer took 30 students randomly as sample. To analyze the data, the writer used mean percentage technique. The result of 30 students is 42.11% and falls into Frustrational Level. The difficulty level of the reading text for the second year students of SMA Pelita Rantepao falls into frustrational reading level. It means that the reading text is very difficult for the students.

Key Words : Difficulty level of reading, reading, text.

INTRODUCTION

In globalization era, within the increase of international mobility and the advance of science and technology many Indonesian learn English to their understanding about documents, literatures, written information, written science and technology, cultures, etc. The more language we know the better we can be, particularly in the globalization era today.

Based on the evidence above, it is hoped that the teaching of English in Indonesia will give some language skills to the learners.

Language has a very important role in expressing ideas, thought, experiences, feelings, and desires. It is a means of understanding ourselves, and our society, and of resolving some of the problems and tensions that arise from human interaction.

One who wants to read must have the knowledge such as phonemes, vocabulary, and grammar of the language. He can handle the reading text whenever he has the linguistic knowledge that enables him to manage the text. In turn, he will find that text difficult, if his linguistic knowledge does not enable him to manage it.

In order to use language skills competent users of a language need a number of sub-skills for processing the language that they use and are faced with. If we look at the receptive skill we can see there are many sub-skills, which we can call upon.

In grading and selecting the teaching materials for reading, there is a tendency that

teachers just refer to the levels as elementary, intermediate, and advance. They tend not to pay attention to the proficiency of the learners. Consequently, the achievement of the learners in reading course is low or high, because the materials are too easy or difficult for them. That is why a teacher must be able to select suitable materials in accordance with his learners' interest, fluency and comprehension.

People complain about the result of the teaching of English. Most of the students of high schools and university encounter the problems in comprehending the English texts. Some attempts have been done to improve this skill such as by providing reading techniques. In this case, it is important also to see the match between the reading materials and
the proficiency of the learners in the hope that
we can reach the goal of reading course.

Based above, the writer conducts this research entitled "THE DIFFICULTY LEVEL FORTHE READING TEXTS OF SMA PELITA RANTEPAO"

Based on the background above, the problems of this study can be formulated as follows: What is the difficulty level of the reading texts for the second year students of SMA Pelita Rantepao ?

The research objective is to find out: To investigate the difficult levels of the reading texts for the second year students of SMA Pelita Rantepao. .

The finding of this research will provide useful information, which is expected to be beneficial or give contribution to the users, the government and syllabus designer as well.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Cloze Test originally intended to measure the reading difficulty level of the text. Miller states that " *cloze test* is one of the ways to measure difficulty levels of reading texts.."[1] A cloze test can be used to determine whether a particular book is at students' *independent reading level*, *instructional reading level* or *frustration reading level*. And another one opinion is from Heaton states "Cloze test was to measure the reading difficulty level of a text."[2]

It is important to note that *the independent reading levels* is the lower level at which a student can read easily with no help from others. It is the level at which the student can read with full understanding and freedom from mechanical difficulties, the level at which he can function on his own, while *the instructional reading level*. At this level, the student can read with a degree of fluency but with enough difficulty to make the instruction essential. This is the level of material that should be used by the student in the classroom when he is working under the guidance of the teacher. While the frustration reading level is the level at which the materials confuse a student. The vocabulary, the sentence structure and the ideas are too difficult for him.

The third level is *frustration levels* which categorized into the advanced class presents the ability of students' comprehension to the reading texts. The students will be able to summarize, give command, retell, and identify of the content of texts or reading materials. In this section, the reading texts are likely the technology text, religious text, and scientific text. In this case, the students comprehend text information directly and they improve the reading abilities of older students.

The concept of Cloze test might be confused with simple blank-filling tests. Originally, completion tests the words for deletion are selected subjectively. In cloze test the words are deleted systematically. It means it is simpler to insert blanks of uniform length. For example. Heaton notes that "The interval at which words deleted is usually between every fifth and every tenth word"[3].

Nowadays, reading becomes a necessity in order to acquire as much information as possible to keep up with our surroundings. People who do like reading find it easier to talk about many things, through mass media, electric or printed media, such as, television, radio or newspaper.

Reading makes people know and understand the written symbols as meaningful information. According to Smith defines "reading as an act of communication in which information is transferred from a transmitter to a receiver.

Furthermore, Bond states that, "reading is the recognition of patterns of written symbols serves as stimulus to recall meaning that are build up through readers past experience. It means that reading is an active process that builds up communication between the writer and the

reader. The readers are expected to not only read the text but also associate and interpret in order to reconstruct what the writer wishes.

In addition, Smith, F states that "Reading is the process of recognition, interpretation and perception of written or printed material.." [6] It means that the reader tries to comprehend the reading passage in order to get information. Further, Smith noticed that "Reading is the communication process from the writer to the reader." It is involves the recognition of letters, worlds, phrases, clauses, and in some respects. It means that there is indirect communication between the writer and the reader through the texts. Finally, Harmer, Jeremy stated that "Reading is an exercises dominated by the eyes and the brain, the eyes receive messages and the brain has to work out the significance of these messages." The writer then, summarizes that reading is a bridge to knowledge.

According to Gebhard "Reading comprehension is the students to understand a total meaning of a reading selection." [9] It means that to comprehend and understand whatever has been read from a text. Students should apply their understanding about the use of vocabulary, sentence structure, the meaning of words, and correlation among the words or sentence in reading text.

So, the writer can conclude that in order to understand the written material, it must be comprehended by mastering those levels of comprehension above.

In addition, Swan says that "reading comprehension is an ability to show understanding by expressing the content of the text." [10], for instance, in answering the questions based on the text given correctly, means that the readers comprehend the text well.

Swan, then also gives suggestion some steps to comprehend the passage as follows:

a. Read a comprehension passage at lest twice, once to get an overall impression of what it is about, and then a second time to concentrate on the details. Read much more slowly than you would read a novel or a newspaper, or article.
b. Read slowly and carefully paragraph. Do not move to the other paragraph until the paragraph being read is entirely understood.
c. Find out the main point or important ideas in each paragraph and distinguish them from subordinate ideas.
d. Answer the comprehension that follows each paragraph.
e. Give chance to the students to read their finding before the class

Based on the statement above, reading comprehension deals with how well the reader understands the meaning of the written material. Readers have understood and comprehended the text if they have found main ideas, writer messages, and are able to retell it both written and orally.

The notion of text as a printed material is familiar in the study of literature. A text may be differently presented in different edition, with different type-face, on different size of paper, in one or two columns, and we still assume, from one edition to the next, that the different presentations all represent the same text. It is important to consider just what it is that is the same . Minimally, the words should be the same words, presented in the same order.

In the notion of text reaches beyond the reproduction of printed material in the some further printed form. A letter, handwritten in the purple ink with many curlicues, may have its text reproduced in the printed form. Similarly, neutral printed versions may be produced of handwritten shopping lists, slogans spray-painted on to boarding, and public notices embossed on metal plates. In each case the text will be held to have been reproduced if the words, the punctuation and, where relevant, the lineation are reproduced accurately.

Halliday and Hassan states several definitions of a text, as follows: "(1) the word *text* is used in linguistics to refer to any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that formed a unified whole, (2) a text may be spoken or written, prose or verse, dialogue or monologue. It may be anything from a single proverb to a whole play, from a momentary cry for help to an all-day discussion on a committee, (3) a text is a unit of language in use. It is sometimes envisaged to be some kind of super-sentence, a grammatical unit that is larger than a sentence but is related to a sentence in the same way that a sentence is related to a clause, a clause to a group by the constituency, the composition of larger units out of smaller ones,

and (4) a text is regarded as a *semantic* unit, that is a unit of meaning. Thus it is related to a clause or sentence by the *realization*, the coding of one symbolic system in another."

It is assumed that the intensive reading skill are being tested, the length of the reading might be vary. Heaton recommends that "a reading text is *50 to 100 words* for *the elementary level*, *200 to 300 words* is for *intermediate level*, and *400 to 600 words* should be *advanced level*."

RESEARCH METHOD AND PROCEDURES

The variable of this research is dependent variable , namely *the reading texts for the s*econd year *students of SMA* and independent variable is *difficulty level*. Research method used to this research is descriptive.

The indicators that have been used to measure the difficulty level of reading text for the second year students of SMA Pelita Rantepao are as follows**:** If the mean score obtained by the students less than 44 per cent, the text is described as being at the Frustrational reading level, between 44 to 53 percent, the text is described as being at the Instructional reading level, and over 53 per cent, the text is described as being at the Independence reading level

The population of the research is the second year student of SMA PelitaRantepao academic year 2009/2010. They consist of 97 students. Since the population of this research is large enough, therefore the writer took 30 students randomly as sample. The instrument for conducting field research :
"Cloze test." This type of test is an appropriate way to measure the difficulty levels of reading text that isa text of 456 words that every eleventh uniform words deleted stand for every item. So the items totally are 41.

To analyze the data, the writer used mean percentage technique. The use of percentage technique was to know the mean score of difficulty levels of reading texts for the the difficulty level of reading text for the second year students of SMAPelita Rantepao

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The result of 30 students is 42.11% and falls into Frustrational Level. It means that he reading text for the second year students of SMA Pelita Rantepao is very difficult.to the second year students of SMA Pelita Rantepao.

The level of difficulty for reading text at the second year students of SMA Pelita Rantepao can be explained that, where is found that out of 30 students, 21 students or(70%) fall intofrustrational level, 5 students (16.667%) falls into instructional level, and 4 (13.33) students falls into independence level

Based on the research findings of the reading text that was taken from English book entitled "Look Ahead" An English Course for Senior High School Students Year XI printed by Erlangga then the writer presents the following

The result of analysis through cloze test proven that the mean score is 42.11% , falls into frustrational level. It means that the reading text is very difficult for the second year students of SMA Pelita Rantepao.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The difficulty level of the reading text for the second year students of SMA Pelita Rantepao falls into frustrational reading level. It means that the reading text is very difficult for the students.

Here several crucial tips are: English teacher should apply variation of teaching techniques for teaching reading , he/she has to select English Course that is suitable for his/her students level, and to make his/her students' knowledge of language area differs from language skills.

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