

READING PROBLEMS IN VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Fitri May Danthi Saragih¹, Natalia Veronika Situmeang², Siti Tasya Jelita Manurung³, Novita Sari Dewi Sinaga⁴, Selviana Napitupulu⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5}Department of English Education, University of HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar

ABSTRACT

This study aims to find the difficulties when reading English which are mostly faced by students vocational students. This study used qualitative research methods. The research instrument is observations and interviews. Based on the results of observations and interviews, it was found that students find reading difficulties such as (1) not liking English lessons, (2) mental problems, (3) boring teacher teaching techniques (4) mistakes in word pronunciation. Reading skills are very important for us because by reading we will get the information we need easily. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct this research to solve these problems with reading difficulties experienced by students, so there are improvements for the future and students' reading skills will improve.

Keywords: *Reading, Difficulties, Vocational Students*

INTRODUCTION

In learning English, there are four language skills that must be mastered by all students, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These four parts are related to each other. By continuing to practice, these skills will increase along with the learning process. However, not everyone is able to control the four skills at the same time. Some people tend to be more efficient in mastering certain skills. In the case of this research, reading is a skill that is considered difficult to master by vocational students.

Reading is one of four language skills. Reading is a basic component of someone so you can have an understanding more knowledge, because with reading, someone will be increasingly Rich in knowledge. Reading is an activity carried out by someone to get information or knowledge that was previously not known by the reader. Many ways can be done by humans to get it read to enrich his knowledge. Reading books is a way of students to enrich vocabulary, and the most important thing is creating a comfortable reading atmosphere so that reading activities can run effective (Scott and Ytreberg: 2003). In line with the theory above the lines (2005: 69) defining reading as "a set of skills that involves making sense and deriving meaning from the Printed Word. In order to read, we must be able to decode (Sound Out) the printed word and also comprehend what we read.

As we know the purpose of learning English is to be able to communicate by using English, therefore reading skills must be learned and practiced in everyday life. If students don't have a lot opportunities to read in English classes, they will lose motivation and lose interest in learning English especially read.

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

Concept of Language

Generally language is a tool to express people's thinking. People use language as a tool interact with humans, tools to think, and channel the meaning of trust in the community. Besides being a means of communication or interacting, language also has an important meaning as a learning method in the scope of the language itself.

Language is the most important thing in communication and used as a tool of communication among countries around the world. Language is one of the communication tools with each who is always used by humans every day without language there will be no communication between human life.

Abidin (2010) said that language as a means of communication contains deep enough understanding because the process communication can occur when the recipient the message is able to understand what is meant by the sender of the message. With the above definition, the researcher has the view that language indeed need to be studied as a tool communication and interaction between one individual with other individuals. This is due to the role of language as a means to convey information or communication either directly or indirect. Directly for example face to face and indirectly, for example by letter

Concept of Communication

The general view of communication is that it is an interaction within a social context. Communication usually involves a sender (source) and a receiver. It involves the interlocutors exchanging signals. These signals could be verbal or graphic, it could be gestural or visual (photographic). In essence, communication involves using codes that are done with the eyes, body movement or sounds made with the voice. Whichever way it is done, there is always a process in which someone initiates a meaning intent that is passed to the interlocutor (receiver). Daniel (2016) asserts that it is when feedback, which involves the receiver responding to the signal by initiating another circle of meaning exchange, has been sent to the sender (source) that the communication process has gone full circle and become complete.

Giffin & Patten (1976) also state that communication is the process of creating meaning as well as ascribing it. It is the exchange of ideas and interaction among group members. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (2004) defines communication as the activity or process of expressing ideas and feelings or of giving people information. One can safely say that communication is the act of transferring information and messages from one place to another and from one person to another. In a related manner, the Online Business Dictionary describes communication as a two way process. It involves participants reaching a mutual understanding beyond merely encoding and decoding information, news, ideas and feelings. It is important that they also create and share the meaning content in the messages passed (see Daniel, 2013). In addition to this, communication is also seen as a means of connecting people or places. It is also regarded as an important key function of management because an organization cannot operate without communication between levels, departments and employees (*Online Business Dictionary*, 2010; Okenimpkpe, 2010).

Concept of Reading

Reading is charged with the ability to understand the meaning or find information from the text. In line with the theory according to Johnson (2008:3), reading is practice of using text to create meaning. Based on the definitions, the researcher concludes that reading must develop, so the reader can understand the meaning of passage and also catch the meaning of the text.

According to Linse (2005:71) on the principle of the purpose of reading is as follows:

a. Read for information

That is reading done for get information that useful for adding insight and leveling science.

b. Reading for pleasure

Reading done for Looking for pleasure as high.

Based on the description above, the activities reading has many benefits especially for students in finding and understand the process learning and outside the process learning. Therefore, teacher hope it can help students in developing reading skills using methods, techniques, as well as appropriate reading strategies and according to the required purpose. From the definition above, it can be concluded that reading skills are the ability to understand meaning or information, to increase knowledge, inspire and entertain.

Defenition of Reading

Reading is something of many use for granted. It means that by reading we can understand everything. Another defenition stated that reading would best be developed in association with writing, listening, and speaking activity. It means that redaing should be better if it is combined with other English skills. Reading process should be related to writing, listening and speaking activities.

According to Patel, reading is an active process which consists of recognition and comprehension skill. It means that reading is process which is done by the reader to comprehend and get the information from printed text. By reading the students also can understand what the writers mean.

Based on the theory, the researcher concludes that reading is the readers activity in order to get information and comprehend from printed text using eyes and brain to understand what the writer thinks in his or her writing. It can be understood that reading is very important skill for students. It needs thought in the ability in making sense of the text that is being read. Reader's background knowledge of the world will influence their achievement in reading comprehension.

The Goals of Reading

Reading is an ability which is extremely important for students for enhance their insight in particularly in English language. The writer appraises that one of the way for increasing students reading ability is by knowing the purposes of the reading. There are many aims of reading which put forward by many experts. Rivers and Temperely (1978) in Nunan (1999) address seven main purposes of reading: 1) to obtain information for some purpose or because we are serious about some topic: 2) to obtain instructions on how to perform some tasks for our work or daily life (e.g.

knowledge how an appliance works); 3) To act in a play, play a game, do a puzzle; 4) To keep in touch with friends by correspondence or to understand business letters; 5) To know when or where something will take place or what is available; 6) To know what is happening or has happened (as reported in newspaper, magazines, report); and 7) To have enjoyment or excitement.

Kinds of Reading

There are four kinds of reading. They are;

a. Extensive reading

Extensive reading is one of the methods of reading that people use for relaxation and pleasure. Adopt this method when the purpose is to enjoy the reading experience. It places no burden upon the reader and due to its indulgent nature, it is seldom used if the text isn't enjoyable. This is one of the methods of reading that occurs naturally. It's how you've read as a child and while growing up. This method of reading helps you understand words in context and enriches your vocabulary.

b. Intensive reading.

Among the different types of reading skills, intensive reading is used when you want to read carefully by paying complete attention to understand every word of the text. It is where you would examine and decipher each unfamiliar word or expression. As the term states, intensive means in-depth. This reading method is especially used when reading academic texts, where the goal is to prepare for an exam or to publish a report. This method helps retain information for much longer periods.

c. Scanning

Imagine if you wanted to look up a word in a dictionary. Look up phone numbers in the phone directory book. Search flight schedules. This is a type of reading where you read to find certain information. Your eyes quickly scroll through the sentences until you find them. You can use this method when you don't have to go deep into the text and read every word carefully. Scanning involves speed reading and is often used by researchers and for writing reviews.

d. Skimming

Through this method, you try to understand the text in short. Though one saves a lot of time through this method, one will gain only a shallow understanding of the text. Skimming is a great way to get a broad idea of the topic being discussed. This method is generally used to judge whether the information is useful or not. A good example of this is picking up a magazine and flipping through the pages. You take in only the headings or the pictures to get a broad idea of what the magazine covers.

The Principles for Teaching Reading

Richard and Schmidt (2002) point out that principles in teaching are beliefs and theories that teachers hold concerning effective approaches to teaching and learning and which serve as the basis for some of their decision-making. Harmer (2001) classifies that there are six principles behind teaching reading as follows:

a. Reading is not a passive skill

Reading is an incredibly active occupation. To do it successfully, one has to understand what the words mean, see the picture the words are painting, understand the arguments, and work out if

one agrees with them. If one does not carry out these things – and if students do not perform these things – then one only just scratch the surface of the text and one quickly forgets it.

b. Students need to be engaged with what they are reading.

As with everything else in lessons, students who are not engaged with the reading text, not actively interested in what they are doing, are less likely to benefit from it. When they are really fired up by the topic or the task they get much more from what is in front of them.

c. Student should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text, not just to the language

It is important to study reading texts for the way they use language, the number of paragraphs they contain and how many times they use relative clauses. But the meaning, the message of the text, is just as important and teachers must give students a chance to respond to that message in some way. It is especially important that they should be allowed to express their feelings about the topic, thus provoking personal engagement with it and the language.

d. Prediction is a major factor in reading

When one reads texts in his/her own language, one frequently has a good idea of the content before he/she actually reads. Book covers give him/her a hint of what is in the book; photographs and headlines hint at what articles are about and reports look like reports before one reads a single word.

e. Match the task to the topic

Teachers could give students Hamlet's famous soliloquy 'to be or not to be' and ask them to say how many times the infinitive is used. Teachers could give them a restaurant menu and ask them to list the ingredients alphabetically. There might be reasons for both tasks, but, on the face of it, they look a bit silly. Teachers will probably be more interested in what Hamlet means and what the menu foods actually are (Harmer 2001).

Once a decision has been taken about what reading text the students are going to read, teachers need to choose going reading tasks- the right kind of questions, engaging and useful puzzles etc. The most interesting text can be undermined by asking boring and inappropriate questions; the most commonplace passage can be made really exciting with imaginative and challenging tasks.

f. Good teachers exploit reading texts to the full

Any reading text is full of sentences, words, ideas, descriptions etc. It does not make sense just to get students to read it and then drop it to move on to something else. Good teachers integrate the reading text into interesting class sequences, utilizing the topic for discussion and further tasks, using the language for study and later activation.

Definition of Problem

According to the Oxford Dictionary, a problem is something that is difficult to deal with or understand. Problems are generally considered to be tasks, situations, or people that are difficult to handle or control because of their complexity and lack of transparency. In each case, the problem is considered a difficult problem to solve or solve, a questionable case, or a complex task involving doubt and uncertainty. In the context of cognitive psychology, a problem is any situation in which

we are trying to achieve a goal and we must find a way to achieve that goal. Think about problems you may have encountered in the past.

So it can be concluded that the problem is something that must be solved or resolved so that something to be achieved can be realized. In everyday language, a problem is a question proposed solution, a matter stated for examination or proof. In each case, a problem considered to be a matter which is difficult to solve or settle, a doubtful case, or a complex task involving doubt and uncertainty.

Reading Problems

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it can be concluded that most of them face difficulties because;

1. Lack of knowledge and skills

They do not understand the meaning of the question or they do not understand the types of questions asked of them. In this case the student does not have the knowledge or skills to recognize various types of reading comprehension questions.

2. Poor vocabulary

The students too face difficulties in English because of their poor vocabulary or because their vocabulary is inadequate.

3. Weak in grammar

Apart from poor vocabulary, their grammar is also inadequate. Our we know, to understand the reading text students need understand the meaning of words and they should also have a good one grammatical understanding. As a result of having poor vocabulary and poor grammar, students have difficulty in understanding the text, in In this case, students need to acquire adequate vocabulary and know how to to use them accurately in context to address their difficulties.

4. Complex text

Students also face difficulties when the text used is long and/or sentences in the text are long and complex with a variety of different modified phrases. The students face this trouble because they don't know the meaning of many words in text and text or sentences used are long. It is believed that if students have adequate vocabulary and good grammar understanding, the length of the text used in the test will not problem and they will be able to understand the text easily.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach using interview techniques. Hancock, Dawson R. and Algozzine (2009:20) state that the main method of collecting qualitative research data is interviews; focus groups; observation; a collection of documented materials such as letters, diaries, photographs; narrative collections; open-ended questions in the questionnaire. Based on this statement, the method that the author chooses is a collection of documented materials.

In this study, researchers obtained data by choose the students of class X SMK Kesehatan Tridarma Pematangsiantar. In this case the researcher only chose 5 students to be interviewed based on their learning achievement. This is done because students are still underachieving, and researchers want to know their perceptions.

In this study, researchers used several instruments to obtain valid data from students. The instrument used by the researcher includes (1) Observation, where the author observes student reading activities (2) Interview, according to Sugiyono, interview is a data collection technique that is carried out in a structured or unstructured and can be done face-to-face or in person or by telephone network. In this case, the researcher uses interviews to find out how students perceive themselves vocabulary mastery and speaking skills.

DISCUSSION

Findings

English as a second or foreign language is the use of English by speakers of different mother tongues. English has also been designated as an international language. So that almost every country in the world uses English when communicating. So that English affects various aspects of life. The problems are faced by the students might be different in one school to another school. Based on the observation and several interviews from English teachers, most of the students in SMK Kesehatan Tridarma Pematangsiantar, especially in class X they still have difficulties in reading such as:

1. Do not like english

The most common factor causing reading problems is that some students do not like English. We certainly know that not all students like English lessons, and most of them find it funny when they say words in English. This can be caused by several factors, for example when they are asked to read English texts, they are shy and afraid when they make mistakes in pronouncing words in English so when asked to read English texts they often say "I don't know English miss" or "I'm not good at English"

2. Low motivation in reading

Reading motivation of course plays an important role in improving students' reading skills, if there is no motivation or encouragement or awareness from students, of course this will cause students to have difficulty in reading.

3. Lacked of knowledge

They still lacked of knowledge about the meaning of words and the order of information presented in paragraphs. In understanding the information in the reading text, of course, vocabulary is very influential. Therefore, if students do not have a broad vocabulary, then these students will also have difficulty reading.

4. They cannot understand some grammatical clues (subjects, verbs, objects, conjunctions, etc.)

Hardly understood the main ideas and factual information explicitly. This is an important thing that students need to know, but in general students do not know the difference between subjects,

verbs, or other general grammar that is often found in reading texts. So this causes students to understand the context rather than the reading they are reading.

The Solution of the Problems

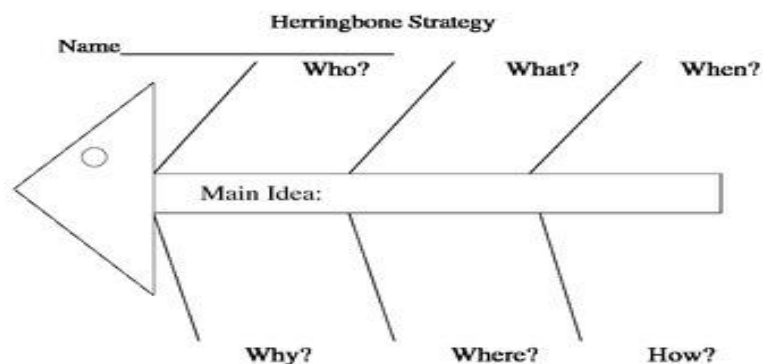
From the problems above, we can solve the problem by a technique which called Herringbone Technique. Herringbone technique is a technique by which the students answer the WH questions; who, what, when, why, where, and how, on a graphical feature like a fish skeleton. Deegan (2006) states that Herringbone technique is a strategy that develops comprehension of the main idea by plotting who, what, when, where, why, and how question on a visual diagram of a fish skeleton.

In addition, According to Thaler (2008), *Herringbone Technique* consists of a short graphic organizer and it is a concrete way of helping English learners find the comprehensive idea in a paragraph or passage. The students answer the questions listed in the fishbone graphic organizer. This leads to the synthesis of all the information in one newly created sentence, which becomes the main idea statement. Choe (2004) adds that *Herringbone technique* is developed by it is named because resemble a fish skeleton that useful for analyzing a single idea.

It contains six questions that help students to organize the details of the text. Deegan (2006) mentions the procedure of the technique are The students work in pairs, the teacher selects narrative texts, the teacher constructs a visual diagram of the Herringbone, the teacher tells the students to record the answers to the questions on the diagram. They will look for answers to:

- 1) Who is the writer talking about?
- 2) What did they do?
- 3) When did they do it?
- 4) Where did they do it?
- 5) How did they do it?
- 6) Why did they do it?

The students read the text to find the answers and record the answers on the diagram, the teacher shows the students how each answer fits into a slot in a main idea sentence, the students write a main idea, using the information from the Herringbone diagram.



For example of implementation of herringbone technique

SNOW WHITE

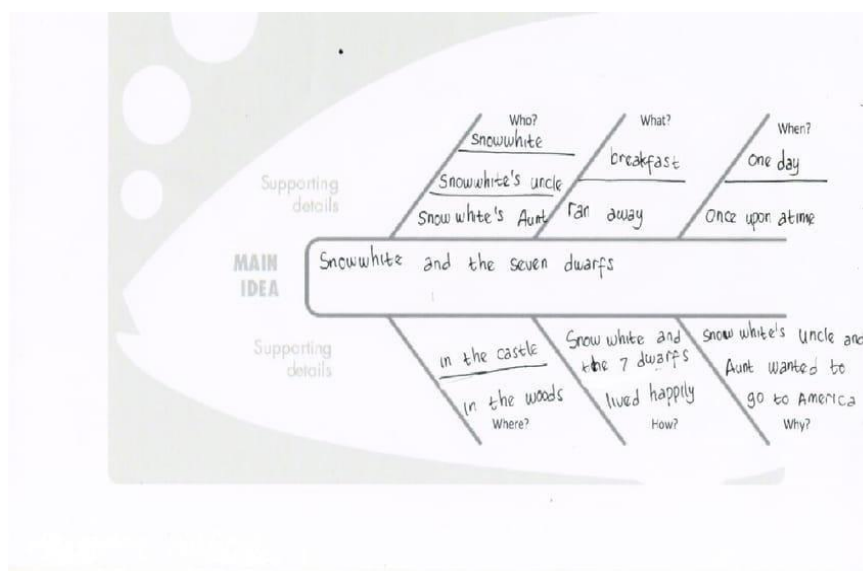
Once upon a time there lived a little girl named Snow White. She lived with her Aunt and Uncle because her parents were dead. One day she heard her Uncle and Aunt talking about leaving Snow White in the castle because they both wanted to go to America and they didn't have enough money to take Snow White.

Snow White did not want her Uncle and Aunt to do this so she decided it would be best if she ran away. The next morning she ran away from home when her Aunt and Uncle were having breakfast. She ran away into the woods.

Then she saw this little cottage. She knocked but no one answered so she went inside and fell asleep.

Meanwhile, the seven dwarfs were coming home from work. They went inside. There they found Snow White sleeping. Then Snow White woke up. She saw the dwarfs. The dwarfs said, "what is your name?" Snow White said, "My name is Snow White."

Doc, one of the dwarfs, said, "If you wish, you may live here with us." Snow White said, "Oh could I? Thank you." Then Snow White told the dwarfs the whole story, and Snow White and the 7 dwarfs lived happily ever after.



CONCLUSION

From the description above, it can be concluded that reading the problem experienced by students of SMK Kesehatan Tridarma Pematangsiantar. Therefore, good techniques are needed to increase the interest in reading students. So students have the willingness to read and have awareness of the importance of reading. Diligently reading English text, students will add a lot of vocabulary and knowledge will be wider. After implementing the research, there were some

advantages of using herringbone technique in the teaching reading comprehension especially narrative text; 1) Herringbone technique helps the students to think quickly, accurately, and creatively, 2) Herringbone technique is fun to be applied teaching reading comprehension, 3) Students are motivated to learn and do the task by using Herringbone Technique because of the competition therein, thus fostering the spirit to be the best, and 4) The time used is more useful.

The writers suggest the teacher can manage the class very well. Before the learning process, the teacher should be understood to use herringbone technique and also based on students' need. The teacher also suggested to use the interesting text during learning process so the students will be more helpful to find the information, for example the text can be related to their life.

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