

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH ONLINE LEARNING

RACHMANITA

Universitas Islam Ogan Komering Ilir (UNISKI) Kayuagung
ayuksulung2407@gmail.com

EVA SAPTARINA

Universitas Islam Ogan Komering Ilir (UNISKI) Kayuagung
eevaavanda14@gmail.com

TIARA AMELIA

Universitas Islam Ogan Komering Ilir (UNISKI) Kayuagung
tiaraamelia14@gmail.com

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Abstract

A primary objective of the study was to explore students' difficulties in reading comprehension through online learning using Google Classroom and Zoom meetings faced by eighth-grade students at SMP Persatuan Pedamaran OKI regency. This study used a descriptive qualitative method; the participants were all eighth-grade students at SMP Persatuan Pedamaran. The data was gathered using a reading comprehension test and questionnaires. The test indicated that 77.5 percent of students struggled with the text's main idea. Then, 72.78 percent of students had a problem with the text's generic structure, and 75.83 percent had difficulty with references. Next, 73.75 percent of students had problems with the moral value of the text. Following that, 72.25 percent of students had difficulties understanding the text's details. Finally, 73.25 percent of students needed help finding the meaning of vocabulary in the text. Further, based on the questionnaires, it was found that the problems in learning reading comprehension online focused on several factors: students' background, social situation, school scene, and teacher's teaching strategy. In conclusion, many students in SMP Persatuan Pedamaran found it hard to read the texts comprehensively, especially in online learning.

Keywords: students' difficulties, reading comprehension, online learning

INTRODUCTION

Due to the current conditions wherein, pandemics occur throughout the world, including in our country of Indonesia, almost all aspect of life is disrupted and paralyzed, including education. All educational establishments, both formal and non-formal, are inaccessible; all teaching and learning activities are delayed or suspended; and all students are obligated to stay at home during the pandemic, for each government directive based on WHO confirmation. Current technological advancements have made it possible to assist in all aspects of life, including education.

Technology has allowed teaching and learning activities to be carried out not only face-to-face, but also at any time and from any location. The solution to today's problems is online learning media, which is one of the electronic learning media. In this situation, online learning media can be an option that facilitates teaching and learning activities. Online learning is required for the teacher or learners to keep the courses running as long as they are comfortable and enjoy the video conference sessions or sharing the file and assignment.

Online learning is a learning process that is facilitated and supported by utilizing information and communication technology (Retnoningsih, 2017). While Mohammadi et al., (2011) defined online learning as the international use of networked information and communications technology in teaching and learning. Online learning can also be defined as the use of electronic systems such as the internet, computers, and multimedia CDs to reduce the number of expenses, goings and comings. Furthermore according to Saifuddin, (2018) online learning is distance learning in which students are detached from their learning resources but can communicate and interact with one another via the internet. Using the method, both students and teachers can send and access subject matter from a variety of sources, increasing interactivity and learning efficiency.

Nonetheless, students had many further consequences to the change from meeting to online learning. Diminutive learning occasions, expanding assignments, vacant quotas, and hostile signal conditions are among them. Online learning obliged the work of flexible appliances such as smartphones, tablets, and laptop computers, which can be used to retrieve information anywhere and at any time. Students and teachers must have one of these mobile devices to support online learning.

Online learning increased widespread in digital world and can be used as an alternative to classroom learning in many situations. Further to that, online learning platforms, according to Mohammadi et al., (2011), were the way to arrange lessons, which boosted prime subject organization. Student's interaction in online learning platforms can reduce lecture workload and improve learning and teaching processes both inside and outside of the classroom. Google Classroom, Zoom, and whatsapp are commonly used in online learning.

Google Classroom was an applicable learning device since it allows students to expand their learning by actively contributing in online discussions and tasks. Beaumont, (2018, p. 2) defined that Google Classroom was a merged learning platform with interesting and simple features. It was simple to be applied for both teachers and students and allowed for easy cooperative work. Winarti et al., (2020, p. 174), on the other hand, asserted that

Google Classroom has two advantages. The first is simple to use. It means that both teachers and students can access Google Classroom from any computer, smartphone, or tablet. Teachers can also add course material, create assignments and announcements, send YouTube links to Google Classroom, and attach files from Google Drive. Additionally, Google Classroom enabled teachers and students to communicate without physically meeting. Teachers can use Google Classroom to create online lessons, invite students to join lessons, provide information, supply teaching resources that students can acquire in the form of acquaintance files and learning videos, allocate assignments to students, and construct project schedules.

Meanwhile, Zoom was a fascinating substitute application for web conferencing that enables you to interact with a significant number of individuals without adding actual interactions and facilitates today's digital learning needs. Since all lecture interpretations can be conveyed directly without the need to meet physically, the Zoom meeting application was remarkably useful for communicating remotely. Hazairin & Melati, (2020, p. 249) confirmed Zoom was a prospective medium of communication to assist English lecturers teach English. Students can apply the chat box with another student or with the entire class, additionally everyone's camera can see and hear them. Farther, Suadi, (2021, p. 54) said that zoom enables the users (lecture and learners) to accomplish action freely as they do in an noticeable conventional classroom. It also gave a chance for learners to contribute response openly to the lectures side to side. The lecture also can organize the online class via zoom as he/she want to synchronize with the course material he/she delivers.

Hazairin & Melati, (2020, p. 252) clarified zoom offered four advantages. First off, Zoom had the maximum capacity of any video conferencing platform. Second, it had steady connectivity and affords users slightly elevated video and audio on any device. And the last Zoom was simple for using. It was simple to use and did not necessitate the creation of an account. Besides, the usage interface is simple enough for the user, and it also offers many features such as screen sharing, breakout rooms, virtual backgrounds, recordings, meeting scheduling, and other productive features. In other words, zoom is a popular medium for long-distance communication that is appropriate for use during the current pandemic.

Both Google Classroom dan Zoom can be used in teaching reading. There were some steps in teaching reading using Google Classroom. First of all, a teacher came to the class and gave the short illustration of how to use Google Classroom application; then a teacher clarified the deadline and the overview of tasks and materials; next students went out from the class and did the activity wherever they wanted; Lecturer and students made interaction

through online for a week; the last a teacher checked the students' work and gave evaluation and feedback. The following week, teacher had an oral interview to students to know student's impression and problem when they had online learning through Google Classroom application.

Meanwhile Zoom lessons for reading may focus on immersive activities and try to keep the lesson as visual as possible. For example, teachers can utilize flashcards or other visual cues to help teach phonics or letter recognition. Moreover Teachers can admit specific students into a session from the waiting room. This allows teachers to work with a small group of students on guided reading assignments. Students who are waiting for their group may be directed to complete other assignments. Teachers can set up their schedule so that all students remain engaged as they wait for their reading time

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed qualitative methods with survey method. O'Brien et al., (2014) stated that qualitative research promotes to the literature in many disciplines by portraying, clarifying, and advancing theories about social interactions and individual understandings that arise in natural, rather than experimental settings. Further, according to Djamba & Neuman, (2002) descriptive research is the research in which the primary purpose is to paint a picture using words or numbers and to present a profile, a classification of types, or an outline of steps to answer questions such as who, when, where, and how. In general, qualitative research tends to be more open to using wide range of evidence and discovering new issues.

The research was conducted at SMP Persatuan Pedamaran. Jln Serhan Dahlan Menang Raya, Kec. Pedamaran, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency, South Sumatera. This research was carried out on eighth-grade students at SMP Persatuan Pedamaran. Based on the observation, many students faced numerous challenges in learning English. After Covid arrived, the school took a long holiday, and after Covid gradually decreased, the teachers only gave assignments via Google Classroom and sometimes via zoom meeting. The activity at school only three days a week. For that reason this school chose as the research site. Furthermore, the whole number of respondents was 75. In this study, data were gathered by running test and questionnaires.

To analyze data the researchers used three steps they were three concurrent flows to activity: Data reduction, data display, drawing and verifying conclusion

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on reading test the percentage of students who had difficulty in answering the questions related to the main idea was 77.50%. It meant that the majority of students struggled to understand narrative text and determine the main idea. It was found that students were too lazy to read the long passage, and their comprehension of the text's content was poor. Furthermore, Mauli et al., (2014) discovered six issues that students faced: low interest in reading, poor vocabulary knowledge, long sentences, poor reading strategy, grammatical confusion, and poor paragraph knowledge.

It was found that 75.83% of students struggled with the reference questions. Students had difficulty in answering questions about locating references. The lack of vocabulary and prior knowledge of grammatical features made most of students struggled to identify pronouns and word references. Arleen and Rischelle, (2020) declared that recognizing words and phrases that refer to the same idea is one of the difficulties in text comprehension. It's been called a reference word or a referential expression.

More than half of the students 73.75% were unable to answer the questions due to a lack of vocabulary, they struggled with the moral value questions. Hutapea, (2018) claimed that most students struggle with reading comprehension in narrative texts, particularly finding the moral value. They had problems with their vocabulary, and their ability to find moral value remained low because they were unsure how to determine moral value from the text.

The percentage of students struggled with the detail information questions was 72.25%. it meant that only a small percentage of the students were able to correctly answer the question since many students lacked in vocabulary and did not focus on reading the text. This was inline with Ansyari et al., (2020, p. 272) statement that it was difficult to search the detail information in the text due to words that they were rarely used in daily life. For that reason they had difficulty processing textual information.

It was discovered that the students had difficulty understanding the appropriate meaning of the words because many students lacked vocabulary knowledge due to the limitations of the words they had (73.25%). This was inline with (Laily, 2018) opinion that the most difficult aspect of reading comprehension for students was understanding vocabulary due to a lack of vocabulary knowledge. It was difficult for students to memorize new words and differentiate the meanings of each word because in English, one word can have multiple meanings. This issue was related to students' poor reading habits and lack of interest in reading.

Meanwhile, based on questionnaires, it was found that only few of students participated actively in learning via online and most of them did not fully engage. They

cannot fully engage in learning process via online for many reasons, such as:

1. Students' Background

According to the data, 25 respondents chose strongly agree (33,33%), that the source of the students' problem in learning reading comprehension was related to their background. The students were too apathetic to read a text since they were uninterested in learning a foreign language. Furthermore, during pandemic a teacher usually gave a text in pdf form then it made students got so bored. 21 (28%) respondents chose agree. 28 (37,35%) respondents chose neutral. And 1 (1,3%) respondent chose disagree. And no one chose strongly disagree.

2. Social Situation

Based on the questionnaire filled by the students. It showed that 17 (22,7%) respondents choose Strongly Agree. Many of them had experience problems in learning reading comprehension because of social Situation. Since their social situation did not give attention toward education made them hard to explore about English Subject. It meant that when they want to ask some questions related to English subject they had nowhere to ask. Nobody in their environment will care about their questions. 43 (57,3%) respondents choose agree. 13 (17,3%) respondents choose neutral. 1 (1,3%) respondent choose disagree. And also 1 (1,3%) respondent choose strongly disagree it can be percentage.

3. School Scene

From the result of the, it showed that 2 (2,7%) respondents choose strongly agree, 30 (40%) respondents choose agree, 25 (33,3%) respondents choose neutral, 6 (18,7%) respondents choose disagree, and 4 (5,3%) respondents choose strongly disagree, that source of students' problem in learning reading comprehension related to school scene. Many students not interested to read a textbook in library since it was not attractive. Monotony scene in the library which only consisted of bookshelf with some old textbooks made students reluctant to entering it.

4. Teacher's Teaching Strategy

From the result of the data, it confirmed that 4 (5,3%) respondents choose strongly agree, 24 (32%) respondents chose agree, the respondents chose neutral 21 (28%), also 18 respondents (24%) choose disagree, and 8 (10,7%) respondents chose strongly disagree, that the cause of students' problem in learning reading comprehension related to teacher's teaching strategy. Teachers usually used conventional teaching strategy called speech in learning process. They delivered speech all the time without doing interactive activities

during lesson made students bored and sometimes sleepy. In reading teachers usually only asked students to read the text silently then asked them to answer some multiple-choice questions. Obviously, this activity made them confused since the biggest obstacle in reading related to vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the data, it could be concluded that eighth-grade students at SMP Persatuan Pedamaran had difficulties in reading comprehension through online learning. It can be seen from the finding of reading comprehension test. Students found it hard to comprehend the text since they got it hard to determine the main idea, generic structure, finding reference, moral value, detail information, and vocabulary meaning from the text. Moreover, the main idea indicated the highest percentage of difficulty and the detail information was the lowest percentage of difficulty. Moreover, the result of data analysis of questionnaires found the origin of students' problem in comprehending English reading text via online were: students' background, students' social situation, school scenery, and teachers' teaching strategy.

Some suggestions might be offered related to problems above. Since there was nothing, we can do with students' background and students' social situation, some suggestions would be addressed to the school and teachers of English. It was hopefully the school could provide an attractive book which can pay the student's interest in reading especially English. It might be start with making reading corner in each class with some interesting book with pictures such as comics, fables, folklore, legends, even biography of notorious people in the world. English teachers can start to use some interactive learning media and teaching strategy in teaching English. Even though the activity was done via online the teachers should apply some interactive activities. Teachers can combine online learning with other interactive applications such as Canva. Students can make interesting slide using it and can present it via zoom meeting.

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