

Reading Comprehension Assessment Used by English Senior High Schools Teachers

Miftahurrahmi Darmansyah¹, Mukhaiyar², Yenni Rozimela³

English Education of Graduate Program at Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia

Abstract: *This article presents the techniques of assessment that are used by senior high schools English teachers in assessing students' reading comprehension. The study was conducted with 7 English teachers who were teaching English subject at two senior high schools in Tanah Datar regency in Indonesia. The data were collected through observation and interview. The results of the analysis show that the English teachers use six techniques of reading comprehension assessment, they are: 1) test, 2) observation, 3) self-, peer-, and group assessment, 4) task, 5) homework assignment, 6) quiz. There are two important conclusions that can be drawn from this study. First, test and task were the most popular techniques that are used by the English teachers. Second, the methods that the English teachers used the techniques of assessment were congruent with the theories of assessment proposed by experts.*

Keywords: assessment, English teachers, reading comprehension assessment

1. Introduction

English language skills have a very important role in our life. Since English is one of the international languages, so the government included English as one of the subjects that must be studied at the level of education, including at senior high school. Hopefully, English subject at schools can prepare their graduates to be ready to continue learning English at the next level of education.

In English subjects there are four language skills which must be mastered by students namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each skill cannot be carried out separately, because these skills have a close relationship between one another. One of the skills that students must learn is reading. Reading is one of the basic communication skills, and it is a very complex process. It is not only the process of eye movement on the printed materials, but also the process of understanding the text to obtain information. Reading is both process and product [1]. Based on this statement, reading can be interpreted as a process and product. In the reading process, it consists of sensory, perceptual, sequence, experience, thinking, learning, connectedness, attitudes and ideas or ideas. The product of reading is communication that comes from the thoughts and emotions of the writer that is felt by the reader when reading. It can be concluded that reading is a reading process that is carried out to understand the contents of the text that is read by interpreting the writer's thoughts and feelings, so that the text can be understood by the reader.

In teaching process there are some aspects which should be considered, namely purpose, media, strategy, assessment, teacher, and students. Among those aspects above, assessment is quite important to the learning process and could be considered as one of the crucial aspects of learning. It also could be considered as one of the most significant factors that influence students learning. Assessment is an activity carried out by the teacher in collecting data about the process and student learning outcomes by using assessment tools made by

the teacher. The data that has been obtained is used as the basis for the teacher in giving a decision.

Assessment should be done not only at the end of the learning process, but the assessment should also be happen in the learning process. Because in assessment of the learning process the teachers can find out the students' performance in a real situation that cannot be seen by the teachers when assessing the students in a test or written test. Assessment used to provide information continuously and universally.

Reading assessment that can be used in assessing students reading comprehension are multiple choice items, true false items (incorrect), matching items, short answer, and essay items (description) [2]. Whereas according to [3] is reading and do (requiring tasks), action responses (reading and responding to actions), reading and retelling, read and do (requiring a short written task answer), read and do (tasks that require short answers), read and do (task requiring a longer written answer), true or false question (reading and answering true or false questions), reading and picture matching (reading and matching images), reading and multiple choice items), reading and completing chart information transfers (reading and filling out information charts), and cloze and gap filling tasks (filling up text). In addition, reading assessment can be done by using, test, observation, self-, peer-, and group assessment, portfolios, homework assignment, task, and quiz.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 The Concept of Reading skill in English Language Teaching

Understanding the concepts of reading is very essential to achieve success in English language learning. This is also because most of teaching-learning materials is in the written form either in the form of books or computer based material.

Based on [4], teaching reading at senior high school has some purposes, they are; the comprehending of textual, ideational, and interpersonal meaning. Textual meaning means the students have to understand about the sentence structure of the text. Ideational meaning means the students have to find main idea, supporting ideas, details, and get information from the text. Interpersonal meaning means the student can respond the text.

2.2 The Concept of Reading Comprehension Assessment

Assessment focuses on what is important in reading [5]. It can model for developing readers the ways in which good readers monitor and fix up their own comprehension the teacher have to assess reading comprehension for many different purposes. There are four cognitive tasks that will be assessed while learn reading 1) forming a general understanding of text, 2) developing an interpretation of text, 3) making –reader- text connections, 4) examining and structure of text.

Assessing reading has purposes to measure students ability in comprehending, interpreting, and analyzing the reading text with the provide topic [6]. Basically, comprehending the reading text includes the details of ability consist of 1) understanding the meaning of words in the text, 2) understanding the arrangement of the paragraph in the text, 3) understanding the main idea, 4) able to answer the explicit questions in the text, 5) able to answer questions although in the different words, 6) able to determine inference of the text, 7) able to understand the meaning and the expression of literature, and 8) able to understand the intention of authors.

In assessing students' reading comprehension, there several techniques that can be used by the teachers both of test and non- test techniques. they are; 1) test, 2) observation, 3) portfolios, 4)self-, peer-, and group assessment, 5) homework assignment, 6) task, 7) quiz.

3. Related Research

The first research that is related to the present study is about the assessment of reading comprehension cognitive strategies: practices and perception of Western Australians Teachers [7]. On the basis of finding, a number of generalizations were made regarding to the practices used by teachers of 10 years old children in Western Australian schools and their confidence in the assessment of children's reading comprehension cognitive strategies (RCCS) such as summarizing, visualizing, questioning, making inferences and predicting. The result of this research is the majority of teachers reported that they are attempting to teach RCCS although fewer teach visualizing or making mental imagery and less than 40% claim to teach the metacognitive skills of self-monitoring for meaning.

Another study was done by [8] who studied about the development of a new reading comprehension assessment: identifying comprehension differences among readers. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the multiple-choice

online cloze comprehension assessment (MOCCA); it also designed to identify individual differences in reading comprehension. He found that the development of MOCCA supports the need for assessments that are developed based on cognitive theories of reading comprehension. The result from this study provide preliminary support for MOCCA as being a reliable and valid reading comprehension assessment that not only identifies the type of cognitive processes that readers using during reading but also distinguishes between types of comprehension processes that good, average, and subtypes a poor comprehended use during reading.

4. Methodology

This research is descriptive qualitative research. The data presented is more of an explanation in the form of words or in the form of images. It is appropriate to use descriptive and qualitative research since this research aimed at finding the procedures of constructing and conducting a reading comprehension assessment.

The setting of the research was in two senior high schools in Kec. RambatanKab. Tanah Datar, they were SMAN 1 Rambatan and SMAN 2 Rambatan. There were seven English teachers involved in this research. The participants were chosen by using purposive sampling technique.

After collecting the data, then the data is analyzed by the researcher. The data analysis of the researcher refers to Miles and Huberman analysis model, as in [9] suggests that the activities in qualitative data analysis are interactively and take place continuously until it is completed or the data is saturated. The activities in data analysis are data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion /verification. Data reduction is the process of retrieving basic data and separating less important data so that the data can facilitate researchers for further data collection. Data display is the process of exposure and presentation of data that has been obtained by researchers by using a brief description, so that an easy-to-understand picture of the data that has been collected is obtained. Whereas drawing conclusion is the last process by drawing conclusions from all data that has been reduced and presented in the previous stage, so that the data is easy to be understood.

5. Result and Discussion

Based on the observation and interview data, there are six techniques that were used by the English teachers in assessing students' reading comprehension, they are test, observation, self-, peer-, and group assessment, task, homework assignment, and quiz.

First, test is used by all of English teachers. They used test when assessing students' reading comprehension as in posttest, mid-term test, and semester test. In order to construct the assessment in daily test or posttest and middle term test usually the English teachers construct a plan. The

considerations in assessment plan are based on what techniques of assessment, the compatibility of the assessment toward the students' characteristics, and the materials that had been learned by the students.

In constructing posttest, the English teachers chose multiple choice, short answer, cloze and gap filling tasks. The English teacher chose those types of reading assessment since those types of assessment are suitable to the students' characteristics, easy to be answered by the students, and easy to be scored by the English teachers.

Whereas in the planning of the reading assessment conducted by the teacher at each meeting, the teacher uses the reading assessment that is available in the book become a learning resource book. In the source book there are several types of reading assessments used, including multiple choice, cloze gap and filling tasks, arrange the words, matching items, short written answer, and true or false.

In addition, the English teachers also used other techniques of assessment in assessing students reading comprehension. They are observation, self-, peer-, group assessment, homework assignment, task, and quiz. Second, observation is used by all of English teachers. The procedures of using observation in form of oral questions used by English teachers were; the teachers introduced the topic to the students. The teachers introduced vocabularies to the students. Then they asked the students read the text. They asked the students several questions about the text. The questions were about the topic, main idea, and supporting details of the text. The students who answered the teachers' questions were written on teachers' note book.

Third, self-, peer-, and group assessment is used by two English teacher. The procedures were the teachers introduced the topic to the students. The teachers introduced vocabularies to the students. Then they divided students into several groups. After that they asked the students read the text. While discussing the text the teachers asked students several questions related to the text. The questions were about the topic, main idea, and supporting details of the text. Then, the teachers explained to the students what they have to do in evaluating others' work, what they have to evaluate and helped students to identify and apply evaluation criteria.

Fourth, homework assignment was used by two English teachers. The procedures of the used of homework assignment were: first, in the last activity, the teacher asked the students to find another text that suitable with the topic that the students and teacher discussed at that meeting. Then, the students were asked to identify generic structure, detail and main idea of the text. The homework would be commented by the teacher at the next meeting. Students' mark will be written on teachers' notebook.

Fifth, task is used by all of English teachers. They used task after the students read a text, then the teachers asked the students to answer the questions about the text. The tasks that

they used were available on the students' worksheet, book, or the teachers created the task by them. the tasks were in form of multiple choice, short answer, deletion gap filling, true false.

Sixth, quiz was used by two English teachers. The procedures of the used of quiz by the teachers were: first, after discussing a text teacher A asked the students to answer five questions that were related to the topic that the students and teacher discussed at that meeting. Then, the students were asked to collect their answer. The teacher checked the students answer and the students' mark will be written on teachers' notebook.

There was one technique of assessment that was not used by the English teachers that was portfolios. Based on the interview data, the English teachers stated that they were not really sure about what portfolios is, how to use it, how they will score the students by portfolios, and whether the students are able to be assessed by using portfolios or not. In addition, the English teachers stated that they had limited time to construct other techniques of assessment. They felt that portfolios will spend much time since it is hold in every meeting.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that in planning assessment in English language skills, the English teachers have used the reading assessment technique. As for reading the assessments that are often used by teachers include multiple choice, cloze gap and filling tasks, arrange words, matching items, picture matching, short written answer, and true false.

The results of this study reveal interesting thing to be highlighted. Test and task are the assessment techniques that used by all of English teachers. There are might be several reasons why test and task becomes popular for the English teachers. First, test is easy to be used and objective. As stated by Norman in [10], test is an evaluation procedure which is comprehensive, systematic, and objective the result of the test can be used as the basic consideration to make a decision about the teaching learning process. In addition, Cronbach in [11] defines that test is a systematic procedure to observe and describe one or more characteristic of students by using numeric standard or categorical system. The teachers also said that test is one of assessment which is very appropriate to be used in assessing students' reading comprehension. Assessing students' reading comprehension by using written test as in daily test or objective test reputed to be effective in order to know whether the students have understand the materials or not.

In applying six techniques of reading comprehension assessment, the English teachers methods were followed the theories of reading comprehension assessment that proposed by some experts.

6. Conclusion

Based on the finding of this research, it can be concluded that the English teachers at senior high schools in Kec.

RambatanKab. Tanah Datar used various techniques of assessment in assessing students' reading comprehension at 1th grade until 3th grade of senior high school. There are six techniques of assessment that were used by English teachers that were explained by some experts in chapter 2 including test, observation, and self-, peer-, and group assessment, homework assignment, task and quiz. There is one technique of assessment that was not used by the English teachers in assessing students' reading comprehension that was portfolios.

In the application of the techniques of assessment, there were some of the teachers who adapted the techniques of assessment as described by some experts, while the others designed their own. Besides, in applying various techniques of assessment some teachers applied same techniques of assessment in same as other teachers' ways or in different ways from other teachers. For example, task that is used by the teacher was applied in same way, the teacher asked the students to read a text and then answer several questions related to the text.

7. Acknowledgment

I would like to offer earnest gratitude to all those people who made this study possible. Firstly, I would like to say Alhamdulillah all praise to Allah SWT, who has given me a chance to finish this study.

Secondly, I would like to convey millions appreciations to who give me an opportunity to study at Universitas Negeri Padang. Thirdly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisors Prof. Dr. Mukhaiyar, M.Pd and Prof. Dra. Yenni Rozimela, M.Ed., Ph.D., whose valuable guidance and expertise have guided me until the end of this study.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, my dear parents for being there behind my dream, my husband, my son, my sister, my brother, and my friends that gave me lots of support during this study.

References

- [1] Mckay, Penny. *Assessing Young Learners*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. 2006.
- [2] Airasian, Peter W. *Reading assessment Concept and Application*. Boston College. 2008.
- [3] Mckay, Penny. *Assessing Young Lesarners*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. 2006.
- [4] Depdiknas. *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP)*. Departemen Pendidikan Nasional. Jakarta. 2006.
- [5] Blachowicz, Camille., Ogle, Donna. *Reading Comprehension Strategies for Independent Learners*. The Guilford Press. New York. 2008.
- [6] Dwijandono, M S.. *Tes Bahasa; Pegangan bagi Pengajar Bahasa*. PT Indeks. Jakarta. 2008.
- [7] Oakley, Grace. *The assessment of reading comprehension cognitive strategies: Practices and perceptions of Western*

Australian teachers. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*. Vol. 34, No. 3, 2011, pp. 279–293. 2011.

- [8] Carlson, et al. *Development of a New Reading Comprehension Assessment: Identifying Comprehension Differences among Readers*. Elsevier Journal of Learning and Individual Differences 32 (2014). Page 40-53. 2014
- [9] Sugiyono. *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan*. CV. Alfabeta. Bandung. 2013.
- [10] Djaali and Mulyono. *Pengukuran dalam Bidang Pendidikan*. PT. Gramedia Widia Sarana Indonesia. Jakarta. 2008.
- [11] Sudijono, Anas. *Pengantar Evaluasi Pendidikan*. PT. Grafindo Persada. Jakarta. 1996.

Author Profile



Miftahurrahmi Darmansyah, the first author is a graduate student majoring in English Department at graduate program, Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia



Mukhaiyar, The second author is a lecturer in English Department in Faculty of Language and Arts in Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia



Yenni Rozimela, The third author is a lecturer in English Department in Faculty of Language and Arts in Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia