



An Analysis of Students' Reading Comprehension at an Islamic Institute in Jambi

Toni Indrayadi

Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kerinci, Indonesia

Article History:

Received: March 3rd, 2021

Revised: June 9th, 2021

Accepted: September 1st, 2021

Published: December 31st, 2021

Keywords:

English student,

Islamic institute,

Reading comprehension

*Correspondence Address:

toniindrayadi2@gmail.com

Abstract: This study examines each reading comprehension indicator and reading comprehension in general. Forty-five first-semester students of the English Education Department at Public Islamic Institute Jambi, Indonesia, which comprised of twenty-one males and twenty-four females voluntarily participated in this study. They were purposively selected as the sample of the research. This study used six indicators of reading comprehension and reading comprehension in general data. The descriptive quantitative approach was employed in this study as the research methodology. The descriptive statistic of SPSS 23 was applied to analyze the mean and standard deviation of six reading comprehension and reading comprehension in general. The criteria referenced interpretation and norm-referenced interpretation investigated interval of six reading comprehension and reading comprehension in general. The result of descriptive statistics and criteria referenced interpretation, and norm-referenced interpretation analysis showed five reading comprehension indicators in terms of author purpose, topic details, reference, and vocabulary in context in moderate criteria, except the main idea in which in high criteria. The reading comprehension was in moderate criteria similar to five reading comprehension indicators. Therefore, English lecturers hope to select an appropriate strategy and be well prepared to teach reading.

INTRODUCTION

English plays a role as a foreign language in Indonesia. This judgement is based on the reason that English is not used as the main communication device among Indonesian in their daily lives (Firmayanto et al., 2020; Moeller & Catalano, 2015; Sulistiyo, 2015). However, most Indonesian agree and perceive that English is the most important foreign language (Yusny, 2013) because it is the way to achieve better employment and higher social status in facing globalization era to compete with other countries in the world (Jayanti & Norahmi, 2014).

It is also used to access the intellectual, cultural, and technical resources world (Kurniasih, 2011). Therefore, the Indonesian Government declared English as the first foreign language learned in Indonesian education. It is used by most of the countries in the world as a second or foreign language, as stated by (Jayanti & Norahmi, 2014) that around 80 percent of the English non-native speakers in the world use English as a vehicle of communication after their first or second language in their daily life.

Considering the importance of English for EFL students in Indonesia as English non-native speakers, reading is

one of the main English skills that need to be concerned (Pangestika, 2018). It deals with the identification, interpretation, and perception process of written material (Karahan, 2017), and it can make students gather available information and knowledge (Aditomo & Hasugian, 2018). In other words, reading is one of the important skills as the basic way of acquiring information from society and for academic purposes (Al-Jarrah & Ismail, 2018; Hayikaleng et al., 2016). Reading enables the students to access information from reading passages and enables them to contribute to their self-realization and develop their personal-social adjustment (Audina et al., 2020; Kurniasih, 2011). (Dartini, 2009) who researched improving students' reading comprehension of descriptive text through cognitive strategy argued that reading can help students enlarge their knowledge.

However, the students must have a better reading comprehension ability to comprehend English reading text. Reading comprehension is defined as an understanding situation and question implication (Basol et al., 2011). (Handayani et al., 2018) viewed that in understanding a science text topic, the students need to understand the specific meaning of the science term. It depends on the words meaning and grammar rules' knowledge of the student (Galloway, 2016). Thus, more reading activities can improve reading skills (Pitaloka & Anggraini, 2020).

Some researchers have been conducted studies dealing with reading comprehension (Audina et al., 2020; Dakin, 2013; Kamalasari, 2017; Kurniasih, 2011; Rashid et al., 2011). Audina et al., (2020) by conducting research entitled "An Analysis of Teachers' strategies in teaching reading Comprehension." The researchers found that directed reading activity must be the teachers' attention. The students can change the way to identify words to gather information, motivate students to

have a strategy in exploring and developing their prior knowledge, and motivate students to self-monitoring when reading text.

Dakin (2013), in his research " the effect of comprehension through reading," revealed that students' comprehension could be increased through strategies that can support and guide their thinking. Kurniasih, (2011) who researched "Teaching the Four Language Skills in Primary EFL Classroom" concluded that the students must suit the material, activities, and teaching technique with their needs and level to achieve the goal of four English language skills.

Research conducted by Rashid et al (2011) revealed that reference words are the most important skill the students require in comprehending reading text to gain knowledge.

However, most of them focus on reading text passages and reading motivation strategies. Therefore, this research is different from other researchers. This research examines reading comprehension in general and examines each indicator of reading comprehension that is usually used in measuring reading comprehension.

This research investigates the students' reading comprehension indicators and reading comprehension in general. Each reading comprehension indicator is used to analyze the students' kind of indicators mostly faced. Reading comprehension, in general, is used to analyze the average ability of the students in comprehending English reading text.

METHOD

A quantitative descriptive research design was adopted for this study. (Fitri & Rozimela, 2020) stated that quantitative descriptive research design can be used to analyze the ability and difficulties of the students. This quantitative research design was considered appropriate for the present study. It aimed to examine the students' reading comprehension.

The study participants were first-semester students of the English program at one public Islamic institute in Jambi, Indonesia. This institute is popular among students due to Islamic teaching and cheaper tuition fees. However, that was not merely the reason the institute was chosen. Besides, this institute is also very reputable in terms of English teaching. Most of the lecturers had been gathered doctoral degrees. There were forty-nine students of the English program comprised twenty-one males and twenty-eight females. They were purposively selected as the study participants due to the consideration of being studied literal reading. Therefore, they were considered appropriate as the participants of the research.

Multiple choice test was used in examining the students' reading comprehension. However, the multiple-choice reading comprehension was piloted first to another student with a similar year before using as the research instrument of the study. Each respondent was asked to answer the text questions that consisted of 38 items. Three items were eliminated based on SPSS analysis because the three items were not valid based on the Corrected Item analysis level of correlation. Based on SPSS analysis of the valid items, 35 items of the reading comprehension test met the criteria of valid items because their level of correlation was higher than 30. Thus, these 35 items accurately measured the students' reading comprehension. The test was rearranged before administering it to the participants of the study.

Initial contact with the dean of teachers training faculty was conducted for his permission to research at the first semester of the English program academic year 2020/2021. The students were administered an online reading comprehension test. An online reading comprehension test administration was due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The English lecturers administrate the reading

comprehension test to students by sending it through the mobile whats App group. The students were asked to choose one of the correct answers to the reading comprehension test in multiple-choice options with four options (a, b, c, and d).

The test was administered in paper and pencil format to record the students' responses. The time given to answer the questions was 90 minutes. Each test item was scored as correct and incorrect by calculating item by item. The statistic analysis of SPSS 23 was used to process the completed reading comprehension test in terms of mean and standard deviation. Then, the interval of reading comprehension was analyzed as a basic measurement of students' reading comprehension through referenced interpretation and norm-referenced interpretation. The process of conducting research is described in Figure 1.

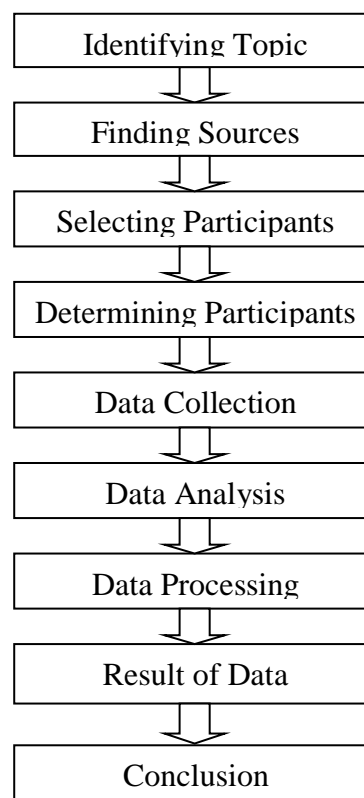


Figure 1. Flow Chart Description of Research

Table 1. Interval of Reading Comprehension

Reading Comprehension Criteria	Reading Comprehension Interval
High	$\alpha \geq X + S$
Moderate	$X - S \leq \alpha < X + S$
Low	$\alpha < X - S$

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Six Reading Comprehension Indicators

Through reading comprehension test by (Dagostino et al., 2014) that matched with reading evaluation for the beginner of Indonesian university students, six salient sub-indicators that emerged in this research were: (1) author purpose; (2) topic; (3) main idea; (4) details; (5) reference; (6) vocabulary in context.

Descriptive statistics, criteria referenced interpretation, and norm-referenced interpretation was used in

examining the students' reading comprehension, author's purpose, topic, main idea, details, reference, and vocabulary in context. The descriptive analysis of SPSS 23 was used to analyze the mean and standard deviation of each indicator of reading comprehension and reading comprehension in general. While reading comprehension interval was analyzed through referenced interpretation and norm-referenced interpretation. Four students did not fill the online reading comprehension test because of personal reasons. Thus the participants of this study were forty-five students.

The participants' data of each reading comprehension indicator in terms of mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Data of Reading Comprehension Indicators

Indicators of Reading Comprehension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency	Percentage	Criteria
Author Purpose	3	1	11	24%	High
			27	60%	Moderate
			7	16%	Low
Topic	2	1	11	24%	High
			29	64%	Moderate
			5	11%	Low
Main Idea	3	1	22	49%	High
			16	36%	Moderate
			7	15%	Low
Details	4	2	9	20%	High
			32	71%	Moderate
			4	9%	Low
Reference	3	1	17	38%	High
			24	53%	Moderate
			4	9%	Low
Vocabulary in Context	3	1	12	27%	High
			26	58%	Moderate
			7	15%	Low

Based on the Table 2, the participants have different criteria for each reading comprehension indicator.

Author Purpose. The criteria referenced interpretation and norm-referenced interpretation analysis for author purpose, high criteria is 11 participants (24%), moderate criteria are 27 participants (60%), and low criteria is

7 participants. It indicated that participants of this study were in moderate criteria because moderate criteria frequency and percentage are higher than high and low criteria.

Topic. The result criteria referenced interpretation and norm-referenced interpretation analysis showed that high criteria are 11 participants (24%),

moderate criteria is 29 (64%), and low criteria are 5 participants (11%). It means that the students in the level moderate, the moderate criteria is higher than high and low criteria.

Main Idea. This reading comprehension indicator analysis of criteria referenced interpretation and norm-referenced interpretation showed that high criteria are 22 participants (49%), moderate is 16 participants (36%), and low criteria are 7 participants (15%).

Details. Tables 2 data of reading comprehension indicators showed that high criteria are 9 participants (20%), moderate criteria is 32 participants (71%), and low criteria are 4 participants (9%). The moderate criteria are higher than the

high and low criteria. It indicated that the participants in moderate criteria for detail.

Reference. Seventeen participants (38%) got high criteria, 24 participants (53%) got moderate criteria, and 4 participants (9%) got low criteria. The participants are in moderate criteria because moderate is higher than high and low criteria.

Vocabulary in Context. The data of vocabulary in context in Table 2 showed that the participants in moderate criteria in which 26 participants (58%) chose the answers correctly, while for high is 12 participants (27%), and low only 7 participants (15%).

The different percentage of each reading comprehension indicator was figured out in Figure 2.

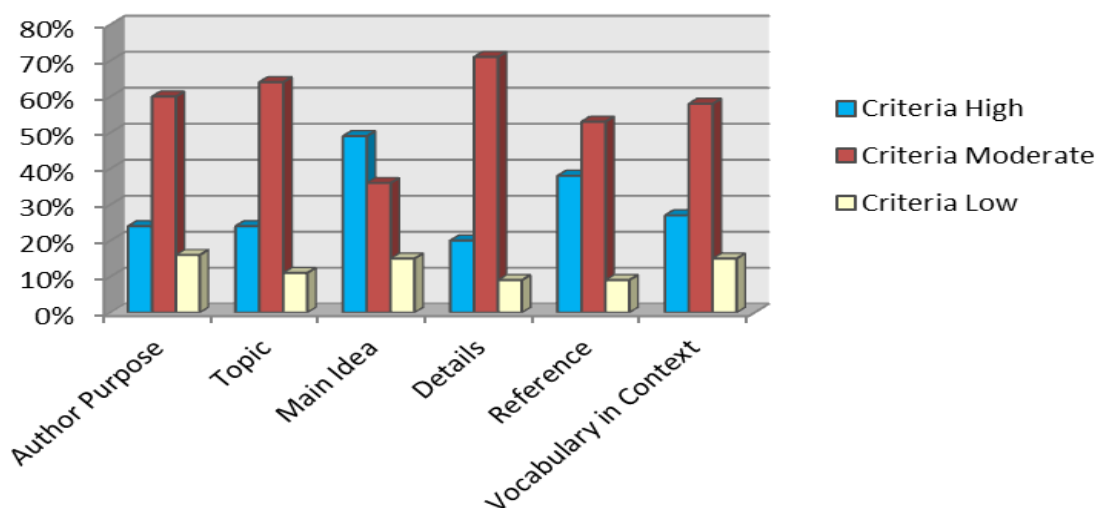


Figure 2. Data of Reading Comprehension Indicator

Reading Comprehension in General

In Reading comprehension, in general, was also examined in this study. The descriptive statistics and criteria referenced interpretation and norm-referenced interpretation indicated that the students' reading comprehension was in the moderate criteria.

The criteria referenced interpretation and norm-referenced interpretation analysis showed significant difference criteria of reading comprehension in general. The data is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Data of Reading Comprehension

Reading Comprehension in General	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency	Percentage	Criteria
			7	15.5 %	High
	3	1	34	75.5 %	Moderate
			4	9 %	Low

Table 3 showed that 7 participants (15,5%) got high criteria, 34 participants (75,5%) for moderate, and 4 students (9%) for low. It indicated that participants are in moderate criteria for reading

comprehension because moderate criteria are higher than high and low criteria. The different percentage of reading comprehension was figured out in Figure 3.

Reading Comprehension

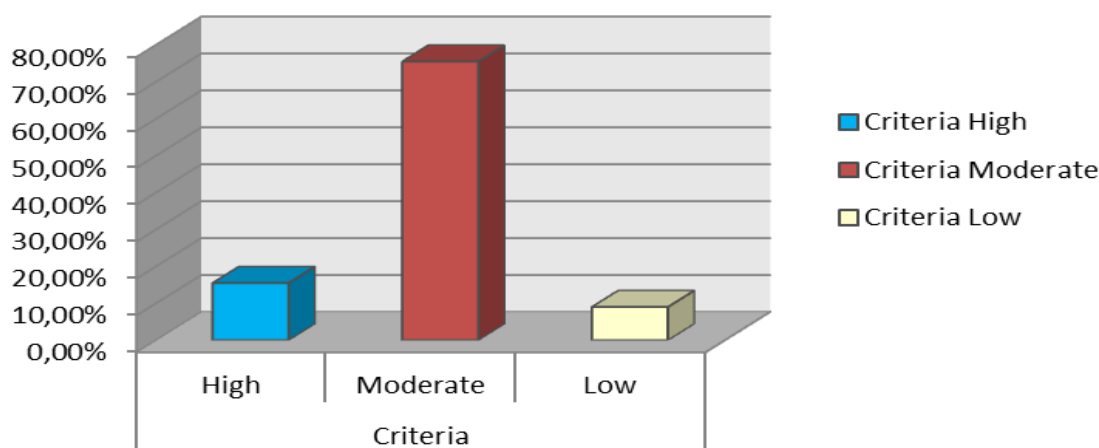


Figure 3. Data of Reading Comprehension

This study provided data on the English department students' reading comprehension indicators and reading comprehension in general. The finding showed that the participants in moderate criteria for most reading comprehension indicators, namely author purpose, topic, details, reference, vocabulary in context. But, only the main idea reading comprehension indicator in high criteria referenced interpretation and norm-referenced interpretation analysis.

The author's purpose of reading comprehension indicator is 60%. This research finding contradicts Dakin's finding (Dakin, 2013). In identifying the author's purpose of reading text, the students have to comprehend the text's purpose or the meaning made by the author (Dakin, 2013). It means that author purpose is defined as the author's reason in writing a certain topic of the passage. The readers can identify it easily as long as they can comprehend the text content or purpose

Participants can answer topic indicators correctly with a percentage of

64%. It contradicts Kumalasari's research (Kumalasari, 2017). The topic of the paragraph is identified through the author's ideas. The authors usually locate it in the first paragraph because this position enables them to state their main idea and explain it. The topic can also be found in the middle or last of the paragraph, but it is usually found in the first or last paragraph.

The main idea is the lowest reading comprehension indicator (36%). The main idea conveys what the author has to say about the topic. The author usually expresses it in a complete sentence that includes the essence of the main point of every idea from the paragraph (Wilawan, 2012). The authors usually express the main idea in the first sentence of the paragraph. However, the main idea is also located in the second, third, or last sentence. In other words, the main idea refers to the main point of the author's thought, which expresses the essence of the paragraph information. In identifying the paragraph's main idea, the readers should keep reading, reread the

paragraph, and then try to figure out what the author is saying. The main idea developed by the author throughout the paragraphs explains, develops, and supports it.

Details are the highest reading comprehension indicator percentage (71%). The details help the reader find the main idea in a paragraph. When the readers find difficulty finding implied and not a clear main idea in a paragraph, he/she can look at the supporting details to have a better understanding of what the author is saying.

Reference is (53%) of moderate criteria reading comprehension indicator. . (Rashid et al., 2011) briefly stated that reference is the recognition of words and phrases that refer to the same idea. It is usually expressed in a phrase that signals the readers to find the meaning elsewhere in the paragraph. References usually refer to the ideas that have already been expressed and refer to the idea yet stated in a paragraph. Thus, references are the connection between information items of the substitution word.

Vocabulary in context is 58% of moderate criteria, reference (53%). Vocabulary in context refers to unfamiliar words surrounding the sentences of the whole paragraphs. Unfamiliar words can be understood through inference (Broek et al., 2018). Therefore, the students must know about identifying the words meaning based on context. The vocabulary of unfamiliar words can be figured out by the readers easily based on context clues that can guide them to the meaning. If more readers comprehend the words' meaning, finding the paragraph's main idea will be easier.

The reading comprehension is also in moderate criteria similar to most reading comprehension indicators (75,5%). The study finding is similar to (Fitri & Rozimela, 2020; Handayani et al., 2018). Fitri & Rozimela, (2020) revealed that the students have a low ability in comprehending analytical exposition text

based on a different levels of questions. Handayani et al., (2018) the students faced problems comprehending science and physics texts.

CONCLUSION

The students have a similar reading comprehension indicator in terms of author purpose, topic, details, reference, and vocabulary in context, except the main idea. The author's purpose, topic, details, reference, and vocabulary in context are in moderate criteria. It was proved by the reading comprehension indicator frequency and percentage of the study used to measure reading comprehension indicators. In general, the students reading comprehension was also in moderate criteria, similar to most of the reading comprehension indicator criteria.

Based on the research finding of the study, English lecturers are suggested to consider an appropriate strategy in teaching reading to EFL students. An appropriate strategy means the strategy which can improve the students' reading comprehension. Therefore, the English lecturers who teach reading classes need to be well prepared before teaching. However, although this study presented the analysis of English department students' reading comprehension in an Islamic higher education institute in Jambi, Indonesia, and the participants of this study are not representative of all English department students of Islamic higher education institute in Jambi, and maybe other students faced other problems. This study also concerns analyzing the students' reading comprehension.

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