

## **CHAPTER II**

### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

### **OF THE OBJECTS OF THE STUDY**

#### **II.1. Reading Comprehension**

According to Widowson (cited in Dubin, Eskey and Grabe, 1986 : 28), reading is the interaction of the text and the reader. The beginning step includes the printed words on the page and the reader's initial knowledge of the topic. The end step includes the new knowledge that the reader has acquired from the text. Because reading is a process of matching information in a text to internally activated information, so it is not information processing but rather information interpreting.

In fact, reading can be defined and described in a variety of ways because there is not a completely valid explanation of reading yet. Although, there is no clear definitions of reading, but they have the same basic of reading. Mostly the contexts of definitions of reading define that reading is interacting with language that has been coded into print and the product of interacting with the printed language should be comprehension.

Reading is fundamentally the comprehension of language. The various levels of language including words, phrases, sentences and entire texts, are operated on by some of the component processes of reading. Comprehension, itself, is a process affected by a variety of skills. As study

by Davis (cited in Heilman, Blair and Rupley, 1981 : 241), there are five comprehension :

1. Recalling word meanings
2. Drawing inferences from content
3. Following the structure of a passage
4. Recognizing a writer's purpose, attitude, tone, mood
5. Finding answers to questions answered explicitly or in paraphrase

Yet, it should not be interpreted that there are only five comprehension skills.

Furthermore, reading comprehension is a process of making sense of written ideas through meaningful interpretation and interaction with language. The core of the process is the continuous development of oral and written language ability. The next factors affecting the process is the development of abilities to react written language with meaning and thought. This process is not different from other kinds of comprehension because comprehension of any kinds depends on the knowledge that means relating what we do not know, or new knowledge, to what we already know.

As stated by Grabe (cited in Dubin, Eskey and Grabe, 1986 : 6), comprehension is always directed and controlled by the needs and purposes of an individual and, therefore, depends on that individual's having acquired. Thus, reading comprehension is most likely to occur when someone is reading, or at least what he sees some good reasons to read.

### **II.1.1. Reading Comprehension Test**

In reading curriculum, it becomes necessary to evaluate students' reading abilities. This evaluation can be used to determine students' progress, their problems and weakness, to motivate and provide constructive feedback, to provide a final test. Tests are usually based on the knowledge and the understanding of the knowledge that have been transmitted to the students. The aim is to find out how much the students have learned in a certain period.

The evaluation is not simply a matter of deciding which test to employ. As it is known that test skills at many levels are needed, since all of these skills are assumed to play a significant role in the reading progress. They include everything from the rapid identification of vocabulary and syntactic structures, to the interpretation of larger discourse patterns, the making of inferences, etc. It must also consider about the selection of the evaluation. Selection means choosing among tests. The choice will often be determined by the aim of reading evaluation. Ease of administration, ease of scoring, ease of interpretation, and cost may also influence the choice of test.

There are some considerations when producing or using reading comprehension tests. When constructing reading comprehension test on a given text, it should start with the overall meaning of the text, its function and aim, rather than working on vocabulary or more specific ideas. It is clear that the students should start with global understanding and the detailed understanding.

As stated by Grellet (1981 : 7), reading is a constant process of guessing, and what one brings to the text is often more important than one finds in it. This is the reason that from the beginning the students should be taught to use what they know to understand unknown elements, whether these are ideas or simple words. Reading comprehension test should also be flexible and varied. Few test-types can be good or bad, because those are used in relation to a given text. This may be covered by multiple-choice questions, true-false questions, matching, etc.

The aim of the test must be clearly defined and a clear distinction made between teaching and testing. Testing involves exercises whereas through teaching the students try to develop skills. The students must be taught to become independent and efficient readers. It is also important to remember that meaning is not inherent in the text, and the students have their own meaning when they read based on what they expect from the text and his initial knowledge.

Choosing appropriate texts must also be considered. The choice of appropriate text depends on the objectives of reading comprehension test, and the objectives should determine the kinds of text used for the test. Among the major concerns are (Allerson and Grabe, cited in Dubin, Eskey and Grabe, 1986 : 164):

1. Whether more but shorter texts are better than fewer but longer texts.
2. Whether texts should be on topics of wide familiarity or on topics that few students would be likely to have knowledge

3. Whether texts should be of general topical nature or devoted to specific topics that represent students' majors.

For example, if the aim of the test is to assess reading rate, so long texts on more general topics may be more appropriate. If the purpose is to state main idea, then a number of short passages will provide the appropriate items.

## **II.2. Achievement Test**

In almost every educational level, tests are used to measure student's ability. Tests actually measure what the students have achieved. They help the students to find out how much they have learned and how much they know about certain topics. They can also be designed to measure a variety of learning outcomes such as the knowledge of specific facts, the knowledge of terms an understanding of concept, the ability to apply facts and principles and various thinking skills.

From many kinds of tests, tests of achievement are the most popular of all kinds of tests. Achievement tests are planned to discover what the students have learned in studying certain subjects. It can help both the teacher and the students in assessing readiness, monitoring learning progress and difficulties, and evaluating learning outcomes.

According to Gronlund (1977 : 10), the major classifications of achievement tests are as follows :

- a. Supply type

1. Essay – extended response

2. Essay – restricted response
  3. Short answer
  4. Completion
- b. Selection type
1. True – false
  2. Matching
  3. Multiple-choice

### **II.2.1. Multiple-choice Test**

The multiple-choice test is one of the objective tests which is often used today in many field of education. In this kind of test, students must select the correct answer from a number of possible answers. The incorrect answers are termed distracters. These distracters should include misconceptions, partly correct answers and common errors of fact or reason. They distract students who are not well prepared for the test from giving the correct answer. Multiple-choice test is usually used to test a student's ability to recall information, to interpret data and to analyze and evaluate material.

Multiple-choice items typically include either four or five choices. The larger number will reduce the student's chances of obtaining the correct answer by guessing (Grellet, 1981 : 220). By making the test with five alternatives the student has only one chance in five of guessing the answer, whereas with four alternatives the student has one chance in four. Perhaps it is the most critical part of the construction of multiple-choice items. The wrong

answer must be possible to someone who does not know the answer, yet distinctly different from the correct answer.

The type of multiple-choice questions can be a word, a paragraph or the whole text. Whatever the type of questions, the students may not consider them as a guessing game but they have tried to choose one answer and reject the others.

### II.2.2. Cloze Test

Cloze testing procedure was first introduced by Taylor (1953), who developed is as a reading test for native speaker (taken from [www.gse.gmu.edu/ell-id/ell-ldcloze.shtml](http://www.gse.gmu.edu/ell-id/ell-ldcloze.shtml)). He defined the term “cloze” from a gestalt concept that an individual will be able to complete a task only after its pattern has been discerned. A cloze procedure may be defined as any single occurrence of a successful attempt to reproduce a part deleted from a “message”, by deciding from the context that remains, what missing part should be.

Cloze test has been used to assess comprehension and determine the readability of a text. Over the last five years, cloze test has similarly been the object of extensive critical review in second language assessment, both as a measure of language proficiency, and as a measure of reading ability (Allerson and Grabe, cited in Dubin, Eskey and Grabe, 1986 : 161).

The cloze test is easy to prepare, administer, and score. It is a relatively accurate and practical procedure to use in the classroom, particularly by teachers. In the cloze procedure, words are deleted from a passage by an objectively specified process. Words at regular intervals or nouns, verbs, adjective may be deleted. The deletion of words at spaced intervals correlates with general comprehension. The deletion of every fifth word seems to be the most common pattern, although sometimes teachers often begin by deleting words at longer intervals (Brown, 1983 taken from [www.seg.co.jp/sss/teaching/link-for-teachers.html](http://www.seg.co.jp/sss/teaching/link-for-teachers.html)).

The Cloze test measures students' comprehension abilities by giving them a short text, with blanks where some of the words should be, and asking them to fill in the blanks. This task requires students to build an internal representation of the text, to put the words together in a meaningful way, so that they will be able to know what words belong in the blanks.

### **II.3. English Department of Airlangga University**

The English Department belongs to the Faculty of Letters of Airlangga University. It is located on Jl. Dharmawangsa Dalam Selatan Surabaya. It was founded in 1988. At that time, the English Department belonged to Faculty of Social and Political Sciences because Faculty of Letters has not been founded yet until in 1999.

In the curriculum, there are some kinds of lectures that students must take. At first, for all new students, they must take *MKDU (Mata Kuliah Dasar*



*Umum*) and *MKDW (Mata Kuliah Dasar Wajib)*. *MKDW* are given to help students to increase their capability in English. The skill subjects which included are listening, structure, reading, writing, and speaking.

The English Department also gives many lectures in which, besides, can support the students' competence in English, also prepares the students in facing the work life such as "Entrepreneurship, Introduction to Business, Public Relations, etc". The students also must take two kinds of other languages that provided in order to broaden their knowledge about language such as Japanese, French and Dutch.

### **II.3.1. Reading Comprehension Test in Airlangga University**

The students of the English Department of Airlangga University like the students of any other departments. They have been graduated from senior high schools. They have learned English in previous education, at least six years, beginning from junior high school up to senior high school. In fact, today, many students might have got English since they were in the kindergarten so they have learned English more than six years. It means that they have been familiar with this language. Consequently, it supports their competence to use and understand English.

Their competence increases when they entered the English Department of Airlangga University because in this department they learn some skill subjects, and practice and use their English almost in all of their lectures.

In the English Department, the students have to complete at least one hundred and forty four *SKS* (Satuan Kredit Semester) in order to get scholar degree (S1). From those one hundred and forty four *SKS*, there are skill subjects such as listening, structure, reading, writing, and speaking (Data source : “Pedoman Pendidikan Program studi Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris”). In the early semester, the students learn those all skill subjects.

As noted above, reading comprehension becomes one of the skill subjects. At first in the curriculum, there were three levels of Reading Comprehension – Reading Comprehension I, II, and III – but in 1999 the curriculum was changed. The level of Reading Comprehension became six and each level only has one credit.

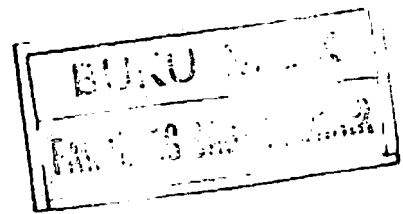
Mostly in each meeting of Reading Comprehension class, the students are given a passage that they must read and answer. At first, they must understand and comprehend the passage in order to be able to answer the question. Sometimes the teacher gives the material and asks the students to analyze. Then, they must be able to interpret the passage.

The kind of tests that the teacher uses in middle and final tests are mostly essay and multiple-choice. In essay, the students are asked to understand the passage. Then, they must answer the question based on their interpretation by using their own words. In multiple-choice, the test not only includes some questions that asked the students’ understanding, but also about vocabulary.

### **II.3.2. Background of the Respondent**

In holding a research of a significant correlation between the students' mastery in doing multiple-choice and their mastery in doing cloze test in Reading Comprehension, I took the students of Reading Comprehension class as the respondent. They are the sixth semester students of the English Department of Airlangga University. In this class, there are thirty-four students.

The choice of the sixth semester students as the respondent is that they have learnt Reading Comprehension for five semesters, where they have done practices in intensive reading. Thus, they are considered to be able to do exercises in Reading Comprehension and their knowledge is also considered adequate.



**CHAPTER III**

**PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF  
THE DATA**