



An Analysys of Students' Inference Skill toward Students' Reading Comprehension

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Abstract: The study of inference skill concerned with infer the message from the text which is written by the author. Studying on inference always faced the different text. Inference skill was occurred in some levels. These levels were very important to keep the meaning of the text to avoid the awkwardness. This research was aimed to find how was the student's inference skill in reading comprehension at the sixth semester done by the students of English education study program in Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung. The characteristic of this research was qualitative research by applying Miles and Huberman models; namely collecting data, data reduction, data display and drawing conclusion. The result of the students' inference skill in reading comprehension was done by the students of English Study Program Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung, in coherence inference, there were ten percent of students making error in this level.

keyword : English Language Teaching, inference, reading comprehension

INTRODUCTION

English is a foreign and second language in some countries. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language. English in Indonesia is used in an international school and English department only. People who live in big city will know English very well, although they don't participate in English department. However, the people who live in a village are impossible to speak English. They speak English in a university or business situation. Sometimes they feel ashamed to speak English because their friend will say them pedantically. Malaysian people use English in their daily activity. Everybody speaks English wherever they are. Children, teens, and adults know English very well although they use *melayu* language as their mother tongue. In other words, English is second language in Malaysia.

English in Indonesian education is an additional subject, especially in regular Elementary School. Many students who graduated from Elementary School only know how to read alphabet in English. They considered that English is a

useless subject. English teacher in Elementary School doesn't graduate of the English Department. Therefore, English is included into foreign language.

There are four reasons why English as an introductory subject in Junior High School. First, English is thought in Senior High School to introduce English as international language. Everything which is used in the world is English. In the environment, we use English language to instruct the tools. Therefore, the student must know and understand the meaning. Third, English in Indonesia is foreign language. The students make English be difficult. Fourth, English is introduced in Senior High School in order to make the students don't shock if they continue in higher graduate. The students must have mastered English in the next graduate to face the globalization.

The last fact about English in education which makes the student in Indonesia feels piteous. After they graduated from the Elementary School and Junior High School they have to continue their education that make they confuse. Because English in Senior High school level is more difficult than the previous level. The student is forced to do the English assignments that make they feel English like "monster". They judge English as the most difficult subject in the school. They have to memorize the pattern of sentences. They don't understand the meaning. They only do what the teacher says and instructs. English is one of the standards for the students to pass the examination.

Reading is an entertainment activity. It is an activity which has no much energy. We read everywhere we want. It makes the students feel happy. The teacher gives instructions for them to read a fiction text such as, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Snow White*, and *The Lord of The Ring*, they read the texts enthusiastically. It makes them know what the world's phenomenon. The students read flood, war, politics, cultures, and fashion through newspaper. The students always go "online" to read the news and look for some information.

There are many strategies in reading comprehension. Those are, identify the purpose in reading to know what you are looking for. Analyze vocabulary, you look for prefixes, suffixes, grammatical context, and semantic context. Analyze implied meaning, not all the text can be interpreted in written language. Capitalize on discourse marker to process relationship; many discourse markers in English give relationship through phrases, clauses, and sentences.

There are some reasons why reading is important to be learned for the students. First, teaching brain to read, the direction of well-control's parents to evidence the brain change for reading comprehension. Second, develop the vocabulary. The difficulties words make the students look for in dictionary and memorize it. Third, developing inference skill, after reading a text, the students answer the question to know the student's comprehension. Finally, developing writing skill. They always re write the text in own words.

Some factors make the student feels difficult in reading. Those are, the students don't use an effective strategy. Actually, the strategies can be applied by

the student in reading English text, but the student doesn't choose the effective strategies. They choose the strategies that the students confuse. Sometimes they choose "a shortcut" to comprehend and answer the question or they don't answer the questions because they have low strategy in reading comprehension.

Moreover, Students are not interested to read a text because the students have low motivation to read the English reading text, although the teacher gives an interesting English text and deliver the text in good time. They are lazy to read an English text. The students consider that reading is not a useful. It just spent their time to do a useless thing. Students don't know how to comprehend the text. Besides they don't have good vocabulary mastery, they also have no felt confidence. The most important thing, they cannot infer the text absolutely. As a result, they answer the questions using ineffective strategies. And it's a big problem of reading comprehension.

The writer assumes that using inference help the students comprehend the text. Special in English subject, inference skill is needed to overcome the student's problem. It makes the students easy to answer the question and rewrite the text in our word. It helps the student predict symbol and picture. Inference is a process which we use the signals, symbols, and the facts. However, the information is not always interpreted. We completed the information based on the facts. Inference is important for us because inference help us to fulfill the information which is signed by the author.

Inferences are needed during the reading process. Research is now focused on the question of precisely which inferences are made during and after reading. The result to date indicates that inferences are greatly influenced by the reader's goal and his or her prior knowledge. One of the most well-known experiments carried out to answer the question was done by Susan Havil and Herbert Clark (1974) based on Jan Renkema (1993)

THEORITICAL REVIEW

Concept of Reading Comprehension

Harris and Hodges in Judy Willis , 2008 state that comprehension can be explained as purposeful thinking as long as constructing meaning through interactions both reader and the text. Meanwhile Reading is called written language ability. It is the ability of the reader to understand information which transferred by the writer. The ability of the readers identify rules of the language that is used by the writer to deliver the written information is result of this skill,

On the other hand Brown (2001) maintains that reading is a psycholinguistics guessing game and other subsequent job, second language expert started to solve the specific problems and questions to face second language reading pedagogy. It means that reading comprehension is the purposeful thinking to understand the meaning through interactions between the reader and the text in written language to solve the specific problems and questions to face the second

language reading pedagogy and to deliver information that is transferred by the author.

From the above statements, reading comprehension is the purposeful thinking to comprehend and understand the information in the text which transferred by the author in written language to solve the problem in language reading pedagogy.

According to Kristin lems (2001) special strategy usage in reading comprehension is needed before, during, and after reading. In reading comprehension, strategies can be examined as intentional actions which the reader uses to construct and improve their understanding. It widely known that strategies is intentional thinking which the reader uses in reading comprehension to understand the text and the reader uses the strategy in before, during, and after reading process.

Kristin lems (2001) explains that to increase neural efficiency at each step of the comprehension process are needed strategies to construct comprehension. Efficient ability reader comprehend the text more successfully than less ability reader because reader's ability exploit strategies such as activating background knowledge in text comprehension and drawing valid inferences what they read. Moreover, Kristin lems (2001) argues that they have difference from less ability reader in their skilled to decipher fluently and precisely. It means that reader has the different comprehension to decipher the text. The readers will succeed in reading comprehension if the reader uses some strategies, such as, background knowledge and drawing conclusion. The strategies can improve the reader's neural efficiency.

Comprehension subject can succeed exclusive goals through student's comprehension of the sense of the words they read or hear. Additional goals can involve cognitive manipulation of the information by actively procedure it through executive purpose in higher cognitive steps such as: 1) Considering the information in another context; 2) Making interpretations; 3) Discovering new personal connections or connections to previous films or literature; 4) Using information acquired to modify their predictions; 5) Analyzing and comparing characters and interpreting their relationships and motives; 6) Inferring causes and effects; 7) Summarizing the plot; and 8) Deducing the theme or author's message.

Observing, questioning, and asking good and poor readers to "think aloud" while they read the instructional practiced proposed for poor readers. Issues of how good readers comprehend and study of the text propose coordinate a set of highly complex and well developed abilities and strategies before, during, and after reading which help them in comprehending and remembering what they read. The most success way to include good readers is to say that they are more creative than poor reader. The skills and strategies those good readers as follows Janette K. Klingner, 2007: 1) Rapid and accurate word reading; 2) Setting goals for reading; 3) Noting the structure and organization of text; 4) Monitoring their understanding

while reading; 5) Creating mental notes and summaries; 6) Making predictions about what will happen, checking them as they go along, and revising and evaluating them as needed; 7) Capitalizing on what they know about the topic and integrating that with new learning.; 8) Making inferences; 9) Using mental images such as visualization to assist them in remembering or understanding events or characters.

Reader's responses to text are involved in reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is a multi components, highly complex process that includes many interactions between readers and what they get in the text (previous knowledge, strategy usage) as well as variables related to the text itself (interesting text, comprehension of the text types). Its means that the several processes need to involve in reading comprehension.

a. Cognitive Processes

Irwin (1991) describes five basic comprehension processes that work together simultaneously and complement one another: micro processes, integrative processes, macro processes, elaborative processes, and metacognitive processes. While reading about these different cognitive processes, keep in mind that the reader uses these different strategies fluidly, going back and forth from focusing on specific chunks of text, as with micro processing to stepping back and reflecting about what has been read, as with metacognition.

b. Microprocesses

Microprocessing refers to the reader's initial chunking of idea units within individual sentences. "Chunking" involves grouping words into phrases or clusters of words that carry meaning, and requires an understanding of syntax as well as vocabulary. For example, consider the following sentence: Michelle put the yellow roses in a vase. Microprocessing directs to the reader's initial chunking of ideas units within individual sentences. "Chunking" engages grouping words into phrases or collects of words that take meaning, and needs a comprehension of syntax as well as vocabulary. For example, regard as the following sentence: *Michelle put the yellow roses in a vase.*

c. Integrative Processes

As the reader progresses through individual sentences, he or she is processing more than the individual meaning units within sentences. He or she is also actively making connections across sentences. This process of understanding and inferring the relationships among clauses is referred to as integrative processing. Sub skills involved in integrative processing include being able to identify and understand pronoun referents and being able to infer causation or sequence. The following two sentences demonstrate how these sub skills are applied: *Michael quickly locked the door and shut the windows.* It means that *He was afraid.*

d. Macroprocesses

Idea is better understood and more easily remembered when the reader can organize them in a coherent way. The reader does this by summarizing the main ideas read. They directly and deliberately choose the most important information to remember or delete relatively less important detail. The clever readers are using a structure or organizational pattern to help them arrange these important ideas. More proficient comprehenders know to use the same organizational pattern served by the author to organize their ideas (e.g., a story map including characters and setting/problem/solution in a narrative or a compare-and contrast text structure for an expository passage).

e. Elaborative Processes

When a reader reads, we tap into our prior knowledge and make inferences beyond points described explicitly in the text. The reader makes inferences that may or may not correspond with those intended by the author. For instance, in the two sentences provided above about Michael, The reader does not know why he was afraid. But we can predict that perhaps he was worried that someone had followed him home, or maybe a storm was brewing and he was concerned about strong winds. When making these inferences, the reader may draw upon information provided earlier in the text or upon our own previous experiences (e.g., perhaps at some point the reader was followed home and hurried inside and quickly shut and locked the door). This process is called elaborative processing.

f. Metacognitive Processes

Many things had been made of the essence metacognition, that is, thinking about thinking. Metacognition is the reader conscious or handle cognitive processing. The metacognitive processes the reader functions are those involved in monitoring understanding, choosing what to remember, and organizing the strategies used when reading. The metacognitive strategies the reader involves rehearsing, reviewing, underlining important words or sections of a passage, note taking, and checking understanding.

Approach of Teaching Reading

Reading comprehension is not only to be a subject, but also to be a measurement scale to know the student's success. According to Brown (2001) the teacher should know what the approach strategy to teach reading in their classroom. Such as: 1) Bottom-up processing, 2) Top-down processing, 3) Schema theory and background knowledge, 4) The role affect and culture, 5) The power of extensive reading, 6) Adults literacy training.

Teacher's instructional role in reading comprehension it can be exploited a very specific instruction model to help the student's learning. The model emphasized scaffolding learning. The aim of this instruction is gradually to free responsibility of the process to the learners, just as the parent guiding a child to

study riding a bike slowly turns over the handle of bike to the child. It means that teaching inference is easy to use in teaching reading and the student needs controller to handle their reading subject. Moreover, Pearson et.al maintains that translated into reading direction model has five steps in more detail below: setting goals and diversified performance criteria, modeling, guided practice, independent practice, and assessment/evaluation.

According to Peterson (2010) there are some ways to develop reading comprehension such as: 1) Finding main ideas and supporting details, 2) Skimming for specific information, 3) Making inference, 4) Understanding advertisement, 5) How thought are related, 6) Understanding contemporary reading passages, 7) Reading history textbooks, 8) Summing it up

Concept of Inference

Occasionally, an author does not explain the reader clearly what is happening. They give the reader clues to find the meaning. Inference is a process to use the symbols or signals in collecting the information. Symbols, signals, and facts about the problems appear while reading. Because the information is not stated in explicit meaning, we have completed our information based on the symbols. Inference (Djuhairie ,2008) is an important skill, because inferring guides us to complete the information by the author.

On the other hand, Inference is the term which is derived from discourse for all implied meaning. The term ‘inference’ from the latin ‘inferre’ meaning ‘to carry in’) is used to show the phenomenon that discourse collects knowledge or information which is to understanding the information. The most significant cases of this, besides pre assumptions, are ‘entailment’, ‘conventional implicature, and ‘connotation’ (Renkema, 2008). Each inference has several functions in reading comprehension. Anne kispal (2008) states that “inferences types have been defined below. It should be divided into some categories of inference”.

Coherence inferences (also known as text-connecting or inter sentence inferences). These maintain textual integrity. For example, in the sentence *Peter begged his mother to let him go to the party*, the reader would have to realize that the pronouns ‘his’ and ‘him’ refer to Peter to fully understand the meaning: 1) Elaborative inferences (also known as gap-filling inferences). These enrich the mental representation of the text, e.g: *Katy dropped the vase. She ran for the dustpan and brush to sweep up the pieces*. The reader would have to draw upon life experience and general knowledge to realize that the vase broke to supply the connection between these sentences; 2) Local inferences. These create a coherent representation at the local level of sentences and paragraphs; 3) Global inferences. These create a coherent representation covering the whole text.

1. How Will the Teacher Need to Teach Inferring?

In teaching reading, the teacher should appreciate that the students were doing the exercise very well, but the teacher should know when they have to deliver the student to use their inference skill.

- a. *The situation*: In discussing narrative text that has been read, the readers note that students cannot answer questions about character traits or mood or other information the author implies but does not state explicitly.
- b. *The collected data*: the reader can confirm that students need to learn inferring asking them to listen to or read a narrative passage that contains clues to character traits or mood but does not state it explicitly. If students cannot use the clues to decide what is happening in sentences like these, they may need explanations about how to infer.

2. Big understandings in Teaching Inference

According to Duffy (2009) the teacher should know what big understandings in reading comprehension before they learn about inference for the students. Those are:

- a. What the reader means when we say meaning is “implied” or is “between the lines.”
- b. That authors compose text based on their experience background and we construct meanings based on what the author’s words make the readers think about (i.e., our experience background).
- c. That authors often leave information unstated or implied, expecting readers to infer it.
- d. That comprehension is an active process of *constructing* meaning, which means the reader must infer.
- e. That inferring is virtually the same process as predicting.

3. How to Make Inference

According to Floris (2007) Here are four tips for working with inferences:

- a. Inference usually depends on understanding the context/ conversation.
- b. Make sure the inferences rely mainly on the author’s words rather than your own feelings ort experience. The reader’s goal is to read the author’s mind, not invent the teacher own message.
- c. Check to see if your inference contradicted by any statements in the paragraph. If it is, it is not an appropriate or useful inference.
- d. Inferences are sometimes necessary and expected when someone does not want to say or write about something unpleasant, for example, *he died in a car crash last night after leaving a bar at 03.00 in morning suggest that a man had an accident because he had too much to drink at a bar, possibly because he was there so late.*

4. Developing Inference Skill:

According to Djuairie (2008) there are some ways to develop inference skills:

- a. Try to read out of the words. Filling the details and information depend on the author's clues.
- b. Ask to yourself when we are reading, we have gotten the answer depend on the author's clues and our experience.
- c. If a writer describes someone, try to understand the people how the movement, the words, and the physic. We can predict the characters of the people through the behavior. Try to construct the people description in our mind; going upon our description of author's description in the behavior and the performance.
- d. If a text book or a teacher asks a question that we don't answer with the easy answer what we read, remember to use inference. Back to our reading which we hope we get the answer; then we look what the author gives the clues that sign something and we must complete in clearly connecting.

Assessing Comprehension.

Reading comprehension has some assessments types to increase reading comprehension. Big assessments in reading comprehension, for example question .The use of questions in instruction has a significant effect on both the development and assessment of students' comprehension strategies. The issue of using questions has involved the attention of experts in reading, and in education has been written the kinds of questions which the teachers should ask. Teachers are urged to ask the variety of questions so that give students the opportunity to respond the materials they read. Teachers are advised, specifically, to avoid overemphasizing questions that need memory for directly stated information. They are supported to focus on questions that need higher-level thinking in order to develop higher-level cognitive processes. However, questions have traditionally been approached from the standpoint of the mental processes need to answer them.

Anderson states that number of question classification schemes based on this approach is developed over the years, more simple distinctions between levels or types of thought that are both difficult to make and "not warranted by the current state of our knowledge about language and cognition" . Moreover, questions that seem to get higher-level thinking because they cannot be answered from directly stated information may actually be quite trivial (Klingner, 2007)

Sanders states that points out of "thinking" questions cannot really be derived from insignificant subject matter.

Goals of Reading Assessment

Haager & Klingner (2007) argued that reading comprehension assessment has several purposes. An important purpose is finding out why a student may be struggling. Teachers must be expert at collecting assessment data so that they can plan what, how, and when to teach. The assessment materials and activities the

teacher should be determined the purpose of the assessment. If we know what type of information we need, we can decide what process.

The assessment instruments and procedures of reading comprehension are available below. When choosing the assessment procedures, it is important to choose the scale that most closely matches the user's needs or goal. The using of reading comprehension assessments typically range from determining a student's reading comprehension competence relative to a normative group, determining students' general strengths and weaknesses, assessing a student's reading level, and assisting teachers, researchers, and others in determining the effects of an intervention on reading comprehension. For example, collating a student's scores with those of other same-age or -grade students need a normative assessment. Looking for the information what a student does while reading need an individual assessment that engages reading aloud. Teachers should consider numerous factors when choosing a test or assessment procedure (Haager & Klingner (2007):

- a. The purpose of the testing (screening, progress monitoring, assessing level of reading, research, or assessing students' competence in comparison to peers)
- b. The specific information needed about the student's reading comprehension (types of questions missed, level)
- c. The number of students being tested (i.e., an individual, a small group, or a whole class)
- d. The length of the test (e.g., shorter tests can be easier to give and less stressful for the student, but may not have enough questions or types of tasks to provide sufficient information about a student's performance)
- e. Whether the test is an individually or group-administered test 6. The number of forms available with the test, particularly if multiple administrations are needed (e.g., many norm-referenced tests come with two forms, making them useful for assessing progress over time—students are given one version of the test as a pretest and another as a posttest)
- f. For norm-referenced tests, the extent to which the norming sample is similar to the students to whom the test will be administered
- g. The examiner's qualifications (e.g., whether the tester has the skills to give highly specific tests)
- h. The amount of training needed to administer a test, score it, and interpret
- i. results (e.g., norm-referenced tests typically require some training).

METHOD

The students have difficulties in describing the clues in the text. The students have low skill to infer the text. The students do not realize that inference is close related in reading comprehension. Because of the problems above, the researcher use the qualitative research; in the form of descriptive qualitative, descriptive is giving a picture in words without expressing and judging.

The characteristic of this research was qualitative research by applying Miles and Huberman models; namely collecting data, data reduction, data display and drawing conclusion. In this research, the data were collected by using documentation, interview, and observation. echnique sampling of this research was purposive sampling. The subject was 15 students as the sample for this research. Based on the description, the writer assumed that descriptive qualitative research was the research that described the phenomenon by using reading text and scientific paradigm. The writer described the result of students' inference skill in reading comprehension of students in English education program in Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of analysis showed there were some cases in student's inference skill on narrative and descriptive text done by the students. In category coherence inference was 10 % case in student's inference skill. Meanwhile, in elaborative inference was 40% case in student's inference skill. Local inference 30 % was case in student's inference skill. And global inference 20% was case in student's inference skill.

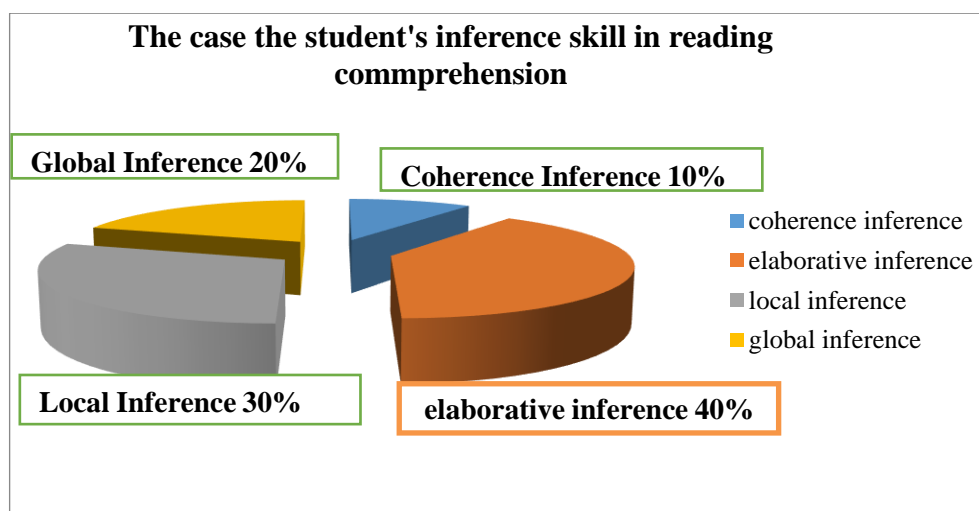


Figure 1.
Percentage of case in student's inference skill in reading comprehension

Based on the diagram , it could be seen that he percentage of the case in student's reading comprehension were category coherence inference was 10 % ,Meanwhile in elaborative inference 40% , Local inference 30 % and global inference 20%. The result of the research is the students are making error in inference. In coherence inference, there were ten percent of students making error in this level. Furthermore, there were fourty percent of the students making error in elaborative inference. For local inference level, there were thirty percent of the students making error in the level. The last level, in global inference, there were twenty percent of the students making error in the level. It means that in inference

levels, the students have difficulties to make inference, especially in elaborative inference.

CONCLUSION

The result of the students' inference skill in reading comprehension was done by the students of English Study Program Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung: in coherence inference, there were ten percent of students making error in this level. Furthermore, there were forty percent of the students making error in elaborative inference level. For local inference level, there were thirty percent of the students making error in the level. The last level, in global inference, there were twenty percent of the students making error in the level.

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