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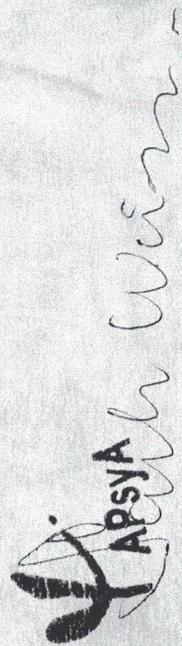
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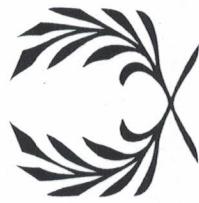
Sri Tiatri

Who was participating as

Presenter



Prof. Dr. Sarlito W Sarwono
APsyA Chairman



Reading Comprehension and the Instruction of Reading Comprehension

A Descriptive Study of the Perception of the Primary School's Teachers in Indonesia

Sri Tiatri ¹⁾

The research and applications on teaching the skills to comprehend reading have been increased since 1980s in many countries, especially in English speaking countries. However, what was the case in Indonesia was limited to be known. This study attempts to explore teachers' perspectives on how students comprehend a text, and how reading comprehensions are taught, in two cities in Indonesia. Results have showed that problems related to reading comprehension among the students were present. Moreover, the methods used by the teachers in teaching reading comprehension seemed to be less focused on preparing students to be self-regulated in comprehending their reading. The implications of the findings, for the further research related to teaching reading comprehension, were discussed.

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Keywords: reading comprehension, Indonesia, self-regulated

Introduction

Since Durkin (1978) published findings that teachers rarely taught the skills to comprehend a text, research and application on teaching the skills in English speaking countries, specifically in United States and Europe were increased. However, what was the case in Indonesia was limited to be known. Indonesia has different characteristics to the countries that had been the place for research based instruction of reading comprehension. Specifically, in general, interest in reading among the people in Indonesia is lower than these English speaking countries. This study attempts to explore how students comprehend a text, and how reading comprehension was taught in two cities in Indonesia, from the teachers' perspectives.

Review of Literature

Reading Comprehension

Several experts (e.g., Sweet and Snow, 2002; Block, Pressley and Gambrell, 2002) defined reading comprehension in different ways. For example, Sweet and Snow (2002) define reading comprehension as a process which the reader extract and construct meaning through their involvement and interaction with a written language. Different formulation with the same meaning, Block, Pressley and Gambrell (2002) define reading comprehension as the process of acquiring meaning from a written text.

Therefore reading comprehension is generally defined as the process of constructing meaning from a written text.

Instruction in Reading Comprehension

The instruction of reading comprehension could be differentiated at least into two dimensions: implicit vs. explicit; traditional vs. recent theoretical treatments. The first dimension mentioned the way reading comprehension was taught, although implicitly through program such as morning reading, or explicitly in the title of the course reading comprehension. On the other hand, the second dimension traditional vs. recent theoretical treatments explained the way reading was taught. The recent theoretical treatment could explain reading instruction for example, using information and communication technology.

Apart from dimensions in teaching reading, in essence, instruction of reading comprehension have six functions needed to comprehend: (a) understanding the purpose of reading, (b) activating relevant prior knowledge, (c) allocating attention on major content, (d) critically evaluating the internal consistency, (e) monitoring ongoing activities, (f) drawing inferences. This six functions need to be implemented, therefore need to be taught implicitly or explicitly, using traditional or recent theoretical treatment.

Research Questions

There were two research questions for this study: (a) How students comprehend texts? (b) How reading comprehension was taught?

Method

Participants

Seven of the fifth grade primary school teachers were participated in this study. Four of them were teachers in a private school in Bandung (hereafter was called as School 1), and three of them were teacher in a state school in Cirebon (hereafter was called as School 2). The teachers has more than 15 years teaching experiences. Description of these participants shows in table 1.

Table 1
Description of participants

Teacher	School	Number of students in his/her class	Experiences in Teaching Indonesian Language (in years)	Teaching Fifth Grade (in years)
Teacher 1	1	39	28	13
Teacher 2	1	40	36	5
Teacher 3	1	37	15	3
Teacher 4	1	37	28	5
Teacher 5	2	34	15/3*	3
Teacher 6	2	28	15	4
Teacher 7	2	33	22	5

* 3 years experiences in teaching Indonesian language.

Measures

The measures used for this study were questionnaire developed by the researcher. The measures were differentiated into 3 parts: (a) the teacher's demographic information; (b) questions related to the students' ability in reading comprehension; and (c) questions related to the instruction of reading comprehension. The measures could be seen in the appendix 1.

Teacher demographic information. The information collected about the teachers' school, number of students has been taught, experiences in teaching, and education related to teaching reading comprehension.

Questions related to the students' ability in reading comprehension. The questionnaire collected two types of information which asked teachers to circle one of five alternatives and gave short explanation related to the answer. The first was information about students' ability in reading comprehension, which ranged from very good to very bad. The second was information about the way of students in reading, which was ranged from always to never.

Questions related to the instruction of reading comprehension. The questionnaire consisted of four open-ended items and 16 multiple choice items with the choices were from always to never. The open-ended items asked the teachers to explain the way they taught reading comprehension. The multiple choice items consisted items about the frequency of activities conducted in teaching reading comprehension.

Procedure

After the two schools gave permission for data collection, the questionnaire were distributed to the teachers, then several days latter were collected. Data was analyzed by counting the frequencies; the result is description of the data.

Result

Students' Reading Comprehension

Results showed that the teacher perceived differently about their students' reading comprehension. In general, the teacher perceived that most of their students have good abilities in reading comprehension. Problems of reading comprehension existed among the students, and these problems were recognised by the teachers (see figure 1).

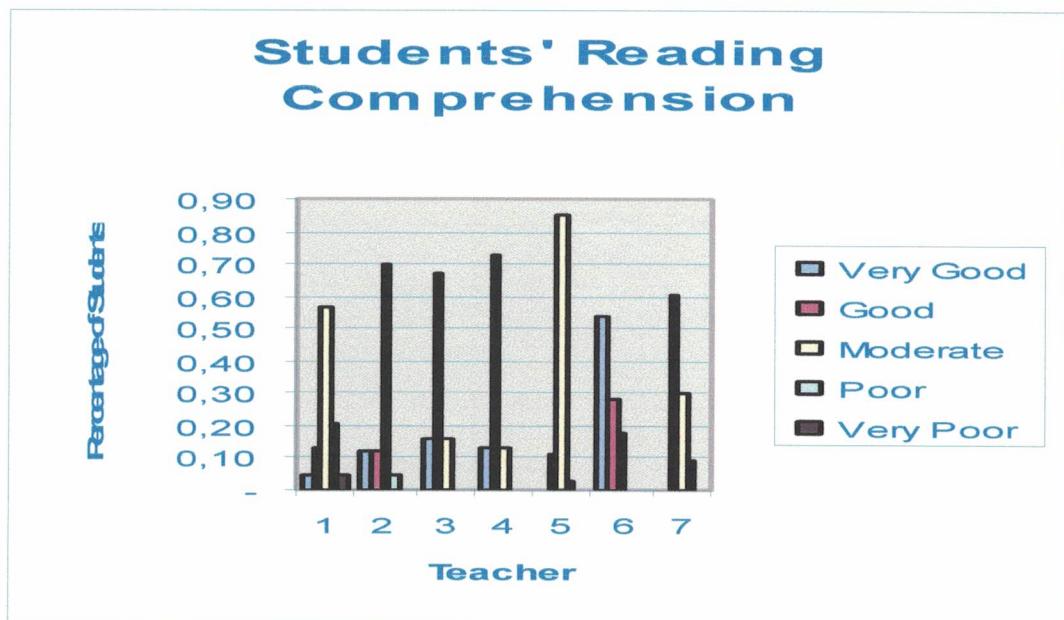
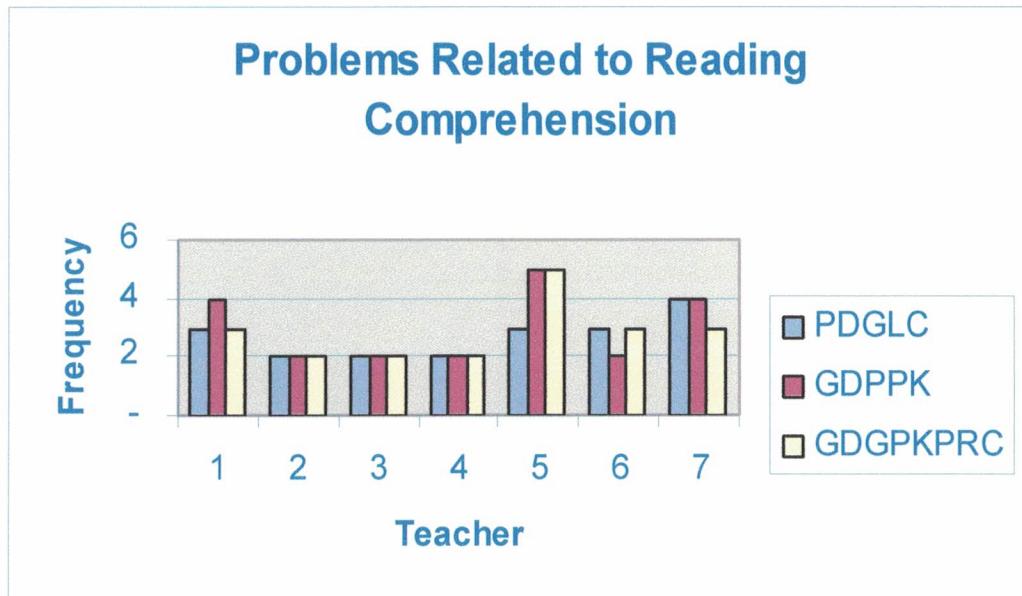


Figure 1. Teachers Perception on Students' Reading Comprehension

The teachers, except Teacher 6, found that the number of students who GDPPK or Good Decoding but Poor Prior Knowledge were higher than two other type of difficulty that were PDGLC (Poor Decoding but Good Listening Comprehension) or GDPKPRC (Good Decoding, Good Prior Knowledge but Poor Reading Comprehension). However, there were two teachers (Teacher 6 and 7) perceived that the frequency of students who PDGLC (Poor Decoding but Good Listening Comprehension) was more than other types of students difficulties (see figure 2).

Related to the statistical description, as examples, two of teachers' comment on students' reading comprehension was as follow:

- “*The children can read but less understand the content of the texts and want to finish quickly*” (Teacher 1).
- “*There are several students who have low interest in reading, especially [for the texts] related to the sciences, therefore their score in examination were low*” (Teacher 2)



- *PDGLC = Poor Decoding but Good Listening Comprehension*
- *GDPPK = Good Decoding but Poor Prior Knowledge*
- *GDGPKPRC = Good Decoding, Good Prior Knowledge but Poor Reading Comprehension*

Figure 2. Problems related to reading comprehension

Teaching Reading Comprehension

The frequent method used by teachers in teaching reading comprehension was question-answering. The visualising method was the most seldom way to be taught by teacher to comprehend.

However, the ways of teaching reading comprehension were slightly different in those two schools. In the School 1, students' independence in reading the text was present. After reading, the most basic method is by asking the students questions about the text. All teachers in this school participated in this study used this method. Variations among them were the additional activities accompany the question-answer method. The additional activities namely by asking the students to: (1) complete a sentence, (2) making a synopsis of the reading, (3) discussion about the reading.

In contrast, in the School 2, the guidance from the teacher was more evident. The three teachers participated in this study read and explain the text to the students. The variation between them was additional activities such as asking the student: (1) to read the text one by one in front of the class, (2) to find the difficult words, (3) to retell the content of the text using the students' own language, and (4) to retell the content of the text one by one in front of the class.

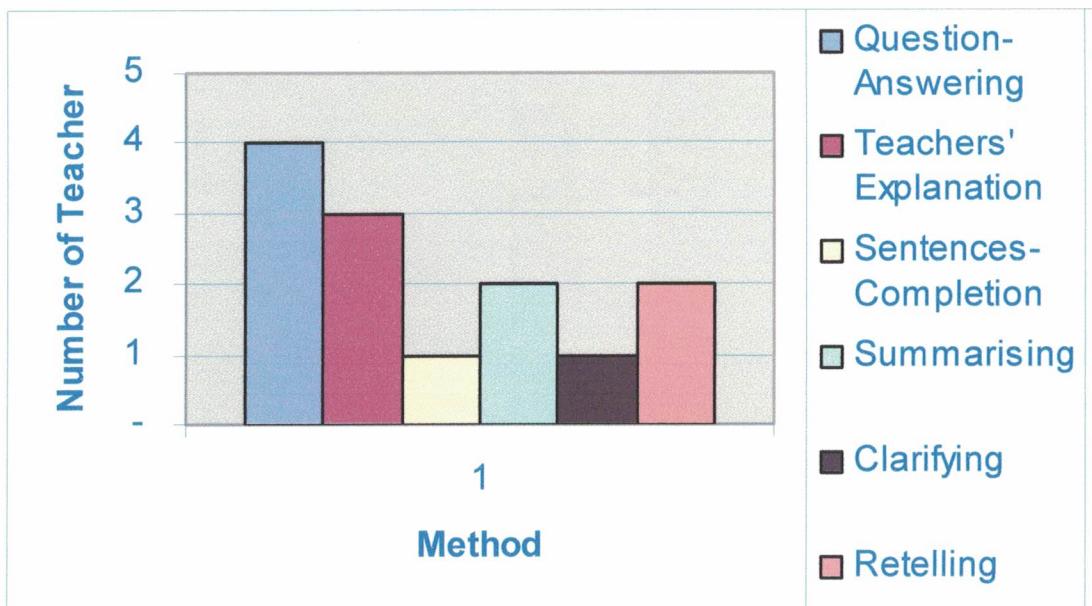


Figure 3. Methods of Teaching Reading Comprehension

Specifically, following are the teachers' comment on their method of teaching reading comprehension: (a) "The children were asked to reread then triggered by several questions" (by Teacher 1); (b) "The children were assigned to read one by one, approximately 15 students, then [I, the teacher] read for them, then [I, the teacher] explain the material shortly and clearly, therefore the children will completely understand" (by Teacher 5). The teachers' comments showed that the teachers did not taught the students strategies that enable students to have regulation. They prefer to guide and serve students until the students understand the text.

When the teachers were asked to comment on some activities, their comments showed that they have conducted some steps in methods of teaching reading comprehension, but again, they tend to serve and gave instruction, which was not lead to the students' self regulation. For example, (a) the activity in summarising: "... because the children have not understand yet the way to summarise" (by Teacher 5, sometimes conduct summarising method); (b) the activity in predicting: "... by showed them pictures or something which related to the text" (by Teacher 6); (c) the activity in constructing mental images: "[By] telling them [the students] a story therefore they understand the text" (by Teacher 7).

As has been said, when the teachers were asked to describe their method of teaching reading comprehension, the teachers' repertoire of the methods were limited to the method of: (a) Question-Answering (the most frequent); (b) Teacher Explanation; (c) Summarizing; (d) Retelling. However, when the teachers were asked to recognized several activities, they recognized and implemented other activities in teaching reading comprehension such as: (a) Question-Answering; (b) Clarifying; (c) Goal Setting; (d) Constructing Mental Images; (e) Predicting; (f) Making Conclusions; (g) Connecting to Prior Knowledge; (h) Rereading the Unfamiliar Part; (i) Rereading Important Points; (j) Solving the Comprehension Problems; (k) Summarizing; (l) Writing Main Ideas; (m)

Monitoring; (n) Oral Presenting of Main Ideas. In short, teacher recognized many methods, but implement the small number of their knowledge.

Discussion

Current study found that teachers perceived that most of their students have good abilities in reading comprehension. However, the teachers also recognised that problems of reading comprehension existed among the students.

Current study also found that The most frequent method of instruction of reading comprehension used by teachers was question-answering. Other frequent used methods were: teacher explanation, summarising, clarifying, retelling. The method of teaching less focused on preparing students to be independent and self-regulated in comprehend their reading. Teachers' knowledge about methods enhancing reading comprehension needs to be enriched.

Current study have limitation. This study is a kind of exploratory research for the further research in this area. The apparent limitations of this study were the limitedness of generalization of the result. The number of participants in this study was limited to seven teachers. They are not representative of the teacher's population in Indonesia. However, the result of this study could be use as a stepping stone to understand a big picture about reading comprehension and instruction in reading comprehension in big cities in Indonesia. This study conveniently describe a real condition in two small part in Indonesia, which to some extend, could be found in other places in Indonesia.

In addition, this study measures the teacher perception about what is going on in the classroom. The perception might be different to the daily practices. Further observation in the classroom about what the students and the teacher do will be useful.

Based on the result, researcher recommended the research-based methods in teaching reading comprehension in the future, especially those which preparing students to be independent and self-regulated need to be introduced to the teachers. Furthermore, a further study to investigate the profile of reading comprehension of the students, and the effectiveness of research-based methods, in Indonesian context, was needed. For further research, better research design, data collection method, and selection of subject were needed.

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Appendix 1: Measurement Instrument

Bandung, 18 Agustus 2004

Bapak dan Ibu Guru Yang Terhormat,

Dalam rangka mempelajari pengajaran pemahaman bacaan di Indonesia, saya bermaksud memperoleh gambaran mengenai hal yang telah berlangsung di Indonesia saat ini.

Berkenaan dengan hal tersebut di atas, mohon kiranya bantuan Bapak dan Ibu untuk mengisi angket yang saya susun terlampir. Angket tersebut menanyakan pendapat Bapak dan Ibu mengenai kesulitan kebanyakan siswa dalam hal memahami bacaan, dan mengenai cara pengajaran pemahaman bacaan.

Atas bantuan Bapak dan Ibu, saya sampaikan terimakasih.

Hormat saya,

Sri Tiatri (Peneliti)
Jl. Sangkuriang S-5 Bandung
Telp. 022-2500306

ANGKET mengenai PEMAHAMAN BACAAN
Peneliti: Sri Tiatri

I. DATA GURU:

- Kota tempat mengajar: ...
- Status Sekolah tempat mengajar: Negeri / Swasta
- Jumlah murid di kelas yang diajar: ... orang
- Keseluruhan pengalaman mengajar: ... tahun
- Pengalaman mengajar di kelas 5 SD: ... tahun
- Pengalaman mengajar Bahasa Indonesia: ... tahun
- Pendidikan atau pelatihan yang pernah diperoleh mengenai pangajaran pemahaman bacaan:
 - (1) Tempat:
Materi:
 - (2) Tempat:
Materi:
 - (3) Tempat:
Materi:

II. PERTANYAAN MENGENAI KEMAMPUAN MURID DALAM MEMAHAMI BACAAN

Keterangan:

SB = Sangat baik;
KB = Kurang Baik;

B = Baik;
SKB = Sangat Kurang Baik

C = Cukup;

PERTANYAAN	Pilihan Jawaban (Mohon jawaban dilingkari)	Keterangan (Silakan diisi dengan keterangan yang ingin disampaikan)
1) Menurut Bapak/Ibu, secara umum, bagaimana kemampuan murid-murid kelas 5 dalam memahami bacaan?	SB - B - C - KB - SKB	Sekitar berapa murid? SB = ... murid B = ... murid C = ... murid KB = ... murid SKB = ... murid

Keterangan:

S = Selalu
JR = Jarang

SR = Sering
TP = Tidak Pernah

K = Kadang-kadang

PERTANYAAN	Pilihan Jawaban (Mohon jawaban dilingkari)	Keterangan (Silakan diisi dengan keterangan yang ingin disampaikan)
2) Apakah murid Bapak/Ibu tidak lancar membaca, sering salah baca, membaca dengan lambat, membaca secara monoton, tidak ada	S – SR – K – JR – TP	

ekspresi, tetapi dapat memahami materi apabila materi itu dibacakan kepadanya?		
3) Apakah murid Bapak/Ibu dapat membaca dengan lancar, tetapi tidak dapat menjawab pertanyaan mengenai informasi yang ada di dalam teks yang dibaca karena tidak memiliki pengetahuan tentang hal yang dibaca?	S – SR – K – JR – TP	
4) Apakah murid Bapak/Ibu dapat membaca dengan lancar, tetapi tidak dapat menjawab pertanyaan mengenai informasi yang ada di dalam teks, padahal dapat memahami materi itu ketika materi itu dibacakan kepadanya?	S – SR – K – JR – TP	

III. PERTANYAAN MENGENAI PENGAJARAN PEMAHAMAN BACAAN

1) Bagaimanakah Bapak/Ibu mengajarkan cara memahami bacaan?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2) Menurut Bapak/Ibu, apakah para guru di Indonesia telah mengajarkan cara memahami bacaan kepada para murid kelas 5 SD? Apa yang mereka lakukan?

.....
.....

3) Apa yang telah dilakukan rekan (guru) Bapak/Ibu untuk mengajarkan cara memahami bacaan?

.....
.....

4) Apakah Bapak/Ibu pernah mendapatkan pendidikan atau pelatihan mengenai pengajaran pemahaman bacaan?

.....
.....

5) Mohon diisi kolom frekuensi pengajaran pemahaman bacaan di bawah ini:

Kegiatan yang dilakukan	Frekuensi	Keterangan (Silakan diisi dengan keterangan yang ingin disampaikan)
Sebelum membaca, menentukan tujuan yang ingin dicapai dari membaca teks tersebut	S – SR – K – JR – TP	
Membuat perkiraan mengenai apa yang akan dibaca	S – SR – K – JR – TP	
Membuat kesimpulan-kesimpulan mengenai hal yang dibaca	S – SR – K – JR – TP	
Mengaitkan hal yang dibaca dengan pengetahuan atau pengalaman terdahulu	S – SR – K – JR – TP	
Mencari arti kata yang tidak dimengerti	S – SR – K – JR – TP	
Membayangkan hal yang diceritakan dalam bacaan	S – SR – K – JR – TP	
Menjawab pertanyaan yang diberikan oleh guru atau pengarang buku	S – SR – K – JR – TP	
Membuat ringkasan	S – SR – K – JR – TP	

Kegiatan yang dilakukan	Frekuensi	Keterangan (Silakan diisi dengan keterangan yang ingin disampaikan)
Menemukan pokok-pokok isi bacaan dan menuliskannya	S – SR – K – JR – TP	
Menemukan pokok-pokok isi bacaan dan menyampaikannya secara lisan	S – SR – K – JR – TP	
Membaca kembali bagian yang penting	S – SR – K – JR – TP	
Membaca kembali bagian yang kurang dimengerti	S – SR – K – JR – TP	
Menyadari apakah diri sendiri mengerti teks yang dibaca	S – SR – K – JR – TP	
Mengetahui apa yang perlu dilakukan ketika mengetahui bahwa dirinya belum mengerti hal yang dibaca	S – SR – K – JR – TP	
...	S – SR – K – JR – TP	
...	S – SR – K – JR – TP	

6) Apakah ada hal lain yang ingin Bapak/Ibu sampaikan? Silakan hal tersebut dituliskan di bawah ini.

-- Terimakasih atas segala bantuan Bapak/Ibu mengisi angket ini --