



**THE ABILITY IN COMPREHENDING READING MATERIALS
IN RELATION TO THE FINAL ACHIEVEMENT
OF THE THIRD-GRADE STUDENTS OF MTs. AL-USWAH BERGAS
SEMARANG REGENCY**

A Final Project

**Submitted in Partial Fullfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of *Sarjana Pendidikan* in English**

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PERNYATAAN

Saya menyatakan bahwa yang tertulis di dalam skripsi ini benar-benar hasil karya saya sendiri, bukan jiplakan dari karya tulis orang lain, baik sebagian atau seluruhnya. Pendapat atau temuan orang lain yang terdapat dalam skripsi ini dikutip atau dirujuk berdasarkan kode etik ilmiah.

Semarang, Januari 2007

Titik Iswati

“I will do my best, God will do the rest”

To my parents, especially my beloved mother.

To my beloved husband, sisters and brother.

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I admit and realize that this final project is not perfect yet and still contains weaknesses. Therefore, I would be glad if criticism and suggestions are given to make this report better. I hope that this report will be useful for the readers and for the improvement of the English learning.

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Titik Iswati

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to find out the extent to which the students comprehend reading material is and the correlation between the students' comprehension ability and their national state exam result.

I am interested to choose this problem because reading is one of the skills that students should master in English learning. Besides, this research result would be beneficial for me, as an English teacher, and for the readers.

The population of this research is the third-grade students with total amount of 256 students. The sample chosen is 41 students in class III A. The object of this research is Reading Comprehension Ability and National State Exam.

The data were collected by using an instrument consisting of 65 items of multiple choice reading comprehension questions. The items were tried out to class III B before they were used as a research instrument. After analyzing their validity, reliability, the difficulty level and the discriminating power, 45 items were said to be valid and could be used as a research instrument.

To find out whether or not there is a correlation between reading comprehension ability as a dependent variable and national state exam as an independent variable, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used. The result shows that 29% of the students obtain average achievement, 64% of the students obtain below average and 7% of the students obtain insufficient achievement in their reading comprehension test. The students' reading comprehension ability is categorized into *fair category* for their average achievement point is between 60 – 74. Meanwhile, the national state exam average point is 5,89. It is said that the students have been successful in their national state exam. According to the Standard Operational Procedure from the National Education Department, their success is shown in the score above the passing grade of 4.26 (four point twenty six).

The result of the study is that there is a correlation between the students' comprehension ability with the examination score.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE	i
APPROVAL	ii
PERNYATAAN	iii
MOTTO	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
ABSTRACT	viii
TABLE OF CONTENT	ix
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF APPENDICES	xiii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background of the Study.....	1
1.2. Reasons for Choosing the Topic	3
1.3. Statements of the Problems	3
1.4. Objectives of the Study	4
1.5. Limitation of the Study	4
1.6. Significance of the Study	4
1.7. Outline of the Study	5
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE	7
2.1 Definition of Reading	8
2.2. Component of Reading	10

2.3.	Objective of Reading	10
2.4.	Importance of Reading	10
2.5.	Technique of Reading	11
2.5.1	Sensitizing	11
2.5.2	Improving Reading Speed	16
2.5.3	From Skimming to Scanning	16
2.6.	The Definition of Reading Comprehension	20
2.7.	Level of Comprehension	21
2.8.	Factors Influencing One's Comprehension	22
2.9.	Improving One's Comprehension	23
2.10.	Hypothesis	26
CHAPTER III: PROCEDURE OF INVESTIGATION		27
3.1	Role of the Researcher	27
3.2	Procedure of Collecting Data	27
3.3	Subject of Investigation	28
3.3.1	Population	28
3.3.2	Sample	28
3.4	Variables	29
3.5	The Instrument	29
3.6	Try-Out	29
3.7	Procedure of Analyzing Data	30
3.7.1	Validity of the Test	30

3.7.2	Reliability of the Test	31
3.7.3	Level of Difficulty	32
3.7.4	Discriminating Power	33
3.8	Correlation Analysis	33
3.8.1	Product Moment Correlation	33
CHAPTER IV: DATA INTERPRETATION		35
4.1	Statistical Analysis	35
4.2	Data Analysis	40
4.2.1	Reading Comprehension Test Result	40
4.2.2	National State Exam Result	43
4.2.3	Correlation of Students' Reading Comprehension and National State Exam Score	44
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION		47
5.1	Conclusion	47
5.2	Suggestion	47
BIBLIOGRAPHY		49
APPENDICES		51

LIST OF TABLES

1. Table 1 Validity Analysis Result	36
2. Table 2 Level of Difficulty Criteria	37
3. Table 3 Level of Difficulty Analysis Result	38
4. Table 4 Discriminating Power Criteria	39
5. Tabel 5 Discriminating Power Anlysis	39
6. Table 6 Result of Item Analysis	40
7. Table 7 Reading Comprehension Score	41
8. Table 8 Level of Achievement	42
9. Table 9 Students' Reading Comprehension Score Classification	42
10. Table 10 National State Exam Score	43
11. Table 10 Correlation Result of Students' Reading Comprehension Score and National State Exam Result	45

LIST OF APPENDICES

1. Research Instrument
2. Validity
3. Reliability
4. Discriminating Power
5. Difficulty Level
6. Correlation
7. National State Exam Result

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English is regarded as one of the most important and difficult subjects in all grade levels, particularly in junior high schools. It is the first foreign language in our country. Although English has been given since the elementary level, it seems that many students still find difficulties in understanding reading materials in their textbooks as well as in their work sheets.

Building reading ability is an essential goal for teachers at all grade levels. It is important to give more attention to reading than any other skills. Based on the 1994 Curriculum, the four skills of English (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are taught comprehensively. It is generally accepted that reading is believed to be one of the keys to success. Another reason is that reading is the key of knowledge. By reading we can keep up with the development of science and technology.

According to 1994 GBPP (Basic Course Outline), the purposes of teaching reading at the third-grade of junior high schools are described as follows:

Students can find or discover

1. certain information from the text
2. the general description of the content of the texts
3. the implicit main ideas of the texts
4. the explicit main ideas of the texts

5. all implicit detailed information of the texts
6. the explicit information of the texts
7. the interpretation of the meaning of a word, a phrase and a sentence based on the context and pleasure from the reading activity

Although the latest curriculum (Competence-Based Curriculum 2004) has been introduced, it is only applied in the first-grade of junior high schools. The 1994 curriculum is still used for it takes times to socialize the new curriculum.

Students' success in learning English at school is assessed by the results of their national state exam. Here, the assessment of students' success in English language teaching is assessed by their ability in answering the items to be tested. The students are regarded to be successful in their English if they get good results in their test without considering whether or not those students are able to use English for communicating their ideas. According to the Standard Operational Procedure from the National Education Department, this success is realized by their achievement with the score of at least 4.26 (four point twenty six) in their national state exam.

Generally, the test items of the national state exam include reading comprehension as many as fifty percent of the items to be tested; structure as many as twenty five percent of the items to be tested; and written dialogues as many as twenty five percent of the items to be tested.

From the above description, it is known that reading comprehension materials is the most amounts of the test items. I assume that if a student is able to

comprehend passages properly, he or she will be successful in answering his or her test.

I am interested in analyzing the reading comprehension's ability of the third-grade level of students of MTs. Al-Uswah Bergas Semarang Regency because when I taught in that school I found that the students' abilities in the previous years were poor. It could be seen from their achievement in the four language skills based on their test result recapitulation. There were some factors causing that low achievement such as the English teachers that taught at the school were not qualified. It means that those teachers did not graduate from the English Department. Another factor was the students who had low motivation in studying English.

1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic

There are two reasons why I chose the topic.

1. First, the curriculum used is 1994 curriculum which required the students to reach the score above the passing grade of 4.26. The ability in mastering the four language skills is important however I really want to know how reading comprehension would influence the students' success.
2. Second, to find out if there is a correlation between the students' reading comprehension ability with their national state exam result so that the result of the research will be beneficial both for students and for teachers of English.

1.3 Statements of the Problems

From the above description, there are two problems i.e.:

1. To what extent is the students' ability in reading comprehension?
2. Does the students' ability in comprehending the passages influence their national state exam result?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the extent to which students master reading comprehension?
2. To discover the correlation between the students' mastery in reading comprehension and the examination result?

1.5 Limitation of the Study

In this study, I limit my research in reading comprehension. What I mean by the students here are the third-grade level of students of MTs. Al-Uswah Bergas Semarang Regency.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study can be described as follows:

1. For the students

It is expected that the result of the investigation will be advantageous inputs for the English learners in general, and particularly be advantageous for

the students of junior high schools so that those students will be able to improve their ability in learning written English materials. By improving such capability, it is expected that the students will have better understanding of the language, which is realized by their success in doing their tests. Further, they will be able to use the language for communicating their ideas.

2. For the teachers

It is expected that the result of the research would be useful inputs for the teachers of English in teaching learning process especially in teaching reading materials to the students.

3. For Educational System in Indonesia

The result of this study is expected to give a valuable contribution to the development of English teaching in the school concerned.

1.7 Outline of the Study

This report consists of five chapters, which can be described as follows:

Chapter I deals with the introduction. It includes background of the study, reason for choosing the topic, statement of the problem, objective of the study, limitation of the study, significance of the study, and outline of the study.

Chapter II provides review of the related literature, which gives the explanation of the framework of the study. This chapter contains the theories of reading comprehension.

Chapter III deals with the procedures of investigation. It includes object of the study, role of the researcher, procedure of collecting data, and procedure of analyzing data.

Chapter IV presents the result of the analysis. This chapter describes the data analysis and the general findings.

Chapter V is the conclusion. This chapter concludes all of the process of the observation and the findings of the study. This report is also provided with appendices and bibliography.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITEARUTE

Harris (1969:59) points out some abilities needed in reading a language which include at least the following:

1. Language and graphic symbols
 - a. Comprehending a large percentage of lexical items occurring in nonspecialized writing and being able to derive the meaning of unfamiliar items (or special uses of common items) from the contexts in which they occur
 - b. Understanding the syntactical patterns and morphological forms characteristic of the written language and following the longer and more involved stretches of languages (sentences and sequence of sentences) occurring in formal writing
 - c. Responding correctly to the graphic symbols of writing (e.g., punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, italicizing) used to convey and clarify meaning
2. Ideas
 - a. Identifying the writer's purpose and central idea
 - b. Understanding the subordinate ideas which support the thesis
 - c. Drawing correct conclusions and valid inferences from what is given

3. Tone and Style

- a. Recognizing the author's attitude toward the subject and the reader; understanding the tone of the writing
- b. Identifying the methods and stylistic devices by which the author conveys his idea

2.1 Definition of Reading

Reading is one of the major aspects of language skills, which has a distinctive characteristic, which differentiates it from the other skills. Reading is the core of discussion in the chapters of books, which are used in Junior High Schools and Senior High Schools.

According to Heilman (1981:2) reading is a process of getting meaning from printed word symbols. It is not merely a process of making conventionalized noises associated with these symbols.

Harrison and Smith (1980:8) define reading as the act of responding with appropriate meaning to printed or written verbal symbols. It means that reading is the result of interaction between the graphic symbols that represent the language and the reader's language skill, cognitive skill and knowledge of words. In this process the reader tries to recreate the meaning intended by the writer.

Meanwhile, Chamber and Lowry (in Burns et. al, 1984:11) point out that:

Reading is more than merely recognizing the words from which certain combination of letters bring about a correct recall. It includes the whole gamut of thinking process: feeling and defining some needs identifying a solution for meeting the need, selection from alternative means, experimenting with choices, rejecting or retaining the chosen route and devising some means of evaluating and result.

Reading activities needs a process by which people comprehend what they read. That process happens when they face written symbols. They look at them through their eyes, and then their mind will process them. Since then, a process of viewing changes into a process of comprehending. Therefore, this process can be called a cognitive process. Furthermore, Reinking and Scheiner as quoted by Kustaryo (1988:2) suggests that reading is an active cognitive process of interacting with printed or written verbal symbols and monitoring comprehension to establish meaning.

On the other hand, Carrell (1988:12) says that reading is a receptive language process. She adds that it is a psycholinguistic process in that it starts with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning, which the reader constructs.

Bonds (1984:2) states that reading is the recognition of printed or written symbols, which serve as stimuli to recall of meaning built up through the reader's past experience.

In comprehending the message of a text, reading can function as a communicative process between a writer and a reader. Reinking and Scheiner as cited by Kustaryo (1988:2) suggest that reading is an instantaneous recognition of various written symbols, simultaneous association of the symbols with existing knowledge, comprehension of information and ideas communicated. When reader interacts with printed verbal symbols, the visual (written) information results in his comprehending the message.

2.2. Component of reading

According to Heilman (1981:241), there are some components of reading.

Those components are:

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

2.3. Objective of Reading

In general, the objective of reading is classified into various kinds, such as getting the general information of a text, getting the specific information of a text, and reading for interest.

Nurhadi (1987:11) states that the objectives of reading are to understand detailed information from any books, to get the main ideas of any passages, and also to recognize the meaning of words. By understanding the objectives of reading, the reader can get information not only implicitly but also explicitly.

2.4. Importance of Reading

Mikulecky (1986:1) states that reading is important when learning a new language. There are some reasons why reading is important i.e.:

1. Reading helps you to think in the new language

2. Reading helps you to build a better vocabulary
3. Reading makes you more comfortable with written English. You can write better English if you feel comfortable with the language
4. Reading may be the only way for you to use English if you live in a non-English speaking country
5. Reading can help you to plan to study in an English speaking country

Getting students to read in English is vitally important for a number of reasons. Reading is a necessary skill for many, if not all, foreign language learners. Reading in the foreign language is important because it shows the written language in action. Frequent reading exposes students to the language in a way that helps them to acquire the language itself.

2.5. Technique of Reading

Most of the techniques are already familiar to the students in their native language but some students have difficulty in applying them to a second language. Nunan (1981:14-19) as quoted by Grellet defines some reading techniques as follows:

2.5.1 Sensitizing

The aim of this section is to provide exercises that will develop the strategies that students need to cope with unfamiliar words and complex or apparently obscure sentences. It should ensure that they do not stumble on every difficulty or get discouraged from the outset. Sensitizing includes:

1. Inference

Inference means making use of syntactic, logical and cultural clues to discover the meaning of unknown elements. If these are words, the word-formation and derivation will also play an important part.

When dealing with a new text, it is better not to explain the difficult words to the learners beforehand. They would only get used to being given “pre-processed” texts and would never make the effort to cope with a difficult passage on their own. On the contrary, students should be encouraged to make a guess at the meaning of the words they do not know rather than look them up in a dictionary. If they need to look the dictionary to get a precise meaning -which is an important and necessary activity too- they should only do so after having tried to work out a solution on their own. This is why, from the very beginning, it is vital to develop the skill of inference.

2. Understanding Relation within the Sentence

Inability to infer the meaning of unknown elements often causes discouragement and apprehension in students when they are faced with a new text. A similar problem arises when students are unable to get an immediate grasp of sentence structures. This will be a definite handicap in the case of texts with relatives, embedded clauses and complex structures. It is therefore important to train the students, as early as possible, to look first for the “core” of the sentences (subject+verb). In order to do that, the learners can be asked to divide passages into sense groups and underline, box, or recognize in some other way the important elements of each sentence in a passage.

3. Linking Sentences and Ideas

Another area in which it is essential to prepare the students is in recognizing the various devices used to create textual cohesion and more particularly the use of reference and link-words.

Reference covers all the devices that permit lexical relationship within a text. It is important for the students to realize that a text is not made up of independent sentences or clauses, but it is a web of related ideas that are announced, introduced and taken up again later throughout the passage with the help of reference.

If the reader does not understand some words of the passages, some of the facts and ideas will probably escape him. But if he does not understand inter – or – intra sentential connectors, he may also fail to recognize the communicative value of the passage since those words act as signals indicating the function of what follows.

2.5.2 Improving Reading Speed

Students who read too slowly will easily get discouraged. They will also tend to stumble on unfamiliar words, and fail to grasp the general meaning of the passage.

2.5.3 From Skimming to Scanning

One of the most important points to keep in mind when teaching reading comprehension is that there is not one type of reading but several according to

one's reasons for reading. Students will never read efficiently unless they can adapt their reading speed and techniques to their aim when reading. By reading all texts in the same way, students would waste time and fail to remember points of importance to them because they would absorb too much non-essential information.

Nunan suggests some ways below as cited by Grellet to make the students more confident and efficient readers:

1. Predicting

This is not really a technique but a skill, which is basic to all the reading techniques (practiced in this part) and to the process reading generally. It is the faculty of predicting or guessing what is to come next, making use of grammatical, logical and cultural clues. This skill at the core of techniques such as "anticipation" or "skimming" and will therefore be practiced in those sections, but it may be worthwhile to devote some time to more systematic training by giving the students unfinished passages to complete or by going through a text little by little, stopping after each sentence in order to predict what is likely to come next.

2. Previewing

Unlike predicting, previewing is a very specific reading technique which involves using the table of contents, the appendix, the preface, and the chapter and paragraph headings in order to find out where the required information is likely to be. It is particularly useful when skimming and scanning and as a study skill.

3. Anticipation

Motivation is of great importance when reading. Partly because most of what we usually read (book, advertisement, magazine, etc), but also because being motivated means that we start reading the text prepared to find a number of things in it, to find answers to a number of questions and specific information or ideas we are interested in. This “expectation” is inherent in the process of reading which is a permanent interrelationship between the reader and the text. What we already know about the subject and what we are looking for are probably just as important as what we actually draw from the text. When reading, we keep making prediction, which, in turn, will be confirmed or corrected.

This underlines the artificiality of the classroom situation in which students are often confronted with passages they know nothing about, do not and cannot situate in a more general cultural context. It is even more important to have more particular desire to read. It is very difficult, in such conditions, to expect the students to learn to read better.

The practice of letting the students choose the topics they wish to read about should therefore be encouraged. However, when dealing with larger groups, it may not always be easy to agree on definite subjects and the teacher may also wish to introduce a new topic, which he believes might be of interest. When this is the case it is often worthwhile to spend some time getting the students ready to a given text. Before the students start reading a

text, they can always be asked to look for the answers to specific questions. This will give an incentive to their reading activity.

4. Skimming and Scanning

Both skimming and scanning are specific reading techniques necessary for quick and efficient reading. When skimming, we get through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it is organized, or to get an idea of the tone of the intention of the writer.

When scanning, we only try to locate specific information and often we do not even follow the linearity of the passage to do so, we simply let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for, whether it is a name, a date, or a less specific piece of information. Skimming is therefore a more thorough activity, which requires an overall view of the text and implies a definite reading competence. Scanning, on the contrary, is far more limited since it only means retrieving what information is relevant to our purpose. It is usual to make use of these two activities together when reading a given text. For instance, we may well skim through an article first just to know whether it is worth reading, and then read it through more carefully because we have decided that it is of interest. It is also possible afterwards to scan the same article in order to note down a figure or a name, which we particularly want to remember.

2.6. The Definition of Reading Comprehension

Jarolimek (1985:243) states that reading with comprehension means that the reader is able to extract from the selection its essential facts and understandings, visualize details and sense the readiness of facts.

From the statement above, we know that reading with comprehension is not only reading the selection but also trying to comprehend or understand the message in the selection. One indication that the reader already comprehends the selection is he/she can answer the questions based on the selection.

Jarolimek (1985:244) points out that reading comprehension is social studies consisting of at least four components:

1. Getting the literal meaning or a general understanding of what is being communicated.
2. Understanding and remembering facts and details that support the idea.
3. Recognizing and remembering the sequence of ideas or event presented
4. Following direction.

All of the four components above show that in reading comprehension the readers have to understand and remember the author's idea in the selection and try to find the supporting details that support the ideas.

Zorn (1980:70) states simpler definition about reading comprehension. He says that reading comprehension is the art of understanding what you read. He adds that comprehension is one of the elements of reading, which is invisible. It is regarded as the invisible element because it cannot be attributed to certain activities, which can be seen, studied and understood.

Since it is also hard to definitely define reading comprehension, some linguists define it differently, but Kustaryo (1988:11-12) almost has the same opinion as Zorn concerning the definition of reading comprehension. She states that reading with comprehension means understanding what has been read. It is an active thinking process that depends not only on comprehension skills but also on the student's experiences and prior knowledge. Reading comprehension itself is a process of making sense of written ideas through meaningful interpretation and interaction with the language (Heilman, 1981:242).

Harris (1981:479) defines comprehension ability as a set of generalized knowledge acquisition skills, which permit people to acquire and exhibit information gained as a consequence of reading printed language.

2.7. Level of Comprehension

By knowing the level of comprehension, the weaknesses of the readers can be found; therefore, it will help both the teachers and the learners. According to Burns, et al. (1984:177), there are four levels of comprehensions:

1. Literal Reading

Reading for literal comprehension, which involves acquiring information that is directly stated in a section, is important and also a prerequisite for higher level understanding. At this level, readers are able to comprehend what the author has said.

2. Interpreting Reading

Interpreting reading involving reading between the lines or making inferences is the process of deriving ideas, which are implied, rather than directly stated. At this level, the reader is able to understand what the author meant.

3. Critical Reading

Critical reading is evaluating written material- comparing the ideas discovered in the material which is known standards and drawing conclusion about their accuracy, appropriateness. Critical reading depends upon literal comprehension and interpretive comprehension and gasping ideas is especially important.

4. Creative Reading

Creative reading involves going beyond the material presented by the authors. It requires readers to think as they read, just as critical reading does, and it also requires them to use their imagination.

2.8. Factors Influencing One's Comprehension

Nuttal (1982:5) says there are many factors that can make a text difficult to be understood by the readers. Some factors making a text difficult to be understood are:

1. The difference code between the writer and the reader

The reader finds a text difficult because he/she is not familiar with the code in which the writer has expressed it. They have a different code in

communication. So, one of the prerequisites for satisfactory communication is that the writer and the reader should share the same code.

2. The lack of the reader's previous knowledge about science

A text is difficult to the reader who knows nothing about science. Although he/she will find some of the difficult words in a dictionary, it will not help him/her to understand the definition. So, the reader's previous knowledge is important in understanding a text.

3. The limited of reader's vocabulary

The reader finds a text difficult because his/her vocabulary is limited. He/she cannot translate a text into extremely simple English and the message is not challenging intellectually.

2.9. Improving One's Comprehension

One important factor that influences the students' reading comprehension achievement is vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary is one of the important causes of poor reading comprehension and faulty reading. Most students cannot understand articles or textbooks because their vocabulary is very limited. For this reason, the teacher should help the students to improve their vocabulary.

According to Langan's (1994:30), there are some ways, which can be used to improve students' vocabulary:

1. Context Clue

When students find unfamiliar words in their reading, the teacher should not give those words' meaning directly. It will be difficult for the

students to memorize those words. The better way can be used by using context clues. There are some advantages of using context clues. Those advantages are described as follows:

- a. It will save our time when we are reading, we will not have to stop to look up words in the dictionary.
- b. It will improve our understanding of what we read because we will know more of the words
- c. It will expand our vocabulary.

2. Using the dictionary

Using the dictionary to determine a word's meaning is more difficult for the young student than an adult may suppose. When students use dictionary, make sure that they know how to use the dictionary. Among the skills one must teach according to Evelyn Jan Tausech (in Clark and Starr, 1981:229) are the following:

The secondary student should be able to recognize alphabetical sequence, use guide words, identify root word in both inflected and derived forms, select the definition that fits the context and realize the differing purposes of comma and semicolon as used in dictionary meaning. He should be capable of using the pronunciation key: the etymology key and responding correctly to the accent work. He should know that geographical and biological information could be located in some dictionaries and understanding the limited nature of this information so that he uses it appropriately.

From the statement above, we know that we should do many things when we look up the dictionary. Moreover, it is impossible for students to look up every unfamiliar word in a dictionary because it will take a long time. Using a dictionary to improve our vocabulary has some weaknesses i.e.:

- (1) The definition may include words student does not understand
- (2) There are many words having more than one meaning listed for them
- (3) The difficulty to remember the new words.

We can use the dictionary as the last resort when puzzle or to confirm what we have already guessed. In using the dictionary, the teacher should point out to the students how to use the dictionary effectively, so they will become skillful in its use.

From the above description, we know that using context clues is more effective than using dictionaries. It means that new words and terms should be presented and developed in the context of a phrase or a sentence rather than in isolation.

To summarize, reading is an ability of cognitive process of interaction between the graphic symbols and the language skills of a reader. Reading is also a process of communication between a writer and a reader. A writer has messages in his or her mind, such as feeling, facts, ideas and arguments he or she wants to share. The writer puts the messages into words or printed verbal symbols. When the messages enter the reader's mind, it means that the communication happens. In comprehending the content of the text, the reader must not only use eyes, but also mind concentration to catch the writer's idea.

2.10. Hypothesis

From the description above I conclude a hypothesis that:

“There is a correlation between the students’ reading comprehension ability and their national state exam result”.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE OF INVESTIGATION

This research is descriptive research. According to Sax's (1979:75) descriptive research is research involving the collection of data for the purpose of describing existing data. Further explanation about descriptive research is proposed by Best (1981:25) who states that the descriptive research describes what it is. It involves the description, recording analysis, and interpretation of conditions that exist. It involves some types of comparison and contrast and attempt to discover relationship between non-manipulated variables.

3.1 Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in this report is to investigate the level of ability of the third grade students of MTs Al-Uswah Bergas Semarang Regency in comprehending reading materials and the correlation between the reading comprehension ability and the students' final achievement. The researcher would like to know whether or not the students' reading comprehension ability has a significance contribution to their final test achievement that the result of the research would be a beneficial input to the English teaching in general.

3.2 Procedure of Collecting Data

The data in this report were obtained by conducting:

1. Field Research

To find out the data of the ability of students' reading comprehension, I have administered a reading comprehension test to the third grade students of MTs Al-Uswah Bergas Semarang Regency in the academic year 2004/2005.

2. Documentary research

To find out the data of national examination result, I took the data from the school concerned.

3.3 Subject of Investigation

3.3.1 Population

Best (1981:8) defines population as group of individuals that has one or more characteristics in common that is of interest to the writer. The population may be all the individuals of a particular type or a more restricted part of that group. The population of this report was the students of the third-grade of MTs Al-Uswah Bergas Semarang Regency. Those students were classified into six classes, which were IIIA, IIIB, IIIC, IIID, IIIE, and IIIF. The total students of the third-grade of MTs Al-Uswah Bergas in the academic year 2004/2005 were 256 students.

3.3.2 Sample

Nawawi (1983:144) states that a sample is a part of population that represents the whole population. Arikunto (2002:112) also has the same opinion as Nawawi in describing the definition of a sample. A sample is a limited number elements selected from the population to be the representative of that population. According to Arikunto's, a writer may take 10%-15%, or 20%-25% or more of

the population used as the sample. If the population is homogenous enough and the number of the population is less than 100, we can take about 20%-25%.

I chose class IIIA as a sample to be the representative of the population because these students have represented the whole population. The numbers of the students of the class concerned were forty-one students.

3.4 Variables

A variable is a characteristic that takes on different values or conditions for different individuals (Wiersma, 1991:25). There are two variables in this study. Those variables are:

- a. Reading comprehension ability as an independent variable, and
- b. Students' national state exam result a dependent variable.

3.5 The Instrument

An instrument plays an important role in a research. Heaton (1975:1) says that test may be constructed primarily as device to reinforce learning and to motivate the students or primarily as a means of assessing the students' performance in the language.

3.6 Try-Out

The instrument was tried out before being given to the chosen sample. In this research, try-out was conducted for 38 students in class III B on Tuesday, April 5th, 2005.

3.7 Procedure of Analyzing Data

3.7.1 Validity of the Test

I used content validity I wanted to measure the students' reading comprehension ability. In line with the issue, Moore (1983:212) asserts that content validity is most useful with intelligence, ability, achievement and skill, and proficiency test.

Ary (2004:296) as quoted by Furchan states that the researcher should compose the test, which is used as an instrument in the research, by consulting to the experts in order for the test or the instrument to be valid.

I took the following considerations before constructing the items of reading comprehension test.

1. Consulting the GBPP (Basic Course Outline) in selecting the items to be tested in the research. The test items involved the materials of reading comprehension related to those mentioned in the Basic Course Outline.
2. Consulting the first and second adviser before constructing the test items.
3. Choosing the appropriate topics of the passages based on the curriculum used in order for the instrument to cover all the reading material items taught in the third-grade of junior high schools.

Besides using content validity, I used empirical validity by administering try-out in my research. To find out the validity, I used this formula:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \cdot \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{\{N \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2\} \{N \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$

(Arikunto, 2002: 146)

in which:

r_{xy} = correlation coefficient

N = number of students

x = total of item score

y = total of the score

3.7.2 Reliability of the Test

Heaton (1984:155) says that reliability is also an essential characteristic of a good test. Meanwhile, Gay and Dielhi as quoted by Sigit (2003:146) define that reliability is the ability to measure without any mistakes and the result will always be consistence although the test is used by other people in different places. Gay and Dielhi say that reliability means consistency, dependability and trustworthiness.

Reliability has to do with the result. It means that the examinee will always find approximately the same result if the same test is given to the same examinee in different occasions, different places and if the answer sheets are graded by different people.

Reliability can be measured by using K-R 21 formula as follows:

$$r_{11} = \left(\frac{k}{k-1} \right) \left(1 - \frac{M(k-M)}{kVt} \right)$$

(Arikunto, 2002:164)

in which:

$$V_t = \frac{\sum Y^2 - \frac{(\sum Y)^2}{n}}{n}$$

$$M = \frac{\sum Y}{n}$$

in which:

r_{11} : instrument reliability

k : total item to be tested

M : total score average

V_t : total varians

Y : total score

n : number of students

3.7.3 Level of Difficulty

The difficulty index or the facility value of an item shows how easy or difficult the item proved in the test. Analysis of difficulty level is intended to select the items that have a good level of difficulty. An item is said to have a good level of difficulty if it is not too easy or too difficult. This formula was used to compute the value of level of difficulty:

$$P = \frac{B}{J_s}$$

(Arikunto, 2005:208)

in which:

P = the level of difficulty

B = the number of students who answered correctly

JS = the total number of the students

3.7.4 Discriminating Power

Analysis of discriminating power is important to distinguish the high and low achievers. Heaton (1975:157) states that the discrimination of the test is its capacity to discriminate among the different candidates and to reflect the differences in the performance of the individuals in the group.

The discriminating power of the items was measured by using this formula:

$$D = \frac{B_A}{J_A} - \frac{B_B}{J_B}$$

(Arikunto, 2005:213)

in which:

D = the discrimination index

B_A = the number of students in upper group who answered the item correctly

B_B = the number of students in lower group who answered the item correctly

J_A = the number of students in upper group

J_B = the number of students in lower group

3.8 Correlation Analysis

3.8.1 Product Moment Correlation

This study involved two variables. Those two variables were reading comprehension ability as an independent variable and students' national state exam result as a dependent variable. This study estimated the students' success in

English. According to the Standard Operational Procedure from the National Education Department, this success was realized by their achievement with the score of at least 4.26 (four point twenty six) in their national state exam. I assumed that if the students' comprehension towards passages in English was good, they would be successful in their test. This assumption was based on the fact that the majority of the test items were dominated by passages or texts.

The estimation above was proved by using the formula called Product Moment Correlation, which studied the relationship between these two variables. I used this formula to calculate the relationship of X that represented the students' reading comprehension ability to Y that represented the students' final achievement, which was symbolized by r .

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \cdot \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{\{N \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2\} \{N \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$

(Arikunto, 2002:146)

in which:

r_{xy} = correlation coefficient

N = the number of students

x = independent variable score

y = dependent variable score

If $r_{xy} > r_{tabel}$ meant that the hypothesis, stating that there was a relationship between reading comprehension ability and students' national state exam result, could be accepted.

CHAPTER IV

DATA INTERPRETATION

Reading comprehension, which is one skill of the four language skills in English, is regarded as a significant skill that should be mastered by those who learn English. In my opinion, secondary students need to master this skill, considering reading comprehension is one of the skills tested in the national state exam. I assume that the students' reading comprehension ability could influence their achievement in the final examination.

Regarding the importance of mastering reading comprehension, I conducted a test for I wanted to know the extent to which students' master reading comprehension and if there is a correlation between their comprehension ability with their achievement in doing their test.

To answer those two questions, I conducted research to prove my assumption that there is a correlation between students' reading comprehension ability with their examination results.

I did a series of steps in my research and the result of the research is described as the following:

4.1 Statistical Analysis

After constructing an instrument, I gave that instrument to class III B to be tried out whether or not that instrument was valid, reliable, had a good level of

difficulty and if that instrument could distinguish high and low achievers, before it was given to the sample of the research.

The result of the validity analysis can be seen in the following table:

Table 1
Validity Analysis Results

Item number	r_{xy}	Criteria	Item number	R_{xy}	Criteria	Item number	r_{xy}	Criteria
1	0.578	Valid	23	-0.336	Invalid	45	-0.150	Invalid
2	0.539	Valid	24	-0.018	Invalid	46	0.419	Valid
3	-0.255	Invalid	25	0.694	Valid	47	0.086	Invalid
4	0.201	Invalid	26	0.093	Invalid	48	0.446	Valid
5	0.460	Valid	27	0.444	Valid	49	0.133	Invalid
6	0.757	Valid	28	0.658	Valid	50	0.033	Invalid
7	0.296	Invalid	29	0.499	Valid	51	0.670	Valid
8	0.557	Valid	30	0.618	Valid	52	0.412	Valid
9	0.460	Valid	31	0.464	Valid	53	0.062	Invalid
10	0.588	Valid	32	0.412	Valid	54	0.440	Valid
11	0.529	Valid	33	0.499	Valid	55	0.568	Valid
12	0.435	Valid	34	0.482	Valid	56	0.493	Valid
13	0.489	Valid	35	0.368	Valid	57	0.154	Invalid
14	0.416	Valid	36	-0.060	Invalid	58	0.468	Valid
15	0.401	Valid	37	0.425	Valid	59	0.342	Valid
16	0.351	Valid	38	0.354	Valid	60	-0.024	Invalid
17	0.130	Invalid	39	0.510	Valid	61	0.360	Valid
18	-0.064	Invalid	40	0.043	Invalid	62	0.377	Valid
19	0.144	Invalid	41	0.578	Valid	63	0.653	Valid
20	0.296	Invalid	42	0.385	Valid	64	0.477	Valid
21	0.371	Valid	43	0.401	Valid	65	0.366	Valid
22	-0.371	Invalid	44	0.369	Valid			

From the result above, it could be seen that there are 20 invalid items. Those invalid items are numbers 3, 4, 7, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 36, 40, 45, 47, 49, 50, 53, 57 and 60. Those twenty items have r_{xy} value less than r_{table} in number of

subject 38 that is 0,320, so that those twenty items are said to be invalid. The forty five valid items can be used as the research instrument; they are numbers 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 21, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 48, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64 and 65.

Besides having validity, the instrument is reliable because after I tried out the instrument to six groups of students in class B, C, D, E and F, the result shows that r_{11} is 0,824 with the level of significancy 5% and the result of r_{tabel} is 0,320. The criteria used to determine reliability is if $r_{11} > r_{tabel}$, the instrument is said to be reliable. Therefore, it can be said that the test instrument is reliable to be used in this research because r_{11} score is more than r_{tabel} .

The test instrument is said to be good enough to be used in research if it is not too difficult nor too easy. The criteria used to determine Level of Difficulty is shown in the following table:

Table 2
Level of Difficulty Criteria

Interval	Criteria
$0.0 \leq P \leq 0.3$	Difficult
$0.3 < P \leq 0.7$	Medium
$0.7 < P \leq 1.0$	Easy

According to the result of the try-out analysis, the level of difficulty result can be seen from the table below:

Table 3
Level of Difficulty Analysis Result

Item number	P	Criteria	Item number	P	Criteria	Item number	P	Criteria
1	0.87	Easy	23	0.21	Difficult	45	0.21	Difficult
2	0.89	Easy	24	0.18	Difficult	46	0.53	Medium
3	0.08	Difficult	25	0.82	Easy	47	0.53	Medium
4	0.95	Easy	26	0.76	Easy	48	0.55	Medium
5	0.89	Easy	27	0.53	Medium	49	0.47	Medium
6	0.50	Medium	28	0.87	Easy	50	0.82	Easy
7	0.95	Easy	29	0.82	Easy	51	0.79	Easy
8	0.82	Easy	30	0.84	Easy	52	0.74	Easy
9	0.89	Easy	31	0.32	Medium	53	0.26	Difficult
10	0.79	Easy	32	0.50	Medium	54	0.74	Easy
11	0.89	Easy	33	0.37	Medium	55	0.89	Easy
12	0.84	Easy	34	0.21	Difficult	56	0.84	Easy
13	0.55	Medium	35	0.66	Medium	57	0.92	Easy
14	0.82	Easy	36	0.37	Medium	58	0.63	Medium
15	0.89	Easy	37	0.79	Easy	59	0.42	Medium
16	0.89	Easy	38	0.82	Easy	60	0.32	Medium
17	0.97	Easy	39	0.82	Easy	61	0.71	Easy
18	0.76	Easy	40	0.76	Easy	62	0.82	Easy
19	0.89	Easy	41	0.68	Medium	63	0.74	Easy
20	0.95	Easy	42	0.82	Easy	64	0.66	Medium
21	0.76	Easy	43	0.89	Easy	65	0.34	Medium
22	0.24	Difficult	44	0.84	Easy			

Based on the data from the table above, the result shows that from 65 items to be tested, there are 40 easy items, 18 items with medium level of difficulty and 7 difficult items.

The test instrument was used to differentiate the high and low achiever. The criteria below is used in determining the discriminating power:

Table 4
Discriminating Power Criteria

Interval	Criteria
$D \leq 0,20$	Poor
$0.2 < D \leq 0.4$	Satisfactory
$0.4 < D \leq 0.7$	Good
$0.7 < D \leq 1.0$	Excellent

The discriminating power analysis result is shown in the following table:

Tabel 5
Discriminating Power Anlysis

Number	D	Criteria	Number	D	Criteria
1	0.26	Satisfactory	34	0.42	Good
2	0.21	Satisfactory	35	0.26	Satisfactory
3	-0.05	Poor	36	-0.11	Poor
4	0.11	Poor	37	0.21	Satisfactory
5	0.21	Satisfactory	38	0.37	Satisfactory
6	0.68	Good	39	0.26	Satisfactory
7	0.11	Poor	40	0.05	Poor
8	0.37	Satisfactory	41	0.42	Good
9	0.21	Satisfactory	42	0.26	Satisfactory
10	0.32	Satisfactory	43	0.21	Satisfactory
11	0.21	Satisfactory	44	0.21	Satisfactory
12	0.32	Satisfactory	45	-0.11	Poor
13	0.37	Satisfactory	46	0.32	Satisfactory
14	0.37	Satisfactory	47	0.00	Poor
15	0.21	Satisfactory	48	0.37	Satisfactory
16	0.21	Satisfactory	49	0.00	Poor
17	0.05	Poor	50	0.05	Poor
18	-0.16	Poor	51	0.42	Good
19	0.00	Poor	52	0.21	Satisfactory
20	0.11	Poor	53	0.00	Poor
21	0.37	Satisfactory	54	0.21	Satisfactory
22	-0.37	Poor	55	0.21	Satisfactory
23	-0.32	Poor	56	0.21	Satisfactory
24	-0.05	Poor	57	0.05	Poor
25	0.26	Satisfactory	58	0.42	Good
26	0.16	Poor	59	0.42	Good
27	0.42	Good	60	0.00	Poor
28	0.26	Satisfactory	61	0.26	Satisfactory
29	0.26	Satisfactory	62	0.26	Satisfactory
30	0.32	Satisfactory	63	0.42	Good
31	0.42	Good	64	0.37	Satisfactory
32	0.37	Satisfactory	65	0.47	Good
33	0.42	Good			

From the table, the result shows that twenty items fall under poor category for $D \leq 0, 20$. Those items are numbers 3, 4, 7, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 36, 40, 45, 47, 49, 50, 53, 57 and 60.

According to the analysis of the validity, reliability, level of difficulty and discriminating power, there are 45 items which meet the requirements to be used in the research as the test instrument.

Table 6
Result of Item Analysis

No	Criteria	No	Criteria	No	Criteria	No	Criteria	No	Criteria
1	Used	14	Used	27	Used	40	Unused	53	Unused
2	Used	15	Used	28	Used	41	Used	54	Used
3	Unused	16	Used	29	Used	42	Used	55	Used
4	Unused	17	Unused	30	Used	43	Used	56	Used
5	Used	18	Unused	31	Used	44	Used	57	Unused
6	Used	19	Unused	32	Used	45	Unused	58	Used
7	Unused	20	Unused	33	Used	46	Used	59	Used
8	Used	21	Used	34	Used	47	Unused	60	Unused
9	Used	22	Unused	35	Used	48	Used	61	Used
10	Used	23	Unused	36	Unused	49	Unused	62	Used
11	Used	24	Unused	37	Used	50	Unused	63	Used
12	Used	25	Used	38	Used	51	Used	64	Used
13	Used	26	Unused	39	Used	52	Used	65	Used

4.2 Data Analysis

4.2.1 Reading Comprehension Test Result

The instrument was given to the sample of the research on Wednesday, April 20th 2005. The result of reading comprehension test is the following:

Table 7
Reading Comprehension Score

Number	Subject Codes	Reading Comprehension	
		Total Items Correct	Score
1	S-01	27	6.00
2	S-02	32	7.11
3	S-03	27	6.00
4	S-04	34	7.56
5	S-05	28	6.22
6	S-06	33	7.33
7	S-07	36	8.00
8	S-08	35	7.78
9	S-09	33	7.33
10	S-10	34	7.56
11	S-11	33	7.33
12	S-12	28	6.22
13	S-13	34	7.56
14	S-14	30	6.67
15	S-15	37	8.22
16	S-16	35	7.78
17	S-17	23	5.11
18	S-18	35	7.78
19	S-19	29	6.44
20	S-20	33	7.33
21	S-21	31	6.89
22	S-22	32	7.11
23	S-23	27	6.00
24	S-24	32	7.11
25	S-25	32	7.11
26	S-26	34	7.56
27	S-27	31	6.89
28	S-28	30	6.67
29	S-29	33	7.33
30	S-30	25	5.56
31	S-31	37	8.22
32	S-32	37	8.22
33	S-33	30	6.67
34	S-34	32	7.11
35	S-35	34	7.56
36	S-36	25	5.56
37	S-37	29	6.44
38	S-38	32	7.11
39	S-39	30	6.67
40	S-40	30	6.67
41	S-41	33	7.33
Sum		1292	287.11
Average		31.51	7.00

This classification is used to measure the students' reading comprehension level of achievement:

Table 8
Level of Achievement

The Percentage of Correct Answer	Grade	Level of Achievement
93% - 100%	A. Outstanding	Outstanding Achievement
85% - 92%	B. Very Good	Above Average
75% - 84%	C. Satisfactory	Average Achievement
60% - 74%	D. Fair	Below Average
Below 60%	E. Weak	Insufficient Achievement

(Tinambunan, 1988:129)

Based on the classification above, I classified the students' score as the following:

Table 9
Students' Reading Comprehension Score Classification

Number of Students	The Percentage of Correct Answer	Grade	Percentage of Students	Level of Achievement
0	93% - 100%	A. Outstanding	0%	Outstanding Achievement
0	85% - 92%	B. Very Good	0%	Above Average
12	75% - 84%	C. Satisfactory	29%	Average Achievement
36	60% - 74%	D. Fair	64%	Below Average
3	Below 60%	E. Weak	7%	Insufficient Achievement

The result shows that 29% of the students obtain average achievement, 64% of the students obtain below average and 7% of the students obtain insufficient achievement in their reading comprehension test.

4.2.2 National State Exam Result

The national state exam for the secondary students in the academic year 2004 / 2005 was administered on Monday, June 6th, 2005 until Wednesday, June 8th, 2005 from 07.30 a.m until 09.30 a.m. The location of the test was in MTs. Al-Uswah Bergas, located on Jalan Masjid Tegalsari, Bergaslor Subdistrict, Semarang Regency, Central Java.

According to the Standard Operational Procedure issued by the National Education Department in 2004, the measurement used to categorize the success of learners was the achievement of minimal point of at least 4.26 in the examination.

The result of the national state exam was announced on June 29th, 2005 by the National Education Department. The national state exam score for English of class III A of the third grade students of MTs. Al-Uswah Bergas can be seen from the table below:

Table 10
National State Exam Score

Number	Subject Code	Score
1	S-01	5.17
2	S-02	5.50
3	S-03	4.83
4	S-04	5.17
5	S-05	5.00
6	S-06	7.33
7	S-07	6.50
8	S-08	6.83
9	S-09	6.00
10	S-10	6.67
11	S-11	6.50
12	S-12	5.33
13	S-13	5.50
14	S-14	6.50
15	S-15	6.83
16	S-16	5.50

17	S-17	5.83
18	S-18	5.83
19	S-19	5.17
20	S-20	6.00
21	S-21	6.33
22	S-22	6.67
23	S-23	5.83
24	S-24	5.83
25	S-25	6.17
26	S-26	6.00
27	S-27	5.83
28	S-28	5.83
29	S-29	5.83
30	S-30	5.33
31	S-31	7.33
32	S-32	6.67
33	S-33	5.33
34	S-34	5.67
35	S-35	6.33
36	S-36	4.83
37	S-37	5.17
38	S-38	5.83
39	S-39	5.83
40	S-40	5.17
41	S-41	5.50
Sum		241.30
Average		5.89

The average point of forty-one students in the final examination is 5.89, meaning those students do not fail in their examination.

4.2.3 Correlation Result of Students' Reading Comprehension and National State Exam Scores

I use Product Moment Correlation to find out if there is a correlation between the students' reading comprehension ability with their achievement in their national state exam. After being computed, the result shows that there is a correlation between the students' reading comprehension ability with their examination result for r_{xy} value is more than r_{tabel} .

The computation of the correlation analysis is as the following

Table 11
Correlation Result of
Students' Reading Comprehension and National State Exam Scores

No	Code	X	Y	X ²	Y ²	XY
1	S-01	6.00	5.17	36.0000	26.7289	31.0200
2	S-02	7.11	5.50	50.5679	30.2500	39.1111
3	S-03	6.00	4.83	36.0000	23.3289	28.9800
4	S-04	7.56	5.17	57.0864	26.7289	39.0622
5	S-05	6.22	5.00	38.7160	25.0000	31.1111
6	S-06	7.33	7.33	53.7778	53.7289	53.7533
7	S-07	8.00	6.50	64.0000	42.2500	52.0000
8	S-08	7.78	6.83	60.4938	46.6489	53.1222
9	S-09	7.33	6.00	53.7778	36.0000	44.0000
10	S-10	7.56	6.67	57.0864	44.4889	50.3956
11	S-11	7.33	6.50	53.7778	42.2500	47.6667
12	S-12	6.22	5.33	38.7160	28.4089	33.1644
13	S-13	7.56	5.50	57.0864	30.2500	41.5556
14	S-14	6.67	6.50	44.4444	42.2500	43.3333
15	S-15	8.22	6.83	67.6049	46.6489	56.1578
16	S-16	7.78	5.50	60.4938	30.2500	42.7778
17	S-17	5.11	5.83	26.1235	33.9889	29.7978
18	S-18	7.78	5.83	60.4938	33.9889	45.3444
19	S-19	6.44	5.17	41.5309	26.7289	33.3178
20	S-20	7.33	6.00	53.7778	36.0000	44.0000
21	S-21	6.89	6.33	47.4568	40.0689	43.6067
22	S-22	7.11	6.67	50.5679	44.4889	47.4311
23	S-23	6.00	5.83	36.0000	33.9889	34.9800
24	S-24	7.11	5.83	50.5679	33.9889	41.4578
25	S-25	7.11	6.17	50.5679	38.0689	43.8756
26	S-26	7.56	6.00	57.0864	36.0000	45.3333
27	S-27	6.89	5.83	47.4568	33.9889	40.1622
28	S-28	6.67	5.83	44.4444	33.9889	38.8667
29	S-29	7.33	5.83	53.7778	33.9889	42.7533
30	S-30	5.56	5.33	30.8642	28.4089	29.6111
31	S-31	8.22	7.33	67.6049	53.7289	60.2689
32	S-32	8.22	6.67	67.6049	44.4889	54.8422
33	S-33	6.67	5.33	44.4444	28.4089	35.5333
34	S-34	7.11	5.67	50.5679	32.1489	40.3200
35	S-35	7.56	6.33	57.0864	40.0689	47.8267
36	S-36	5.56	4.83	30.8642	23.3289	26.8333
37	S-37	6.44	5.17	41.5309	26.7289	33.3178
38	S-38	7.11	5.83	50.5679	33.9889	41.4578
39	S-39	6.67	5.83	44.4444	33.9889	38.8667
40	S-40	6.67	5.17	44.4444	26.7289	34.4667
41	S-41	7.33	5.50	53.7778	30.2500	40.3333
Σ		287.111	241.3	2033.28395	1436.757	1701.81556

$$r_{xy} = \frac{41 [1701.82] - [287.111] [241.3]}{\sqrt{\{41 [2033.28] - [287.111]^2\} \{41 [1436.76] - [241.3]^2\}}}$$

For $\alpha = 5\%$ and number of subject 41, $r_{table} = 0.308$.

The hypothesis stating that there is a correlation between reading comprehension ability and students' national state exam result, can be accepted. Since $r_{xy} > r_{table}$, it is stated that there is a correlation between reading comprehension ability with national state exam result.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1. Conclusion

Students need to have a good mastery in the four language skills. Reading comprehension is included in the four language skills that must be mastered by those students. It is advantageous to have a good comprehension of passages in English because reading is the core of discussion in the chapters of books, which is used in junior and senior high schools according to the 1994 curriculum. Moreover, the national state exams based on the 1994 curriculum emphasized the test materials on reading comprehension.

After teaching in MTs. Al-Uswah Bergas for some years, I had an assumption that the students' ability in comprehending English texts was categorized into poor category. This result could be seen from the score recapitulation of the students in the previous academic years. There were some factors that caused that poor achievement. First factor was the quality of the teachers of English. Some English teachers in the school did not graduate from the English department therefore they did not master the subject well. Second factor was the students in the school had low motivation in English because they regarded English as a very difficult subject. Third factor was the limit number of books used.

Based on this assumption, I was interested in assessing the students' reading comprehension because I wanted to know their reading ability.

I conducted research in 2005 for the students in the academic year 2004/2005. I gave reading comprehension multiple choices questions which relevant to the Basic Course Outline (GBPP) and 1994 curriculum.

The result shows that the students' ability in this academic year was categorized into fair category. This achievement influences their national state exam score. Students who have a good ability in comprehending English texts will have a good achievement in their English test for they know and understand what is written in the text. This understanding makes them easier to answer the questions from the text material.

5.2 Suggestion

There are some factors to improve the students' ability in learning English at MTs. Al-Uswah Bergas Semarang Regency i.e.:

1. The school must have qualified teachers. What I mean by qualified teachers are teachers who are from the English department so that they master English materials and curriculum. These teachers must also be able to transfer their knowledge to the students.
2. The school needs to provide good books that correspond to the required curriculum.
3. The students' motivation of learning English must be improved by giving them a good method in teaching so that those students will not easily get bored in learning the language. Besides, the willingness from the students themselves to improve their ability will be something important to do.

For secondary students in general, motivation from teachers and themselves is a key and an important thing to do to get better understanding in comprehending English texts. Besides, some steps below may be beneficial to improve their comprehension:

1. Teachers provide interesting reading materials that relevant to the curriculum.
2. Students improve their vocabulary by reading English texts more and try to find the difficult words by using dictionary.
3. Besides, students should enrich their knowledge by reading more books in their native language.

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