AN ASSESSMENT ON READABILITY OF READING TEXT IN ENGLISH SUMMATIVE TEST FOR FIFTH GRADE SMP NEGERI TOMPASO

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Abstract : The present study dealt with the research problem: Are reading texts in 2020 summative assessment for fifth semester students at SMP Negeri Tompaso readable assessed using Flesch reading ease formula? The study is a quantitative content analysis with fifth semester summative test as the source of data. The data were reading texts with more than 100 words in length. The data were analyzed quantitatively using automatic online readability checker. Result of the data analysis indicates that of 6 reading texts that are analyzed, four (text 1, 2, 5 and 6) ranged from 79.4 (fairly easy to read) to 90.4 (very easy to read), one (66. I) is moderate or average, and still one (39.6) (3) is difficult to read. It can be concluded that only one of the analyzed texts is appropriate for the target students or test-takers. Consequently, test items assessing reading comprehension ability do not yield students reading ability properly.

Keywords: *Readability, Reading Text, Assessment, Summative Text.*

INTRODUCTION

It is a common phenomenon that we will feel uncomfortable if we eat more food than the amount we usually consume. Well get sick or at least feel tired if we work very hard every day. Similarly we'll find it difficult to walk or sleep if our body weight is much higher than it should be. We will get drunk if we drink too much whisky. We all learn from our experience that an empty balloon filled in with too much gas will explode. When love is in excess, it brings a man no honor, nor worthiness. 'Too much love will kill you', says Bruno Mars

in his song. Everything in excess is opposed to nature. In short, everything which goes beyond sufficient or permitted limits is bad. This phenomena can also be observed in applies also in teaching and learning process.

Since language learning materials play a crucial role in exposing learners to English language Pikirang, Liando & Wuntu, (2021), the materials must be carefully selected In order to facilitate learning gains. Selection of instructional/learning materials should take into account both quantity and quality. Teachers should take into account a number of things, including authenticity, the original source, the target language skill, and leaners' language levels and ages. Glewwe, Kremer, and Moulin (2009), for example, found that providing textbooks to Kenyan students only raised the test scores of higher-achieving children, partly because the textbooks were too difficult for most children's skill level. Instructional/language learning materials which are beyond students' capacity, will be difficult to grasp.

Instructional and language learning materials are categorized into two general groups: language learning materials related to language skills and to language components Lalogiroth & Tatipang, (2020). Journal of English Culture, Language, Literature and Education, 8(1), 1-21.. Materials related to language skills including materials for developing listening, speaking reading, and writing. Language component consists of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The two groups are interrelated; in the sense that grammar vocabulary, pronunciation introduced are used to promote the development of the four language skills Lumentut & Lengkoan, (2021). Conversely, the teaching of the four skills helps students master the language components.

English teachers often rely on reading texts in ESL/EFL textbook to develop reading skills. For reading materials used in the language classroom, the lexical and syntactical levels of the material play a critical role in whether the material is appropriate for learners. Lexical level is measured by vocabu1ary; the number of words syntactical level by sentence lengths Paranduk & Karisi (2020).

Since there are no easy measurement tools (online tool) for determining the level of the grammatical components in a material, identification of grammatical components that learners are familiar with and have studied previously is considered important. Both lexical and syntactical levels indicate what level of learner would best be served by the material.

In addition to reading texts for developing reading skills, similar texts are often used in language tests to assess students (test-takers') reading comprehension ability. Usually S, the reading texts in language tests are followed by a number of questions assessing comprehension. As with reading texts used to develop students reading skills, selection of reading texts to be used in language tests should take into account lexical and syntactical levels of the selected texts. This is important for English teachers or test developers to do, because, if not, it is possible that level of text effect students ' test performances.

Ideally, before reading texts are included in ESL/EFL textbooks and language tests, their lexical and syntactical levels should be verified in advance in order to make sure that they are appropriate for the target students or test-taker. Previous research findings show that some reading tests in E L/EFL textbooks are inappropriate for the target students. Rita Karmila Sari (2020), for example, reveals that not all text in English in Focus textbooks are suitable for students who u e it. Conver ely, Ka ule (2011) who assesses readability of textbook found that of two hundred and seventy- eight Grade Seven students, only eighteen students could read the text unassisted while the rest were frustrated by it.

Lots of studies have been done on readability of reading texts in E L/EFL textbooks. The purpose of such studies is to describe the readability of ESL/ EFL reading texts or to disclose reading ease level of certain texts (Mujiyanto, 2016: 21). A readability score is a number that tell u how easy it will be for someone to read a particular piece of text. Thus, if the readability of a text is high, people

will be able to read it easily. Conversely, if the readability is low, people still might find the text difficult to read. Readability score is based on the average length of sentences and words in a given text.

The two researchers mentioned above and many more deal with readability of reading texts in textbooks. Studies on readability levels of reading texts in English language tests, especially those used at junior and senior high schools are rare. Therefore, it is necessary to find out whether reading texts in language tests used at junior and senior high schools are appropriate for the target tests or test-takers. It is possible that their low scores in reading are due to the difficulty level of the texts in the test or vise-versa. The finding of this study is important especially for English teachers as test developers at Junior and senior high school. The finding provides input for them to carefully consider reading texts to be included in formative and summative tests they are going to develop. Level of difficulty of reading texts in those tests may affect to scores.

RESEARCH METHOD

The purpose of this study is to describe the readability of reading texts in summative assessment at SMP Negeri Tompaso in the academic year 2020/21 In this content, the study is categorized as an evaluative study in that it tries to evaluate whether or not reading texts in the examination are appropriate in terms of student ' grade level. Since data are reading texts in summative examination, the stud y categorized as content analysis. Barelson (1952) define it as "A research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. Furthermore, the data collected will be quantified, therefore, the study is classified as quantitative content analysis (Franzo i, 2004: 547).

The source of data in this study was English language test used in summative as assessment for fifth semester students at MP Negeri Tompaso in the academic year 2020/21. The data were reading texts in English language

test with minimally 100 words in length. Data in this study was collected using documentation technique. Documentation technique was carried out in two steps: firstly identify and collecting all the reading texts in the textbook, and put them in the data collecting sheet. The next step is to count the length of each selected texts, and select only texts which consisted of minimally 100 words for the analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

It should be pointed out that English language test used in the summative examination 2020/2021 there are 14 reading texts of varying length. Of these, only 6 texts were analyzed because they consist of more than 100 words, the requirement for using automatic readability checker available online. The reading texts referred to are presented below.

Text 1

Dear Tantri,

Nowadays, it's difficult to find a true friend like you (1). I sometimes think I am very lucky to get you as my friend (2). Without you, my life would have been very boring (3). I still remember the first day of school when we were young (4). You called me and gave me a seat (5). That moment is not easy to forget (6). It is the beginning of our long friendship (7). You even often shared some of your food when my mother forgot to give me pocket money (8). You also lent me a dictionary when I forgot to bring it (9). It's almost 15 years we have been shared problems and fun together (10). Now, you ' re not here anymore (11). I would like to thank you being there for me for the ups and downs of my life (12). It's time for us to be apart (13). You have to move to Surabaya (14). I just want to say that you are my best friend (15). It is difficult for me to say goodbye (16). I don't want you to leave me but I know that moving to Surabaya is very important for your future (17). I only hope that you will get everything that you

dream in your new city (18). One thing that I want to tell you, please don't forget me (19). Keep in touch (20). Send me an email and tell your activities there (21). Don't make the distance that may break our relationship (22). It is hard for me to stay away from you (23). I can't wait to meet you soon (24). With best wishes.

Text 2

Someone that I admire most is my mother (1). She is my idol (2). In my opinion, my mother is not only beautiful but also kind (3). In addition, she is a good housewife (4). Her beauty comes from her good looking physical appearance (5). She is average m height (6). Her straight, black hair is shiny (7). Furthermore, the color of her eyes is like honey (8). And her light brown skin is still very supple (9). She looks attractive in whatever clothes she wears (1 0). Beside her attractive appearance, my mother is very kind (11). She likes to help people (1 2). For example, whenever there are sick people in our neighborhood, she will give them a visit (13). She often gives food and drink to the unfortunate people (14). She pays the school fee of some orphans in the surroundings (15). And something that impresses me more is she doesn't like other people to know whenever she does good deed (16). In addition, my mother is a good housewife (17). She takes care of her family well 18). For instance, she prepares all the healthy food for the whole family (19). She keeps the house clean and organized (20). She makes sure that the whole family's need is fulfilled (21). She is a great mother and I love her very much (22).

Text 3

Built directly east of the Kremlin, Moscow's historical fortress and the center of the Rusian government, Red Square is home to some of the country's most distinctive and important landmarks (1). Its origins date to the late 15th century, when the Muscuviye prince Ivan III (Ivan the Great) expended the Kremlin to reflect Moscow's growing power and influence (2). An important public marketplace and meeting place for centuries, Red Square houses the ornate

16th-century St. Basil's Cathedral, the state Historical Museum and the enormous GUM Department Store, as well as a modernist mausoleum for the revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin (3). During the 20th century, the square became famous as the site of large-scale military parades and ot11er demonstration designed to show Soviet's strength (4).

Text: 4

Last Wednesday, I went to Malang with my sistem (1). We visited Museum Angkut in Batu (2). There, we saw a wide range of transport tools from all over the world ranging from the traditional to the modem (3). They displayed the vehicles with unique background of the original cities transport tool (4). They were divided into 9 zones based on their original cities (5). My favorite zone is UK zone (6). I saw a land Rover car that was used by queen Elizabeth when the parade in Australia complete with the situation of the city of London in the evening and the grandeur of Buckingham palace (7). Unfortunately, we could not ride the vehicle (8). However, my sister and I took a lot of picture (9). When I arrive in Jakarta, I will post the pictures to my FB account (10).

Text: 5

My school is one of my favorite places in town (l). It is a green and beautiful school (2). It has many large trees which make the air around my school very fresh and clean (3). It covers a very large area surrounded by high fences (4). Overall, it has 30 buildings are arranged to form rectangle with a field in the middle commonly used as a sports place (5). When entering the school, we are greeted by a bil1board saying "Let's go forward with us" in front of the gate (6). Two security men are on duty near the gate every day (7). After passing through the gate, we pass a parking area whicl1 can accommodate all vehicles of teachers and students (8). The building is quite large (9). Every morning the headmaster and teachers always line up in front of it to welcome the students (10). Behind the main building stand the classrooms (11). On the right side there are classes for the Ist and 2nd grades, while on the left side, classes for

the 3rd grades (12). In front of every classroom there are small flower gardens which add the beauty of my school (13). We like to play and learn there (14). My school also has a large canteen (15). It is located behind the hall (16). I enjoy having lunch there (17). My school's canteen sells a lot of foods like snacks, cakes, meatballs, fried chicken, rice, noodles, and various drinks (18). Though it sells a variety of foods and drinks, it is always kept clean (19).

Text 6

Once, there lived a hen called Red Feather because the color of her feather was red (1). One day, the fox caught the red feather and put it into a sack (2). He intended to bring the hen home and cooked it for dinner (3). Suddenly, he saw a dove lying on the ground (4). The fox was delighted to find a dove. (5), he thought of having a lot of food for dinner (6). He didn't know that the dove was a friend of the red feather (7). The dove knew that the fox had caught the red feather (8). He wanted to help the red feather by pretending to have a broken wing and lying on the ground for the fox to catch (9). The fox left the hen in the sack trying to catch the dove (10). As the fox got closer, the dove instantly flew away leaving the fox (11). Meanwhile, the fox was busy trying to catch the dove, the hen released herself from the sack and ran away as fast as possible (12). The fox wasn't able to catch the dove so he decided to stop chasing (13). But had already gone (14). Finally, the fox realized that he had nothing for dinner (15). (Taken from 366 and More Fairy Tales, 1990).

Data analysis was conducted using automatic online readability checker. Results of the analysis for Flesch reading ease is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Readability Scores Assessed Using Flesch Reading Ease formula

Text	Words	Sentence/ words	1 syllable	2 syllables	3(+) syllables	Flesch Reading Ease Score
1	256	25/11	206	36	14	90.4
2	224	22/10	165	34	25	79.4
3	126	5/25	72	30	24	39.6
4	142	10/14	97	28	17	66.1
5	262	19/14	201	47	14	82.7
6	210	15/14	169	33	8	88.3

The scores obtained were then interpreted or matched with the criteria mentioned in 3.4. Result of the interpretation is depicted in Table 3.

Table 3. Interpretation of readability scores obtained

Text	Readability Scores	Interpretation	Grade
1	90.4	Very easy to read	5th grade
2	79.4	Fairly easy to read	7th grade
3	39.6	Difficult to read	College
4	66.1	Standard/average	8th & 9th grade
5	82.7	Easy to read	6th grade
6	88.3	Easy to read	(6th grade

Result of the data analysis show: that of 6 reading texts that are analyzed, four (text 1, 2, 5 and 6) ranged from 79.4 (fairly easy to read) to 90,4 (very easy to read), one (66.1) i mod rat or average, and still one (39.6) (3) is difficult to read. In the Flesch reading- a text, higher core indicate material that is easier to read; lower numbers mark passage that are more difficult to read.

The finding of the present study shows that of 6 analyzed reading texts, four (text 1 2, 5, & 6) are very easy, easy and fairly easy to read, one (text 4) has moderate/average readability, and still one (text 3) is difficult to read. This indicates that reading text for inclusion in the summative examination were selected without paying attention to the readability level; of the texts. It is possible that comprehension questions assessing students' comprehension of the easy texts can be answer correctly while those assessing comprehension questions of difficult text are difficult to answer correctly. This, in other words, means that the scores obtain the test used in the summative examination do not reflect the test-takers' real reading comprehension ability.

In measurement theory, it is claimed that every measurement is an additive composite of two components: true ability (or the true level) of the test takers that measure; and error. Put it briefly, observed score equals true score plus error.

Observe Score = True Score = Error

Errors in measurement are caused by a number of factors. In the case of the language test analyzed in this study, reading texts which are very easy or very difficult may yield test scores which do not reflect test takers real reading ability. Therefore, it is important for English teachers, as test developers, to make sure that the test selected for inclusion in a test are within test takers' reach. The reason is test used in summative examination are high-stake that can seriously affect test takers.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Result of the data analysis shows that of 6 reading texts that are analyzed, four (text 1, 2, 5 and 6) ranged from 79.4 (fairly easy to read) to 90.4 (very easy to read), one (66.1) is mode rate or average, and still one (39.6) (3) is difficult to read. It can be concluded that only one of the analyzed texts is appropriate for the target students or test-takers. Consequently, test items assessing reading comprehension ability do not yield students reading ability properly Tangiduk, Samola & Rorimpandey, (2021).

The finding of the present study leads the researchers to put forward the following suggestions to English teachers and researchers in reading in English. English teachers who also function as test developers are expected to take into their consideration difficulty level of reading texts selected for inclusion in mid-term and end of semester tests. In this way, error of measurement can be minimized. Since studies on readability of reading are still rare, researchers in reading in English are expected to conduct more studies not only on readability, but also comprehensibility of reading texts in ESL/EFL language tests used at schools so that more information about readability and comprehensibility of reading texts in the tests can be obtained.

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