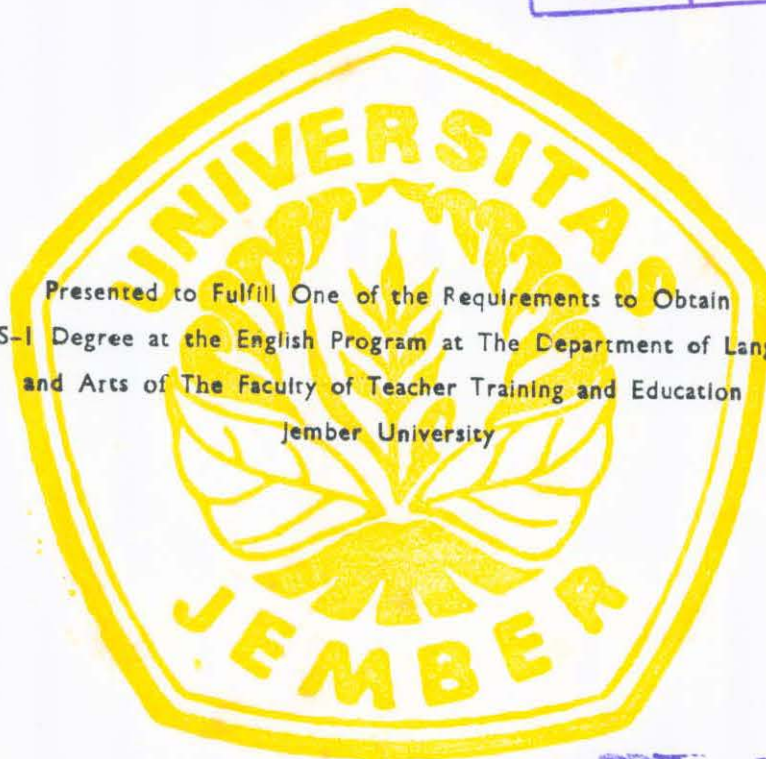


A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF READING
COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT USING CLOZE TEST
FORMAT AT THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF
SMUN I PESANGGARAN IN THE 2000/2001
ACADEMIC YEAR

THESIS



by :

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ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
JEMBER UNIVERSITY
JANUARY 2001

DEDICATION

This thesis is honorably dedicated to :

1. My beloved Mom, Hj. Mariyam. I truly appreciate your affection, silent prays, unconditional love and everything you give to me. I do love you more than words I can say
2. My beloved Dad, H. Mashudi (in Memoriam). I feel you in every beat of my heart, in every step of my life. Hope you rest in peace
3. My beloved brothers and sisters. We have many loves to pass our long days. I love you so much
4. Bang Anto , thanks for more than seven years being my inspiration.
5. KLAN '96 BAND (Karim, Achek, Gogo', Davi, lin and Mom in Gunung Batu). I'm very proud of being a part of you
6. LIGA AKSARA TEAM (Basofi, Adi, Mamik,). Thanks for being patient
7. My Friends in 96' level (Dyah, Hani, Tyas, Ifa, Etik, Iskandar, Tedy, Mas Yok'95, et al), also keluarga besar PKPRI Jember
8. My Almamater

MAY GOD BLESS YOU

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF READING
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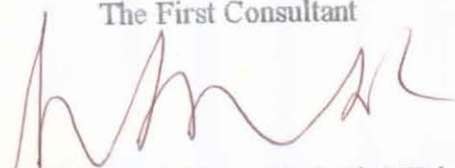
THESIS

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the S-1 Degree at the English Program at the Department of Language
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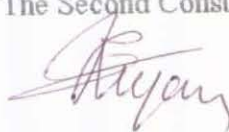
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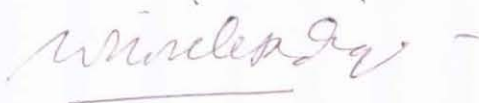
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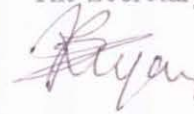
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At last, I realize that this thesis is still far from being perfect, however it is expected to be useful either for the readers or me myself. Knowing this fact, I always hope constructive criticism as well as advice from those who really want to make this thesis better.

Jember, January 2001

Writer

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ABSTRACT

lin Nur Inayah, January 2001. **A Descriptive Study of Reading Comprehension Achievement Using Cloze Test Format at the Second Year Students Of SMUN I Pesanggaran in the 2000/2001 Academic Year.**

Thesis, English Program, Language and Arts Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Jember University

Consultants: 1. Dra. Wiwiek Eko Bindarti, MPd

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Key Words: Descriptive Study, Reading Comprehension, Cloze test Format

Cloze test is one of the tests used for measuring reading comprehension. Unfortunately, language teachers do not always use this test format; whereas, this test is very easy to design and score. For this reason, this research was conducted to see how the students' reading comprehension achievement using cloze test format was. This research was conducted at SMUN I Pesanggaran from 30th October until 15th November 2000. The respondents were 52 students which were taken by using proportional random sampling. To achieve the research objective, a teacher made test was administered to get the main data; while interview and documents were used to get the supporting data. To know the test reliability, the try-out was conducted on 4th November 2000 to the students who were not the respondents, by using split-half method. Based on the research result, the average score of the students' reading comprehension achievement was in the category of *less than enough* (58.96%). In detail, most the students (61,54%) performed satisfactory in reading comprehension, that is respectively in the category of very good (1,92% or 1 student), good (26,93% or 14 students) and enough (32,69% or 17 students). While the others (38.46%) were in the category of less than enough (19,23% or 10 students), bad (13,46% or 7 students) and very bad (5,77% or 3 students). This means that, it is necessary for the teacher to help the students to improve their reading comprehension achievement, by giving them more practice in reading and exercises in the form of cloze test format.



I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

English has a very important role in Indonesian educational system. It is regarded as a means for transferring information, relating to the fact that many references and scientific books are written in English. Therefore, it has been taught as one of the compulsory subjects in junior and senior high schools.

The objective of learning English is to make the students able to communicate either in oral or written form. This means that they should master the four major language skills. In the 1994 curriculum (Depdikbud, 1995:10), it is stated that "the objective of learning English at general high schools is that, the students will acquire reading, listening, speaking and writing skills at 2500 words until 3000 words".

Foreign language learning puts a great emphasis on the mastery of the learned language through reading activities. Those who have a good reading skill might be able to get certain information from a reading passage instead of improving their grammar, pronunciation and enlarging their vocabulary. This means that teaching and learning activities are much devoted for the students' development of reading skill. Kristiono and Prihantoro (1996:8) state that "reading is considered to be the most important language skill to develop in the classroom because the reading material can be constructed in such a way so that the students could practice listening, speaking and writing". Unfortunately, it is not easy to construct such a good reading material and test that really promotes those language skills.

Tests of reading come in a wide variety of forms. Different methodologies, theories and techniques have been used in the testing of reading comprehension. As Hughes (1994:2) states that "language abilities are not easy to measure. All tests need time and money to prepare, administer, score and interpret". In addition the problem of reliability and validity of test can also discriminate the students' achievement in reading that goes along with it.

To cope with the problem of constructing a test, language testing experts have developed one kind of test of reading comprehension that is called cloze test. According to Weir (1989:46), this test has been used since 1953 as the test was originally designed to measure the readability of passages of prose. Dealing with this test, Oller (1979:358) states that "cloze test has been developed and applied in many testing situations for the measurement of English, either as a first, second or foreign language".

Though originally invented as a test of readability, cloze test has also been developed and applied as a testing technique. In line with this, Anderson (1979:219) says that "cloze-test has received considerable attention from examiners and teachers of English as a foreign language, both in the classroom and standardized test". Moreover, Bachman (1982:61) in his study says that "cloze-test has been found to be highly correlated with virtually every language skill and component". This means that cloze-test has the same chance as many other types of language tests that can be used as well.

Furthermore, Weir (1989:46) confirms that many other experts such as Alderson (1978), Klein - Braley (1981), Bormuth (1962) have also carried out some researches on this test, and they come to the same conclusion that cloze tests are interesting measures of language proficiency.

The above issues show that a research on the description of the reading comprehension achievement using cloze test format is necessary.

1.2 Research Problem

The problem of this research is formulated as follows:

"How is the reading comprehension achievement using cloze test format at the second year students of SMUN I Pesanggaran in the 2000/2001 academic year?"

1.3 Operational Definition

To understand the concept and indicators of this study, it is necessary to describe them to an operational form.

1.3.1 Reading Comprehension Achievement

Reading comprehension achievement in this study deals with the degree to which the students have mastered the understanding of written material in a formal learning situation. Their achievement can be seen on their test scores.

1.3.2 The Cloze test Format

The cloze test format in this study is defined as a type of fill-in-the blank-test constructed by deleting words from a passage and replacing them with blanks to be filled by students. In writing this test, words are deleted from a text after allowing a sentence of introduction. The deletion rate is systematically set in every seventh word. Candidates have to fill each gap by supplying the deleted words.

1.4 Research Objective

The objective of this research is to know the reading comprehension achievement using cloze test format at the second year students of SMUN 1 Pesanggaran in the 2000/2001 academic year.

1.5 Research Significances

The result of this research will be significant for the following people:

1.5.1 English teachers

As an input to know how far the achievement of the students' reading comprehension using cloze test format. In addition, the result can be used as a consideration to improve English teaching.

1.5.2 Further researchers

As a useful source for future researchers who have a similar problem with this research but in different language skills or design.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Cloze Test

2.1.1 Definition and Characteristics

One of the tests used for measuring reading comprehension achievement is cloze test. According to Oller and Conrad (1971:183), cloze technique was first introduced by W. L Taylor in 1953, referring to a type of test designed to measure the readability of passages of prose. The test was constructed from a reading passage by deleting every fifth, sixth or seventh word from the passage, and the test takers are expected to reconstruct the deleted language patterns by supplying responses that were exactly the same or most identical with the deleted words with the help of their own language system and grammar, and semantics clues are available in the context. The average score of the test takers was taken as the index of the level of difficulty of the passage.

In cloze test, words are deleted from a text after allowing a few sentences of introduction. In this case, Sadtono (1974:20) states that "in cloze test words are deleted systematically every fifth, sixth, seventh, etc word from the passage and leave the first and the last sentences undeleted to help the test takers comprehend the passage".

From those quotations, it can be said that cloze test is a kind of fill-in-the blank test that has characteristics as follows :

1. Constructed from a reading passage.
2. Deleting every fifth, sixth, seventh , etc word from the passage.
3. Remaining the first and the last sentences undeleted.
4. Requiring the test takers to reconstruct the mutilated passage pattern by supplying responses that were exactly the same or the most identical with the deleted words.



2.1.2 Cloze Test Procedure

A cloze test has a procedure, as Oller (1979:344) states that "...cloze procedure is the family techniques for systematically distorting portion of the text".

Cloze procedure is basically a very simple technique. Anderson (1978:110) states that:

Words are just deleted from a passage of prose in some mechanical fashion and replaced by blanks of a standard length. The mutilated passages are then given to the readers with instructions to restore the missing words. The number of words correctly replaced is an indication of how much the readers have understood.

The above idea shows that cloze test procedure includes the activity of deleting a number of words of a passage and requiring the reader to complete the blanks with the words to be.

Similarly, Strawhorn (1999:13) notes that a cloze test procedure is "a fill-in-the blanks activity where the learner uses clues from the context to supply words that have been deliberately removed from the text". In preparing this test, there are some procedures that can be followed; "1) leaving the first and the last sentences of the text undeleted, 2) deleting certain words, and 3) replacing each deleted word with an underlined blank space".

The above idea shows that in cloze test procedures, the deletions are made after leaving the first and the last sentences undeleted. The students are expected to fill in the blanks using clues from the context.

In its original form, the cloze procedure involves deleting a number of words in a passage, leaving blanks, and requiring the person to attempt to replace the original words. After a short un mutilated 'lead in', it is usually about every seventh word which is deleted (Hughes, 1994:63-64).

This quotation shows that Hughes has a similar idea with Anderson and Strawhorn in which cloze procedures include the activity of deleting words, leaving blanks and acquiring someone to replace the original words to be. He also suggests to take out every seventh word from the text.

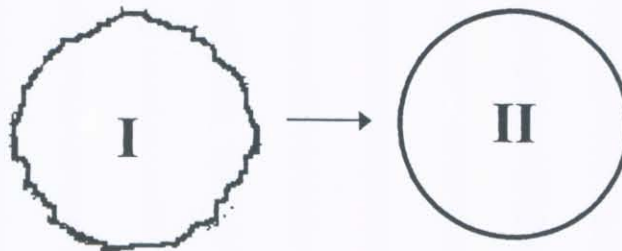
From the above explanation, it can be assumed that cloze test procedures are as follows :

1. Leaving the first and the last sentences undeleted to help the students to understand the passage.
2. Deleting a number of words in a passage and substitute them with blanks.
3. Requiring the person taking a test to replace the original words to be.

2.1.3 Principle of the Cloze Test

According to Taylor (in Weir, 1989:46), the term “*cloze*” is derived from the Gestalt concept of closure which refers to “the tendency of an individual to complete a pattern once they have grasped its overall significance”.

On this point, Webster as cited by Sadtono (1974:64) regards “*cloze*” as “the perception of incomplete figures or situation as though complete by ignoring the missing parts, by compensating them with projection based on past experience”. This can be seen in Sadtono’s (1974:65) figures as follows:

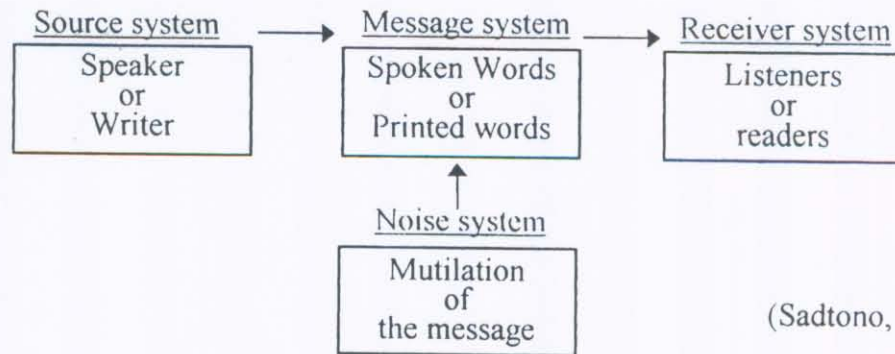


Picture I : incomplete circle

Picture II : complete circle

The above figures illustrate two different test formats. The first picture represents the incomplete test format, whereas the second represents the complete test format.

Furthermore Sadtono (1974:21) confirms Taylor’s illustration of the term “*cloze*” as follows :



(Sadtono, 1974:21)

The above diagram shows how the source system (speaker or writer) sends the message in the form of spoken or printed words to the receiver system (listeners or readers), and how the message is interrupted by the interference coming from the noise system before it is received. In spoken language, the interference may come from outside noise which can be the speech of other people that is not participating in the interaction. In written language, the interference comes from the mutilation of the language patterns which interrupt the message before it is received by the receiver system.

The same process happens when a cloze test is used. In applying the test; it is hopefully to mutilate the message in the passage by deleting mechanically every fifth, sixth or seventh word from the passage and the test takers are required to reconstruct the mutilated passage by supplying responses that are exactly the same or most identically with the deleted words. In this case, the mutilated passage is as the noisy system that interrupt the message before it is decoded by the receiver (the test takers), and it can be theoretically said that the ability of the test takers in giving the right responses will reflect their ability in understanding the message. (Sadtono, 1974:21)

Furthermore, Sadtono (1974:23) states that "In sum, since the cloze test is very much influenced by the theory of communication, it includes the principle of probability and redundancy in a language". This means that in the principle of probability, readers are helped to comprehend a word in the context by using the clues provided, so it will be easier for them to guess the next word, and it will also be easier to comprehend the word in such a context. This also concerns the predictability, that is, the ability to guess the right word.

From the above discussion, it can be said that the principle behind the cloze test is essentially the theory of information or the theory of communication in which we find a transmitter (speaker or writer) who sends the message in the form of printed or spoken words, and the receiver (reader or listener) who receives the message and decode it into his language habit.

2.1.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of cloze test

a. Advantages of cloze test

There are many advantages of cloze test. According to Weir (1989:47) some of the advantages are as follows :

1. Cloze tests are easy to construct and easy to score if the exact word scoring procedure is adopted. In other words, it just leaves blanks in every fifth, sixth, seventh, etc word, and a subject response is counted as the correct one as long as it is exactly the same as the original word that has been deleted.
2. It can be set in relatively short text and exhibit a high degree of internal consistency in term of measuring the reliability of the test.
3. In the literature, cloze tests are often considered as valid and uniform measures of reading comprehension.

Those quotations show that cloze test has a high reliability if the exact word scoring method is adopted. Besides, many studies that have been conducted show that cloze test has a validity measurement of reading comprehension.

b. Disadvantages of cloze test

There are some disadvantages of cloze test. Sadtono (1974:10) states that:

The only disadvantage of cloze test is the reliability of the examiner, especially on the foreign language test. If the cloze test uses contextually - appropriate word method, the examiner should be a native speaker or a person who has knowledge about the foreign language.

In other words, to determine whether a certain word is appropriate to the text or not is difficult. To eliminate this problem, it is suggested to use a native speaker as the examiner.

Furthermore, Weir (1989:47) states that there are some disadvantages of cloze test as it is explained below:

1. "The evidence is contradictory about differing scoring method to be adopted in marking the cloze test". This means that in applying cloze test people are still having some different methods to use in scoring the test.
2. "It is difficult to translate the score of cloze test to a description of what candidates can or can't do in real life". The difficulty is on what performance a cloze test really tells us about a student's language ability.

2.1.5 Some Advice in Creating Cloze Type Passages

To create a type of cloze passage, it is necessary to consider some ideas about how to construct cloze type passages. In this case, Hughes (1994:70) suggests the test writers to deal with the following points:

1. The chosen passages should be at the level, and appropriate to the people who are going to take the test. If there is a doubt about the level, a range of passages should be selected for pre-testing. Indeed, it is always advisable to pre-test a number of passages, as their behavior is not always predictable.
2. The text should be at a style appropriate to the kind of the language ability being tested.
3. After remaining a few sentences undeleted, the deletions should be made about every fifth, sixth, seventh word from the passage.
4. Clear instructions should be advised. They should be advised to read quickly through the text in order to become familiar with the general meaning before completing each blank. They should also be reminded that there is only one possible word in each blank.
5. Anyone who is to take a cloze test should have had several opportunities to become familiar with the technique. The more practice they have had, the more likely it is that their scores will represent their true ability in the language.
6. Cloze test scores are not directly interpretable. In order to be able to interpret them, we need to have other measure of ability. Once a pattern is established between cloze test score and class level, we have to be sure that the cloze test score and class level are balance. The information from the teachers is also useful to interpret the score.

It can be said that in creating a cloze test, the test writer should consider the appropriateness of the text for the people who are going to take the test. Besides, clear instructions should also be given to make the students familiar with the test.

Furthermore, Campbell and Rutherford (1988:48) suggest that "In preparing cloze test, choose a passage that students can read with little or no difficulty. You can even use a passage that has already been used and discussed in the class". In addition, Davies (1996:116) states that "a jumbled list of possible words can be supplied to support less-able students".

2.2 Reading Comprehension

2.2.1 Concept of Reading Comprehension

Christine Nuttal (in Simanjuntak, 1988:14) notes that "Reading is meaningful interpretation of the printed or written verbal symbols. It is a result of the interaction between the perception of graphic symbols that represent language and reader's language skill and knowledge of the world. In this process the reader tries to recreate the meanings intended by the writer". While Grellet (1996:8) states that "reading is an active and constant process of predicting, checking, and asking one self question". From these concepts, it is clearly seen that reading requires activities that extract or obtain ideas from the written text

Every reading activity needs comprehension. Dealing with this Kustaryo (1988:12) states that:

Reading without comprehension is verbalization. Indeed, the student who reads the text does not merely move his eyes along the sentences he reads. Instead, at the same time his mind works to get the message of the sentences present. In general, good comprehension means recognizing and understanding general ideas and specific facts and seeing how these ideas and facts are organized and developed.

This means that a reading activity needs an ability to recognize and use the organization of the passage. Moreover, Kustaryo (1988:12-13) states that " Reading with comprehension means understanding what has been read. It is an active thinking

with comprehension means understanding what has been read. It is an active thinking process that depends not only on comprehension skill, but also on student's prior knowledge". This shows that an efficient reader is able to use his prior knowledge besides his comprehension skill.

Based on the above statements, it can be assumed that every reading activity needs comprehension. In other words, every good reader must be able to recognize and understand the content of the text, and see how the author's ideas are organized and developed. Readers are also expected to recognize the author's purpose and make a judgment about the material and then evaluate what has been read.

2.2.2 Taxonomy of Reading Comprehension

The taxonomy of reading comprehension is explained by Grellet (1996:4-5). He states that reading involves a variety of skills. The main ones are as follows:

1. Recognizing the script of the language
2. Deducing the meaning and the use of unfamiliar lexical items
3. Understanding explicitly stated information
4. Understanding information that is not explicitly stated
5. Understanding the communicative value (function) of sentences and utterances
6. Understanding the relation within the sentences
7. Understanding cohesion between parts of the text through grammatical cohesion devices
8. Identifying the main point of important information in a piece of discourse
9. Distinguishing the main idea from supporting details
10. Extracting salient point to summarize (the text, an idea, etc)
11. Basic reference skills
12. Skimming
13. Scanning to locate specifically required information. (Grellet, 1996:4-5)

The above lists show that most of reading skills cover the understanding of the explicitly stated information, the understanding of the implicitly stated information and the understanding parts of the text and the readers see how they are organized.

2.2.3 Some Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension Achievement

There are some factors that affect reading comprehension achievement. According to Otto and Dixicle (1979:147-149), "there are two factors influencing reading comprehension, they are: *the characteristics of the material* to be read, and other related to *the characteristics of the reader*".

a. Characteristics of the Material

1. "Level of difficulty of the reading text". The material which is extremely difficult will be also difficult to be understood. For example, the material conveying the philosophical concept is very difficult to comprehend.
2. "Vocabulary". Some vocabularies which are not familiar to the students will be a problem for them. For example, the terms in a medical book will make the student elusive, because most of its vocabularies refer to specific terms in a certain field.
3. "Grammatical structure". The material which involves a complicated grammatical structure will also affect the student's comprehension, as it also affects the meaning of the sentence.

b. Characteristics of the Reader

1. "Background knowledge". If the students have enough background knowledge and experience related with the material, they will not get difficulty in comprehending it.
2. "Decoding skill". This skill needs the reader's attention when he is reading a printed material. In line with this, Samuel (in Otto and Dixicle, 1979:149) states that: "if the reader has to use most of their available attention for the purpose of decoding, an insufficient quantity of attention will be left for processing the meaning of the passage".
3. "The purpose of the reader". This means that if the reader reads the passage only for completing a class management, comprehension may be minimum, because no real focus possessed by the student. It is different if the student is really interested in reading the passage, the comprehension will be easily guided.

2.2.4 Reading Comprehension Program at SMU Based on the 1994 Curriculum

It is stated in the basic course outlines for teaching program (GBPP) in the curriculum at Senior High Schools that "learning a foreign language is learning to communicate by the target language orally or writtenly which includes four language skills, namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing" (Depdikbud, 1995:1-2). As one of the language skills, reading is thought to improve the students' ability to understand English, as it is used in writing materials.

Concerning the above explanations, the aim of teaching reading is that students can read the text in the form of narration, description, dialogue, argumentation, and the specific form, such as schedules, the content of the books, announcement, direction, ticket, label, daily notes, leaflet, brochures, letters, and so on. This contains about 250 words which require the skills below :

1. Finding the specific information
2. Getting the general illustration of the text
3. Finding the main idea explicitly
4. Finding the main idea implicitly
5. Finding all of explicit details information
6. Finding all of the implicit information
7. Interpreting the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences based on the context
8. Getting enjoyment (Depdikbud, 1995:100)

Moreover, to achieve the above aim of teaching reading, the students should comprehend the reading texts that include; comprehending word meaning, sentences, paragraphs, and the whole text.

a. Comprehending Word Meaning

In order to read English texts confidently, students should know many words they read. In line with this, Kustaryo (1988:15) states that :

in order to understand a paragraph the reader must have an appropriate understanding about the meaning of words. In other words, if the reader has no understanding of the word meaning, he will get difficulties in comprehending the entire paragraph.

Furthermore, Whorter (1989:3-43) suggests some ways to overcome the difficulties to comprehend the word meaning and to read comprehensively that can be explained as follows:

1. To check the meaning of word in dictionary
2. To interpret the meaning of a difficult word by word analysis
3. To guess the meaning of the word from the context by using context clues

The above quotation shows that the students should check the meaning of words in the dictionary to get the exact meaning of the word. Another way to overcome the difficulty to comprehend the meaning of the word is by word analysis. The students may find the meaning of the word by breaking it into small elements; stem, prefix, and suffix, and then they interpret the meaning of each element in order to obtain the meaning of the entire word. They may also use context clues to derive the meaning of unfamiliar words since this technique does not interrupt the flow of reading. The context may give some definitions that can be used to discover the meaning of unfamiliar words.

b. Comprehending Sentence Meaning

Tinker and Cullough (1979:210) remark that, "comprehending a paragraph requires comprehension of its sentences as well as an understanding of relationship between the sentences which are essential for grasping the larger meaning of the paragraph". This means that comprehending sentences is needed before one tries to comprehend the paragraph.

To comprehend the sentences, the readers need to recognize the meaning of words, because the students who do not know the meaning of words sometimes experience difficulties to comprehend sentences. However, They might not comprehend sentences eventhough they already know the meaning of words in the sentences. This is supported by Simanjuntak's (1988:92-93) statement that "sometimes it is difficult to understand the sentence although the vocabulary is known, when a sentence is long and difficult to unravel syntactically, many students could not explain what the sentence means".

Therefore, to overcome the problem, the students need to know some ways to derive the meaning of the sentence. In line with this, Simanjuntak (1988:93) says that “it is very important to teach the students the way how to search for the most information in the sentence”. It is expected that the students are able to understand the reading text by applying some ways mentioned below:

1. Identifying key ideas
2. Locating details
3. Reading sentences by combining ideas
4. Reading sentences by relating ideas (Simanjuntak, 1988:93)

c. Comprehending Paragraph

Comprehending a paragraph needs comprehension of its sentences. This is accordance with what Tinker and Cullough (1979:210) note that “the comprehension of a paragraph requires comprehension of its sentences as well as understanding the relationship between the sentences which are essential for grasping the larger meaning of the paragraph”. This means that to comprehend a paragraph, a reader also needs to understand the organization of the paragraph.

Meanwhile, Simanjuntak (1988:101) states that:

In order to be able to understand the paragraph, the first thing to do is to know what the paragraph tells about. Then we have to understand each sentence, what they are saying and see how the sentences relate to one another. Finally, we have to consider the main point of the paragraph.

The above statement describes that a paragraph has three essential parts that should be understood by the readers. They are: 1) Topic; that is the one thing the whole paragraph tells about. 2) Main idea; that is the point of the whole paragraph makes. 3) Details; that is the sentences that explain the main idea .

1. Finding the Topic

Topic is one thing a paragraph describes. Every sentence in a paragraph discusses or explains about the topic. It can be said that topic is the subject of the entire paragraph. In line with this Simanjuntak (1988:101) has an idea;

When the reader reads for general ideas, it is important to identify the topic that he is reading. The title of the text usually gives the topic of the text. To find the topic of the paragraph, ask question; what is the one thing the author's is discussing throughout the paragraph.

This statement shows that topic can be found by identifying the title that is discussed throughout the paragraph.

2. Finding the Main Idea

According to Hancock (in Simanjuntak, 1988:103), "the main idea is the essence of the paragraph; rather what the author is trying to get across to the reader". This shows that the main idea is what the author wants a reader to know about. So, the main idea is an important idea that an author develops throughout a paragraph. In addition, he said that "the function of the entire paragraph is to explain, develop, and support the main idea". So, It is clear that the whole of the paragraph consists of how to explain, develop, and support the main idea.

3. Organizing Supporting Details

Supporting details in a paragraph are those facts and ideas that support the main idea. All details in a paragraph relate to and some ways expand the main idea of the paragraph, but not all these details are completely essential.

In line with this, Whorter (in Simanjuntak, 1988:106) states that:

all details in a paragraph support the main idea, but not all details are equally important. In facts, some details are just meant to describe or others are meant to provide additional information, but not essential, still others are intended merely to repeat or restate the main idea.

d. Comprehending the Whole Text

In reading a reader commonly wants to know the message conveyed by a reading passage or a text. "The whole text consist of words, sentences, and paragraphs and the understanding of the smaller units" (Burns et al, 1984:173). This means that to comprehend the whole selection, the reader should comprehend words,

sentences, and paragraphs. In other words, to comprehend the whole selection of reading text of English in the classroom, the students should also understand the relationship among paragraphs of the text.

Based on the above explanations, it can be inferred that reading comprehension includes comprehension of words, sentences, paragraphs, and the whole of the composition. Thus, the students' proficiency in reading can be observed by their ability in understanding the whole composition of reading texts.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research Design

Since this research was intended to describe students' reading comprehension achievement using cloze test format, a descriptive research design was applied. A descriptive research is intended to make a description about certain situation and phenomenon (Suryabrata, 1997:95). Besides, this research was not hypothesis driven, rather it generated hypothesis as what Arikunto (1993:208) also states that "the descriptive research is non-hypothesis research". Therefore, it was not necessary to state the hypothesis to conduct this research.

The procedures of this research were as follows:

1. Formulating the problem and the objective
2. Constructing the instrument to get the data
3. Determining the research area and respondents
4. Conducting the try - out
5. Collecting the data by administering the real test to the students
6. Analyzing the collected data
7. Discussing the analyzed data
8. Making a conclusion

3.2 Research Area

The area of this research was SMUN I Pesanggaran. This location was directly determined based on the consideration that SMUN I Pesanggaran had an easy permission procedure. In other words, the area of this research was chosen purposively.