

# EFL Children's Perception on Reading

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## Abstract

Reading has a very significant effect towards individuals' life. English in Indonesia as a foreign language, so there are many possibilities which the English language students get difficulties in understading reading text. EFL young learners are also still struggling to overcome their reading problems. This research was conducted to find out the EFL children's reading problem. The data were collected through questionnare and explained descriptively. The questionnare consists of ten questions which is made based on the rubric of reading. The respondents of this research were the 20 students from the fourth grade. The results of the research that the EFL children's reading problem are students seldom pay attention to punctuation in reading English, students always have difficulty to distinguish the pronunciation of words in English, students always need a long time to understand the reading text in English, students never look for the main idea of the reading text which they read, students have poor reading habit because they unusual read in English or seldom read in English, students seldom even never understand the grammar structures in English when reading, students never even seldom pay attention to the form or the content of the reading text which they read, students never apply any strategies in reading English, students lack of vocabulary when reading English so that they need a dictionary to comprehend the reading text in English, and students do not like or not interested reading English because they are seldom reading in English. Thus, the questionnare show the EFL children' reading problem.

**Keyword:** EFL Young Learners, Reading Problem.

## I. Introduction

English is a foreign language, but many people have to learn English because the use of English is very common among the people now. English has four skills in learning, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All of those skills are related to each other. Those skills are divided into receptive and productive skills. Speaking and writing are productive skills. Listening and reading are receptive skills Qarqez and Radzuwan (2017: 422). The one of receptive skills that can be said to be quiet an important

part is reading. Reading is vital in English because reading is one of activity that cannot be released from human life to find new things in their life. Anderson et al in Gilakjani (2016: 230) stated that reading as the process of making meaning from written texts. Through reading the reader can get what they want to know. In general, students may have challenges in reading. According Satriani (2016: 16), English in Indonesia as a foreign language, so there are many possibilities which the English language students get difficulties in understading reading

text and it is caused by wrong words identifications and recognitions. Learner also cannot read because lack of motivation, find difficulty in the material of reading, reading skills and reading strategy that is used, and the assumption that every student may have different difficulties in understanding the reading text, Nurjanah (2018: 255).

Reading in particular in English also have challenges. Irena Shehu in Satriani (2016: 17) stated that main problems in students' reading comprehension is vocabulary. The students have to open the dictionary to understand the new word. Jolly in Barus (2009: 75) said that success in reading in a foreign language depends on the ability to read in the native language. In addition, students have to transfer their reading skills or reading strategies in the native language in order to be able to read effectively in the foreign language. In this situations, students do not need to learn new reading skills in the foreign language. Moreover, if students fail to read effectively and efficiently in the foreign language, it is because they either do not possess enough native language reading skills or they have failed to transfer them. If the students have poor reading habits in their native language they cannot read the written text in the foreign language, because their reading ability in native language influence their effectively reading in foreign language. Furthermore, Clarke in Barus (2009: 75) declared that the process in reading is basically the

same in all languages, then it can be expected that good native language readers will be good second or foreign language readers. Students who are proficient readers in the native language are more likely to become good readers in the foreign language, Cummins in Barus (2009: 75). There has been a lot of research in the field which focused on difficulties in reading text, such as research from abroad which is done by Albader in Satriani (2016: 17). In his research, Albader mentions the difficulties that students' faces in reading in a second or foreign language. It covers some linguistics aspects, such as grammar (syntax), pronunciation (phonetics), and meaning of words (semantics). There are also some researches related with the students' difficulties in reading text done in Indonesia. Fakhruddin in Satriani (2016: 17), also have conducted a similar research with this research. It used to find out the students' problems in comprehending English reading texts. The findings showed that the factors that may make the students have difficulties in understanding English reading texts are related to vocabulary, grammar knowledge, and reading interest. This is the same as the other research that lack of vocabulary, grammar knowledge, and reading interest can cause the difficulty in reading. If the students lack of vocabulary, they will be difficult to increase their reading comprehension, they also will be difficult to read everything by using English because vocabulary plays an

important role to master a language, Siahaan (2012: 208). Grammar knowledge is also needed in reading English because the students cannot understand the context of the written text if they do not understand the grammar, Suganda (2016: 81). Besides that, the students in Indonesia still have bad habit reading and lack of reading interest even though reading in the native language.

EFL young learners are also still struggling to overcome their reading problems. Davoudi and Yousefi in Kasim and Raisha (2017: 309) have listed a number of EFL young learners' reading difficulties and problems such as deficits in vocabulary knowledge and background knowledge, problems with grammatical knowledge and also poor reading strategies which is in fact very important to reduce the difficulties. The difficulties that is faced by the EFL young learners also the same as the difficulties in general. The EFL young learners also need a motivation in reading, so they can have good habit in reading. The EFL young learners also must have reading interest. Moreover, all students will benefit from explicit instruction for decoding and encoding using English orthography. Naturally, children who share the same alphabet with English will have less difficulty learning to read in English than those who do not use an alphabet or use a different alphabet, Cameron ; Nunan in Garton and Copland (2019: 191-192). In fact, all children, including native speakers, find it challenging to learn

the different ways in which English represents sounds.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **2.1 EFL Young Learners**

Garton and Copland (2019: 172) stated that the term young learners covers a range of learners who share commonly accepted characteristics such as having short attention spans and learning holistically, but differs in terms of their physical, psychological, social, emotional, conceptual and cognitive development. Accordingly, preschooler or pre-primary children cover two to five years and they are commonly known as very young learners or early starters; primary school pupils are within the age range of six to 10/11 years old and they are commonly known as young learners; secondary school pupils are within the age range of 11–14 years, and are also known as young learners or early teens; and those within the age range of 15–17 years are known as young adults. According to Garton and Copland (2019: 188), children usually learn to read in their first or native language (L1) in school during early childhood, from kindergarten through third grade. According to Klein in Suganda (2016: 81), young children tend to change their mood every other minute, and they find it extremely difficult to sit still. Harmer in Suganda (2016: 81) said that young learners are curious, like to seek teacher approval, tend to be bored very easily, and do not like sitting and listening for a long time.

## 2.2 Reading Competency

In reading, the readers need to combine information from the text and the background knowledge to get the meaning of the words. The role of reading activities in language learning also develop the good writing style because students may enrich their vocabulary and grammatical structure of the written language, Delfi and Yamat in Riadi and Tantra (2020: 259-260). In order to comprehend the text, the reader must be able to infer the implicit information in the written text, Lipson Riadi and Tantra (2020: 259-260). However, there are many researches on reading proficient show that reading is a complex process for the readers Wilson in Riadi and Tantra (2020: 259-260). It is integrated with the other skills in language learning. Thus, many EFL learners are difficult to master the reading skill because it involves determining main idea, identifying specific information, reference, inference, and vocabulary, Ita Retno Sari, Ari Nurweni in Riadi and Tantra (2020: 259-260). According to Ghabanchi and Behrooznia in Riadi and Tantra (2020: 260), the ability to read is considered to be important since there are many researches and investigations in reading competency for decades. Pradipta and Artini in Riadi and Tantra (2020: 260) declared that the factors that impact the students' reading competency such as motivation, students' attitude in EFL class, and reading strategies. Koda in Riadi and Tantra (2020: 260) said that there are various variables that

impact learners' reading competency. Some of these variables involve vocabulary knowledge, prior knowledge, metacognitive information, and reading strategies. In line with Trehearne and Doctorow in Riadi and Tantra (2020: 260) expressed that there are other factors that affect learners' reading competency. These factors are learners' reading attitudes, useful teaching on comprehension methods, versatility, text form, and being aware of various reading comprehension strategies.

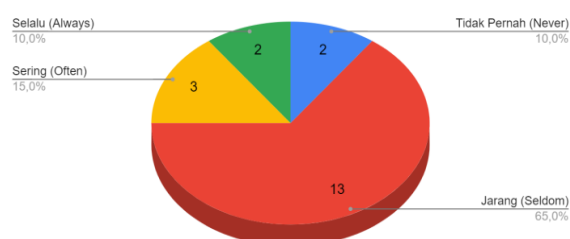
## III. Design of Research

This research applied a descriptive qualitative research design since the data were collected through questionnaire and explained descriptively.

## IV. Findings and Discussion

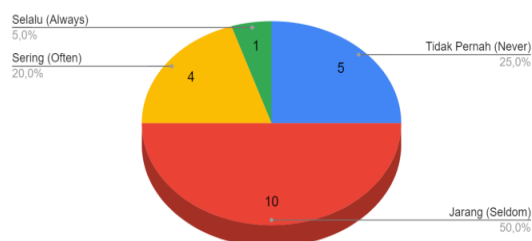
The objective of this research was to find the EFL children's reading problem. The population of this research were the 20 students from the fourth grade. The data were collected through questionnaire and explained descriptively. The students answer the online questionnaire that consist of ten questions and the questions are made based on the rubric of reading, as below:

1. Apakah kamu suka membaca dalam bahasa Inggris? (Do you like reading English?)



The first question is intended to find out how much interest the fourth grade students are in reading especially in reading English. The data show that, first, from 20 students, 2 students or 10,0% students answer 'never' and it means that 2 students do not like reading English because they are never reading in English. Second, from 20 students, 13 students or 65,0% students answer 'seldom' and it means 13 students do not like reading English because they are seldom reading in English. Third, from 20 students, 3 students or 15,0% students answer 'often' and it means 3 students like reading English because they are often reading in English. Fourth, from 20 students, 2 students or 10,0% students answer 'always' and it means 2 students like reading English because they are always reading English. So, from the first chart it can be concluded that the EFL children's reading problem is the EFL children's do not like or not interested reading English because they are seldom reading in English.

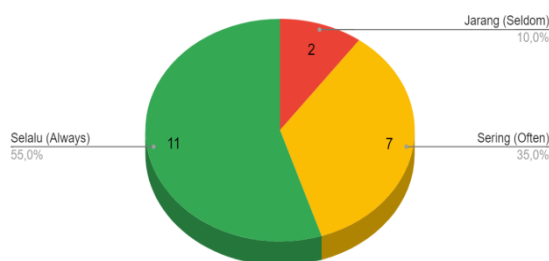
2. Apakah kamu biasa membaca dalam bahasa Inggris? (Do you usually read in English?)



The second question is intended to find out the reading habit of the fourth grade students. The data show that, first, from 20 students, 5 students or 25,0% students answer 'never' and it means the students are

unusual read in English or they never read in English. Second, from 20 students, 10 students or 50,0% students answer 'seldom' it shows that the students unusual read in English or seldom read in English. Third, from 20 students, 4 students or 20,0% answer 'often' it shows that the students usual read in English or often read in English. Fourth, from 20 students, 1 student or 5,0% answer 'always' it shows that the students usual read and always read in English. So, for the second chart it can be concluded that the EFL children's reading problem is the students have poor reading habit because they unusual read in English or seldom read in English.

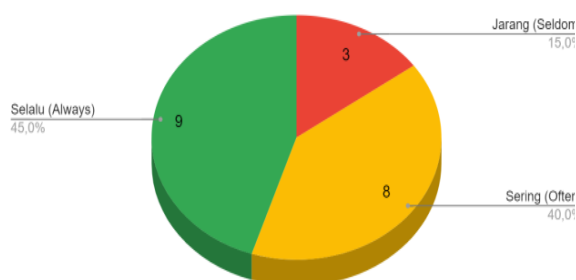
3. Apakah kamu memerlukan kamus ketika membaca dalam bahasa Inggris? (Do you need a dictionary when reading in E...)



The third questions is intended to find out the vocabulary mastery of the fourth grade students when reading in English. The data show that, first, from 20 students, 2 students or 10,0% students answer 'seldom' it means that the students need a dictionary when reading in English but they seldom need it. Second, from 20 students, 7 students or 35,0% students answer 'often' it means that the students often need a dictionary when reading in English. Third, from 20 students, 11 students or 55,0% students answer 'always' it

means the students always need a dictionary when reading in English. So, from the third chart it can be concluded that the EFL children's reading problem is the students lack of vocabulary when reading English so that they need a dictionary to comprehend the reading text in English.

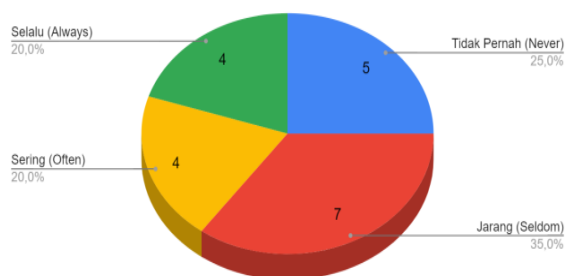
4. Apakah kamu kesulitan membedakan pelafalan suatu kata dalam teks bacaan ketika membaca dalam bahasa Inggris? (Do you have difficulty distinguishing the pronunciation of a word in the reading text when reading in English?)



The fourth chart is intended to find out the ability of the fourth grade students when distinguish the pronunciation of words in English or the fluency of the students. The data show that, first, from 20 students, 3 students or 15,0% students answer 'never' it is meant that the students do not have difficulty to distinguish the pronunciation of words in English. Second, from the 20 students 8 students or 40,0% students answer 'often' it is meant that they often have difficulty to distinguish the pronunciation of words in English. Third, from the 20 students 9 students or 45,0% students answer 'always' it is meant that they always find the difficulty to distinguish the pronunciation of words in English. So, from the fourth chart it can be concluded that EFL children's reading problem is the students find difficulty to distinguish the

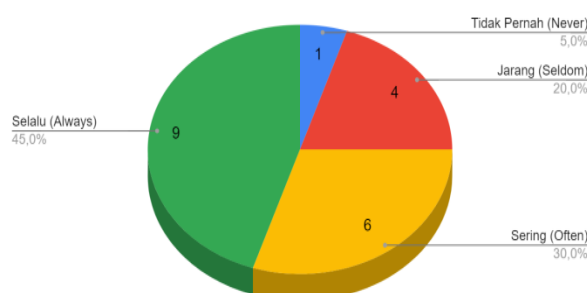
pronunciation of words in English or students do not fluent in reading English.

5. Apakah kamu memperhatikan tanda baca ketika membaca bahasa Inggris? (Do you pay attention to the punctuation when reading English?)



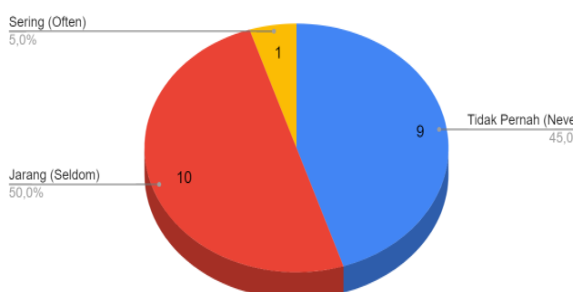
The fifth chart is intended to find out whether students pay attention to the punctuation when reading English or not. The data shows that, first, from 20 students, 5 students or 25,0% students answer 'never' it means that the students never pay attention to the punctuation when read in English. Second, from 20 students, 7 students or 35,0% students answer 'seldom' it means that the students pay attention to the punctuation when read in English but they seldom do it. Third, each of the 4 students or 20,0% answer 'often' and 'always' it means the student usually pay attention to the punctuation when reading. So, from the fifth chart it can be concluded that the EFL children's reading problem is the students seldom pay attention to the punctuation when reading in English.

6. Apakah kamu memerlukan waktu yang lama untuk memahami teks bacaan dalam bahasa Inggris? (Do you need a long time to understand the reading text in English?)



The sixth chart is intended to find out whether students need a long time to understand the reading text in English or not. The data shows that, first, from 20 students, 1 student or 5,0% student answer 'never' it means that the student do not need a long time to understand the reading text in English. Second, from 20 students, 4 students or 20,0% students answer 'seldom' it means the students need a long time to understand the reading text in English but seldom. Third, from 20 students, 6 students or 30,0% students answer 'often' it means that the students often need a long time to understand reading text in English. Fourth, from 20 students, 9 students or 45,0% students answer 'always' it means that the students always need a long time to understand reading text in English. So, from the sixth chart it can be concluded that the EFL children's reading problem is the students always need a long time to understand the reading text in English.

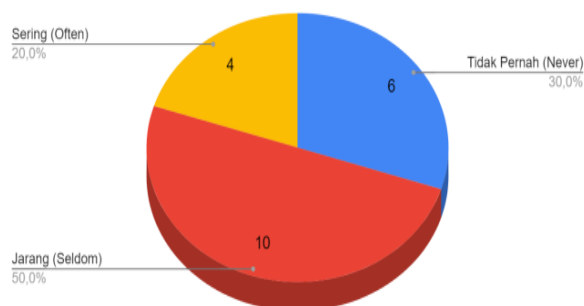
7. Apakah kamu memahami struktur tala bahasa dalam bahasa Inggris ketika membaca? (Do you understand the grammar structure in English when reading?)



The seventh chart is intended to find out whether students understand grammar structures in English or not. The data shows that, first, from 20 students, 9 students or 45,0% students answer 'never' it

means that they never understand the grammar structures in English when reading. Second, from 20 students, 10 students or 50,0% students answer 'seldom' it means that the students seldom understand the grammar structures in English when reading. Third, from 20 students, only 1 student or 5,0% student answer 'often' it means that only one student often understand the grammar structures in English when reading. So, from the seventh chart it can be concluded that the EFL children's reading problem is the students seldom even never understand the grammar structures in English when reading.

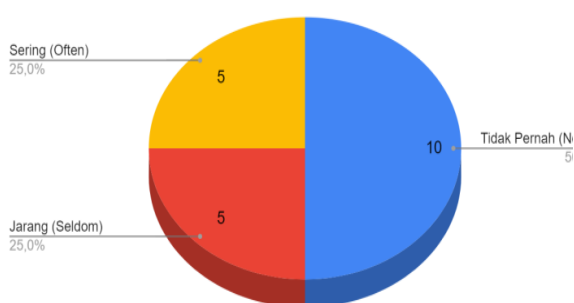
8. Apakah kamu memperhatikan bentuk dan isi teks bacaan dalam bahasa Inggris ketika membaca? (Do you pay attention to the form and the content of the reading text in English when reading?)



The eighth chart is intended to find out whether students pay attention to the form or the content of the reading text which they read or not. The data shows that, first, from 20 students, 6 students or 30,0% answer 'never' it means that the students never pay attention to the form or the content of the reading text which they read. Second, from 20 students, 10 students or 50,0% answer 'seldom' it means that the students seldom pay attention to the form or the content of the reading text which they read. Third, from 20

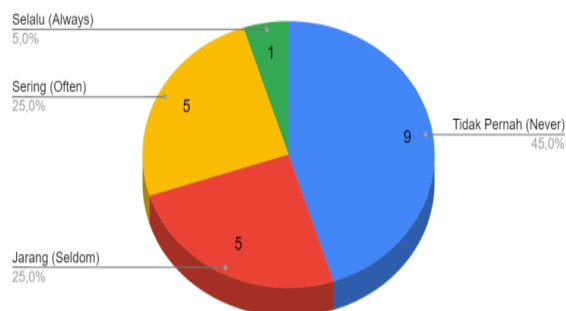
students, only 4 students or 20,0% answer 'often' it means that only four students often pay attention to the form or the content of the reading text which they read. So, from the eighth chart it can be concluded that EFL children's reading problem is the students never even seldom pay attention to the form or the content of the reading text which they read.

9. Apakah kamu menerapkan strategi tertentu dalam membaca bahasa Inggris? (Do you apply any strategies in reading English?)



The ninth chart is intended to find out whether students apply any strategies in reading English or not. The data shows that, first, from 20 students, each of the 5 students or 25,0% students answer 'often and seldom' it means that there are five students often apply any strategies and there are five students seldom apply any strategies in reading English. Second, from 20 students, 10 students or 50,0% students answer 'never' it means that there are 10 students never apply any strategies in reading English. So, from the ninth chart it can be concluded that EFL children's reading problem is the students never apply any strategies in reading English.

10. Apakah kamu mencari ide pokok dalam teks bacaan bahasa Inggris yang kamu baca? (Are you looking for the main idea in the English reading text that you are reading?)



The tenth chart is intended to find out whether students are looking for the main idea of the reading text which they read or not. The data shows that, first, from 20 students, 9 students or 45,0% students answer 'never' it means that the students never look for the main idea of the reading text which they read. Second, from 20 students, each of the 5 students or 25,0% students answer 'seldom and ofteh' it means there are 5 that the students seldom look for the main idea of the reading text which they read and there are 5 that the students often look for the main idea of the reading text which they read. Third, from 20 students, only 1 student or 5,0% students answer 'always' it means only one students always look for the main idea of the reading text which they read. So, from the tenth chart it can be concluded that EFL children's reading problem is the students never look for the main idea of the reading text which they read.

So, from all of the charts can be found the EFL children's reading problem such as; 35,0% students seldom pay attention to punctuation in reading English. Actually, punctuation play an important role in



reading, because it can help the reader to find out the meaning of the reading text easily. There are 45,0% students always have difficulty to distinguish the pronunciation of words in English. There are 45,0% students always need a long time to understand the reading text in English. There are 45,0% students never look for the main idea of the reading text which they read. Looking for the main idea is also important in reading, it can help you understand the reading text quickly. There are 50,0% students have poor reading habit because they unusual read in English or seldom read in English. Actually, reading habit give big influent for reading comprehension. There are 50,0% students seldom even never understand the grammar structures in English when reading. Understanding the grammar actually can help the reader get the point of the reading text. There are 50,0% students never even seldom pay attention to the form or the content of the reading text which they read. There are 50,0% students never apply any strategies in reading English. Reading strategy also can help the students to comprehend the reading text easily. There are 55,0% students lack of vocabulary when reading English so that they need a dictionary to comprehend the reading text in English. And there are 65% students do not like or interest reading English because they are seldom reading in English.

## V. Conclusion

This research was conducted to find out the EFL children's reading problem. The data were collected through questionnaire and explained descriptively. The result of the research that the EFL children's reading problem are students seldom pay attention to punctuation in reading English, students always have difficulty to distinguish the pronunciation of words in English, students always need a long time to understand the reading text in English, students never look for the main idea of the reading text which they read, students have poor reading habit because they unusual read in English or seldom read in English, students seldom even never understand the grammar structures in English when reading, students never even seldom pay attention to the form or the content of the reading text which they read, students never apply any strategies in reading English, students lack of vocabulary when reading English so that they need a dictionary to comprehend the reading text in English, and students do not like or not interested reading English because they are seldom reading in English.

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