# MINIMIZING STUDENTS' ERRORS ON ANSWERING "YES/NO" QUESTIONS ON READING COMPREHENSION

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**Abstract:** This study is aimed at finding out the ways to minimize students' error and factors encountered by the students on answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension at the first year students of SMPN 1 Sekotong. The number of population was 32 which were divided into 2 classes. The writer took 32 % of the students as the sample of the study or all of them. They were taken randomly as the sampling techniques to gain the data needed. The writer contributed a set of questionnaire which is consisted of 11 questions. The best ways to minimizing students' error on answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension at the first year students of SMPN 1 Sekotong were Direct reference (45,7%) is very motivating, inference (37,1%) is fairly motivating, Supposition (42.9%) is motivating, Evaluation (37. 3%) is motivating. Some factors encountered by the students in answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension at the first year students of SMPN 1 Sekotong were Language transfer (22.9 %) is motivating factors by the respondents Intra lingual interference (28, 6%) is not motivating factors of respondents, The sociolinguistics situation (35.7%) is fairly motivating factors of the respondents, Age (31.4%) motivating factors of respondents, Modality (22, 9 %) is poorly motivating factor, Succession of approximate system (37.3%) is not motivating factors of the respondents, Universal hierarchy of difficulty (37.1%) not motivating factors of respondents. The methods of teaching and learning process in the class support in minimizing students' error in answering "yes/no" questions very well.

**Key Words:** *Students' Error, "yes/no" Questions, Reading Comprehension.*

## INTRODUCTION

Recent research on reading has shown that reading is a complex cognitive activity that is indispensable for adequate functioning and obtaining information in contemporary society (Alfassi, 2004; Zhang, 1993). In addition, they also state that reading in the first language is different from reading in foreign language. Learning English as a foreign language for some students is considered is a difficult thing. Indonesian students as a foreign language learner usually find some difficulties in reading many kinds of English literacy in the form of text, poetry, novel and textbook.

There are some reading difficulties which are stated by Nuttal (1996), Harmer (2001) and Burns et al. (1999 in Nunan, (1992:16); (1) inability to apply reading strategy in the native language to read in English language, (2) read slowly word by word, (3) easy frustrated and dissatisfied especially when they meet some difficult words, (4) read the text aloud in which it may inhibit comprehension, (5) they confuse to read authentic text in foreign language, (6) the length of the sentence in the text, (7) the

text genre which is unfamiliar to the students and, (8) deficit in working memory.

To measure the students' reading comprehension, some comprehension questions which are put under the passage are usually given. The questions varied from the easier to the most difficult ones or from the questions which merely need to be answered just by scanning the text to the questions which demanded the students to think hard (skimming) in detail.

The questions are listed out in two major form namely WH-questions type and "yes/no" questions type. Unfortunately, the students at the first year of SLTP Negeri 1 Sekongkang still found it difficult and make errors in answering "yes/no" questions. Inspired by above phenomena, this particular study will be conducted to have difficulties in answering "yes/no" questions based on reading comprehension texts. Hopefully could provide the fact about their basic difference (if any) in English reading comprehension of what their teacher instructed them to do.

Some factors which may raise problems in understanding the reading materials in classes deals with the reading material, the total program of reading instruction, the child own personality, interest, motivation, and his out of schools (Alexander in Henning 1986:22).

Namset (in Richard, 1974: 5) stated that there are seven factors which language error, they are:

### 1. Language Transfer

Richard (1974) stated that they sentence in the target language may exhibit interference from the mother tongue. George (in Richard, 1974: 5) found that one of the deviant sentences from second language learners could be attributed to language transfer, a figure similar to that given by lance (1972).

Transfer is a process that describes the use of the behavior that have been learned automatically, spontaneous in the effort to give new response Dulay (in Tarigan, 1990: 26). Futher, Dulay divide language transfer into two types, they are negative transfer and positive transfer. Negative transfer is the use of L1 system in L2, while those systems are different. Positive transfer happens when the L1 systems and L2 system is equal. Negative transfer in the second language learning is more known as interference, interference refers to those transfer that caused language error. Language error are happen because an old behavior (L1) is different from the new behavior just learning. Corder (in Richards, 1974: 27) stated that large number of the learners' errors is related to the systems of his mother tongue.

### 2. Intralingua Interference

According to Richards (1970 cited in Richards, 1974: 6), intralingual interference refers to items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language.

In an experiment on learning Russian word-order, Torrey (1966) found that subjects sometimes adopted a consistent word order different from either Russian or English, Torrey (in Richards, 1974: 6). Richard (1971 cited in Richard, 1974: 6) found the systematic intralingual error involve overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and semantic errors. Brudhiprabha (in Richards, 1976: 6) stated that many intralingual errors represent the learning difficulty of what are often low level rules in the target language, such as differences between the verb inflection in I walk, she walks.

### 3. Sociolinguistic Situation

In sociolinguistic situation factor, the different setting for language use result in different degrees and types of language learning these many is distinguished in terms of the effects of the socio-cultural setting on the learner's language and in terms of relationship holding between the learner and the target language community and the respective linguistic markers of these relations and identities. The effects of the learner's particular motivations for learning the second language as the effects of socio-cultural setting also include in this factor.

Lambert (in Richards. 1974: 7) stated that different setting for language learning may motivate different process of language learning. For example: two language are learned in the same socio-cultural setting, the learner may develop a given type of semantic structure.

### 4. Age

Age is one of some factors which may affect of the approximate system of the second language learner. Some aspects of the child's learning capacities change by getting older and these may affect language learning.

The child's memory span increases with age. Lannegberg (in Richards, 1974: 9) noted a period of primary language acquisition, postulated to by biologically determined, beginning when the child stars to walk and continuing until puberty. Some of the characteristic of child language have been attributed to the particular nature of his memory and processing strategies in childhood.

Brown and Bellugi (in Richards, 1974: 9) related aspects of children's language to limitations in the length of utterances imposed by the child's inability to plan ahead more than a few words. Further, he stated that adults are better prepared for language learning than children in some ways. Adults have better memories, a large store of concepts, while children are better imitators of speech sounds.

### 5. Modality

The learner's language may vary according to modality. The modality of exposure to the target language and the modality of production, production and perception may involve the acquisition of two partially overlapping system. Vildomec (in Richards, 1974: 8) observed that interference between the bilingual's languages is generally on the productive rather than receptive side.

### 6. Successions of Approximate Systems

This factor concerns the lack of stability of the learner's approximate system, such system usually unstable in given individuals, since there is invariably continuing improvement in learning the target language. It happens because the circumstances for individual language learner are never identical; the acquisition of new lexical, phonological and syntactic items varies from one individual to another. Whinnom (in Richards, 1974: 11) stated that is rare for a learner to use replacement (error) or over use a given structure 100% of the time.

**7. Universal Hierarchy of Difficulty**

This factor is concerned with the inherent difficulty for man of certain phonological, syntactic or semantic items and structure. Some forms may be inherently difficulty to learn matters with the background of the learner. For example: the English /v/-/ò/ and /f/-/Ø/ are very hard to distinguish, not only for non-native speakers but also for native speakers, Delattrc, Lieberman, and Cooper (in Richards, 1974: 13).

Difficulty in learning has been defined by psycholinguistics in terms of such factors as sentence length, processing time required, derivational complexity, types of embedding, number of transformations, and semantic complexity.

Therefore, this recent study aimed at finding out the best ways to minimize students' errors on answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension?, and what factors that students' encounter in answering "yes/no" questions on reading comprehension?

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

In this study, the researcher used descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative studies simply describe phenomena. Descriptive method describes and interprets what exists, Ary (1985:322). It was used since it only observed and described the best ways to minimize students' error and factors encountered by the students on answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension at the first year students of SMPN 1 Sekotong.

**Setting**

This study took place at Junior High School (SMPN 1) in Sekotong, particularly the first year students.

**Subjects of the Study**

The subjects of this study were the first year students of SMPN 1 Sekotong. They particularly consisted of two classes which is in one class consist of 16 students. So the total of subjects was 32 students.

**Data and Source of the Data**

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to collect data. In this study, the researcher asked the students to answer the questionnaire given. And the source of the data was the first year students of SMPN 1 Sekotong.

**Research Instrument**

In this study, the researcher is the key instrument in collecting data. In this study the researcher giving the questionnaire.

**Data Collection and Data Analysis**

The researcher collected the data by conducting objective test and questionnaire; in the objective test, the writer used multiple choice and test. The objective tests are applied to find out the students' errors in answering "yes/no" question on reading comprehension, and in questionnaire the writer gave questions to the students to know what the factor that may contribute to the students' ability in answering "yes/no" question on reading comprehension.

The data were analyzed based on the following steps (Creswell, 1980:218): 1) Organizing and preparing the data for analysis. 2) Read through all the data. 3) Begin the analysis with a coding process. 4) Use the coding process to generate a description of the subjects as well as categories or themes for analysis. 5) Advance how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative. 6) A final step in data analysis involves making an interpretation or meaning of the data to find out the answers of research questions.

**DISCCUSSIONS**

**Data Finding**

The finding found after having the data collection and analysis. The analysis leads the discussion toward the finding of investigation. The presentation of the result is intended to answer the statement of the problems displayed.

1. The best ways to minimizing students' error on answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension at the first year students of SMPN 1 Sekongkang.

There were 4 classifications of the best ways to minimizing students' error on answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension found in the research, and those were classified as follows:

The name of the best ways to minimizing students' error on answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension:

| No | Name |
|----|------|
| 1. | Direct reference |
| 2. | Inference |
| 3. | Supposition |
| 4. | Evaluation |

The questionnaire consists of 6 optional answers, where the students can choose one of them according to their own opinions. The optional answers are: not motivating (1), very poorly motivating (2), poorly motivating (3), fairly motivating (4), motivating (5), and very motivating (6).

The data was drawn in the following table:

The percentage of the best ways to minimizing students' error on answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension:

| No | S | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1. | D | 5.7% | 0% | 2.9% | 8.6% | 37.1% | 45.7% |
| 2. | I | 2.9% | 2.9% | 11.4% | 37.1% | 28.6% | 17.1% |
| 3. | S | 0% | 2.8% | 8.6% | 20% | 42.9% | 25.7% |
| 4. | E | 2.9% | 11.4% | 2.9% | 37.1% | 11.4% | 34.3% |

Note:  S = Statement
　　　DR　 = Direct Reference
　　　I　　= Inference
　　　Sp　 = Supposition
　　　E　　= Evaluation

Note: 1 is not motivating, 2 is very poorly motivating, 3 is poorly motivating, 4 is fairly motivating, 5 is motivating, 6 is very motivating.

From the table above it can be seen that direct reference was selected to be very motivating (45.7 %) by the respondents, while inference was perceived as fairly motivating (37.1 %) of the respondents, supposition could be motivating (42.9%) of the respondents. While evaluation was perceived as motivating by (37. 3%) of respondents

Of the questionnaire above, it can be concluded that the best way to minimize students' error in answering "yes/no" questions was direct reference, and then followed by supposition, after that, it followed by evaluation, and the last one was inference.

2. Some factors encountered by the students in answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension at the first year students of SMPN 1 Sekongkang.

The percentage of factors encountered by the students in answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension.

| No | S | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1. | L | 14.3% | 21% | 11.4% | 20% | 11.4% | 22.9% |
| 2. | I | 28.6% | 17.1% | 14.3% | 5.7% | 20% | 14.8% |
| 3. | S | 14.3% | 8.6% | 34.3% | 35.7% | 14.3% | 2.8% |
| 4. | A | 8.6% | 8.6% | 8.6% | 20% | 31.4% | 20,8% |
| 5. | M | 17.1% | 17.1% | 22.9% | 14.3% | 14.3% | 14.3% |
| 6. | S | 37.3% | 11.3% | 22.9% | 2.9% | 14.3% | 11.4% |
| 7. | U | 37.1% | 28.6% | 20% | 0% | 8.6% | 5.7% |

Note:　S　　= Statement
　　　L　　= Language Transfer
　　　I　　= Intra lingual Interference
　　　S　　= Sociolinguistics situation
　　　A　　= Age
　　　M　　= Modality
　　　S　　= Succession of approximate system
　　　S　　= Universal hierarchy of difficulty

From the data above it can be seen that language transfer was told to be motivating factors (22.9%) by the respondents. While intra lingual interference was perceived as not motivating factors (28.6%) of respondents. The sociolinguistics situation could be very fairly motivating factors (35.7%) of the respondents. While Age was perceived as motivating factors by (31.4%) of respondents. There are (22.9 %) of the respondents selected that modality was poorly motivating factor. Succession of approximate system regarded as not motivating factors (37.3%) of the respondents. And there are (37.1%) of respondents perceived universal hierarchy of difficulty as not motivating factors.

In this part, the writer would like to discuss about the data obtained in detail for both the best ways to minimizing students' error on answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension and factors encountered by the

students in answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension.

**Elaboration**

Firstly, the writer classifies the questionnaire of the best ways to minimizing students' error and factors encountered by the students in answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension into four categories namely; direct reference, inference, supposition, evaluation.

Next, it's continued to classify factors encountered by the students in answering ""yes/no" questions in reading comprehension, they are; Language transfer, Intra lingual Interference, Sociolinguistics situation, Age, Modality, Succession of approximate system, and Universal hierarchy of difficulty.

The questionnaire consists of four statements about the best ways to minimizing students' error on answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension.

- Direct reference (45.7 %) is very motivating
- Inference (37.1 %) is fairly motivating
- Supposition (42.9%) is motivating
- Evaluation (37. 3%)is motivating

The questionnaire given consists of seven statements about factors encountered by the students in answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension.

- Language transfer (22.9 %) is motivating factors by the respondents
- Intra lingual interference (28.6%) is not motivating factors of respondents.
- The sociolinguistics situation (35.7%) is fairly motivating factors of the respondents.
- Age (31.4%) motivating factorsof respondents. selected that
- Modality (22, 9 %) is poorly motivating factor.
- Succession of approximate system(37.3%) is not motivating factors of the respondents.
- Universal hierarchy of difficulty (37.1%) not motivating factors of respondents.

From the data analysis above, minimizing students' errors on answering "yes/no" questions on reading comprehension at the first year students of SMPN 1 Sekotong had been found that there four kinds of the best ways to minimize students' error on answering "yes/no" questions on reading comprehension, they are; Direct reference, Inference, Supposition, and Evaluation.

The institution or school is one of the important elements which are responsible to motivate the students to be more accustomed to answer the questions in relation to the English language, particularly reading comprehension. The teachers and all elements in the school should support each other so that the teaching and learning process of English make the students be accustomed to answer the questions, particularly "yes/no" questions.

Every teacher especially in SMPN 1 Sekotong when teaching English reading comprehension at school will face many challenges because of many differences of student's motivation in learning English language.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the result of data analysis and the data interpretation above which deals with minimizing students' errors on answering "yes/no" questions on reading comprehension at the first year students of SMPN 1 Sekotong in academic year 2012/2013, the researcher concludes that there are found that there four kinds of the best ways to minimize students' error on answering "yes/no" questions on reading comprehension, they are; Direct reference, Inference, Supposition, and Evaluation.

1. The best ways to minimize students' error on answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension at the first year students of SMPN 1 Sekotong.

- Direct reference (45.7 %) is very motivating
- Inference (37.1 %) is fairly motivating
- Supposition (42.9%) is motivating
- Evaluation (37. 3%) is motivating

Some factors encountered by the students in answering "yes/no" questions in reading comprehension at the first year students of SMPN 1 Sekotong.

- Language transfer (22.9 %) is motivating factors by the respondents
- Intra lingual interference (28.6%) is not motivating factors of respondents.
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- Modality (22.9 %) is poorly motivating factor.
- Succession of approximate system (37.3%) is not motivating factors of the respondents.
- Universal hierarchy of difficulty (37.1%) not motivating factors of respondents.

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