

THE THIRD YEAR STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN COMPREHENDING ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY AT THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF BUNG HATTA UNIVERSITY PADANG

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INTRODUCTION

English is the largest language by number of speakers and it is one of the international languages. In learning English four skills should be mastered. The fourth skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All those skills are equally important and whenever possible should try to incorporate all of them into our lessons if we want to have a balanced approach. Reading is important for the learners. It is a part of communication and the way highly building knowledge. It is very important in education field; students need to be exercised and trained to have good reading skills. In the learning process, reading skill is also the most important skill that must students have because through reading skills they can understand more knowledge especially in English.

Reading essay is one of the skills which is taught on English subject at the English Department of Bung Hatta University. There are several kinds of essay studied by students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University; Expository Essay, Analytical report, Persuasive essay, Objective report, and Argumentative Essay[1]. An argumentative essay is an essay where you agree or disagree with a problem, using reason to support your opinion[2]. Relating to this, the researcher is interested in conducting a research on purpose of determining and describing the students' difficulties in comprehending argumentative essay.

Even though the third-year students have studied argumentative essays, some of them still got difficulties in comprehending argumentative essays. Based on the researcher's informal interview with the students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University, they are too lazy and get bored to read the argumentative essay because they have difficulty to guess the meaning of the essay.

Two previous related researches at Faculty of Teacher Training and Education have been conducted by Ayu Melinda (2014) and Meta Sari (2012). Their researches are related to ability of the third year students' at the English Department in comprehending argumentative essay. The finding of Fitria showed that 62.5% of the third year students had moderate ability in understanding argumentative essay[3]. Similarly, another researcher (Meta Sari) found that 62.5% of the third year students had good ability in writing argumentative essay.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting a research entitled "The Third Year Students' Difficulties in Comprehending Argumentative Essay at The English Department of Bung Hatta University Padang". There are three aspects of difficulties in reading comprehension of argumentative essay. They deal with the questions about the introductory paragraph, body paragraph, and concluding paragraph[4].

METHOD

In this research, the researcher used descriptive method. Descriptive research involves collecting data to test hypotheses or to answer questions about the current status of research subjects[5]. This research described the students' difficulties in comprehending argumentative essay.

The population of this research was the third year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University Padang. The number of sample was 24 students, they were chosen by using total sampling technique because the population is less than 100 and all members of the population will be selected as the sample of this research. The researcher used a reading test to collect the data. The researcher gave the sample a test in the form of reading comprehension,

the test was an examination question that required an answer in a sentence, paragraph, or short composition. A good test must be valid and reliable[6]. To know the validity of the test, the researcher uses content validity. To find out the reliability of this test the researcher used the interrater method. The researcher used the Pearson Product Moment by Arikunto to find out the reliability index. The reliability index of the test was 0.96. It means that the instrument was reliable.

The data were collected by using table of checklist and the data were analyzed by calculating students' difficulties. The data were analyzed by using formula statistical as suggested by Arikunto (2015).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The result of data analysis showed that in general, the third-year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University Padang had difficulties in comprehending argumentative essay. Specifically, they had difficulties in comprehending the introductory paragraph, body paragraph, and concluding paragraph of argumentative essay. It was indicated by the fact that; 70.8% students had difficulties in comprehending the introductory paragraph of an argumentative essay, 70.8% students had difficulties in comprehending the body paragraph of an argumentative essay, and 79.2% students had difficulties in comprehending the concluding paragraph.

It is probably caused by students' lack of vocabulary they master and lack in understanding contents such as introductory paragraph, body paragraph, and concluding paragraph.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the third-year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University had difficulties in comprehending argumentative essays. Dealing with such conclusions, it is suggested to the lecturer to give more explanations and exercises to improve students' ability in comprehending the contents of introductory paragraph, body paragraph, and concluding paragraph of argumentative essay. The students are suggested to read more and do more exercises of argumentative essay to improve their ability to comprehend it. The next researchers are suggested to do research related

to reading comprehension because there are still many aspects of reading skills that have to be researched.

Keywords: Reading, Argumentative Essay, Difficulties

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