

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES
IN COMPREHENDING PARAGRAPHS OF THE EDUCATIONAL
NEWS OF JAKARTA POST AT ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

Article

*Submitted to Fulfill a Partial Requirement for S.1 Degree at the English Department of Teacher Training
and Education Faculty Bung Hatta University*

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0910013121054



**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
THE FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
BUNG HATTA UNIVERSITY
PADANG
2013**

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN COMPREHENDING PARAGRAPHS OF THE EDUCATIONAL NEWS OF JAKARTA POST AT ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

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Abstract

The purpose this research was to study the difficulties of the second year students of English Language Teaching Department of Bung Hatta University in comprehending the paragraphs in the educational news of Jakarta Post. The population of this research was the second year students of English Department of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Bung Hatta University. The population members was 102 students, and the size of sample was 32 students. The researcher used cluster random sampling technique to get representative sample. The instrument used to get the data was reading test in the form of multiple choice. To know the reliability of the test, the writer used Split-Half method and Pearson Product Moment Formula, then the result of correlation coefficient was analyzed by using Spearman-Brown formula. The result of this study showed that in general the second year students of English Language Teaching Department had difficulties in comprehending paragraphs of educational news of Jakarta Post. It was proved that there were 20 students (62.5 %) who were categorized had difficulties and 12 students (37.5 %) had no difficulties. The finding of this research lead the researcher to conclude that the second year students of English Language Teaching Department of Bung Hatta University had difficulties in comprehending the paragraphs of educational news of Jakarta Post.

Key words: reading, difficulties

Introduction

In teaching-learning process, beside using books, the teachers or lecturers have to use an authentic material as an additional sources of teaching reading. One of the authentic materials that can be used by the lecturer in doing teaching learning

process to improve the students' ability to comprehend a text is newspaper. One of the English newspapers is Jakarta Post. Jakarta Post is a daily English language newspaper in Indonesia. There are many sections involved in Jakarta Post. One of them is Educational News Section. This

section deals with the news around education. It covers with many paragraphs.

Most of the students still assume that reading authentic material especially newspaper is difficult. The common problems that students have in comprehending it deals with finding topic, main idea and supporting details.

Authentic materials are the materials that have been produced to fulfill some social purposes in the language community (Peacock in Chen, 2003). On the other hand, authentic materials are not specifically prepared on teaching material in learning course. Lecturers prefer to bring the authentic materials taken out from internet article, magazine, and newspaper (Wallace in Ervina, 2011). Newspaper is a periodical publication containing news regarding current events, informative articles, diverse features, editorials, and advertising (Wikipedia, 2013). Wikipedia (2013) states that a paragraph is a self-contained unit of a discourse in writing dealing with a particular point or idea.

Newspaper contains with paragraphs. Wikipedia (2013) states that a paragraph is a self-contained unit of a discourse in writing dealing with a particular point or idea. A paragraph consists of one or more sentences. Paragraphs are usually an expected part of

formal writing, used to organize longer prose. There are three elements in paragraphs, namely, topic, main idea, and supporting ideas. The *topic* is the broad, general theme or message. It is what some call the subject. The *main idea* is the "key concept" being expressed. The supporting *details*, support the main idea by telling how, what, when, where, why, how much, or how many, (<http://academic.cuesta.edu/acasupp/as/308.HTM>. 2013).

The purpose of this research was to find out the difficulties faced by the second year students of English Language Teaching Department of Bung Hatta University who registered in academic year 2012/2013 in comprehending paragraphs in educational news of Jakarta Post.

Methodology

This study was descriptive research. Gay (1987: 189) states that descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. This research described the difficulties faced by the second year students of English Language Teaching Department of Bung Hatta University who register in academic year 2012/2013 in comprehending paragraphs in educational news section of Jakarta Post.

Gay (1987: 102) states that population is the group or subject of interest to the researcher in which the result of the research will be generalizable. The population of this research was all the second year students of English Language Teaching Department of Bung hatta University academic year 2012/2013. They all are 102 students.

To select the sample, the researcher used cluster random sampling technique. Cluster random sampling was used because they were distributed into group or classes and they were homogeneous. The total number of sample was 32 students.

The instrumentation of this research was a reading test in form of multiple-choice. To see the validity of the test the researcher used content validity (Arikunto, 2009). It means that the test is valid if it covers all materials which have been taught to the learners. The researcher counted the reliability of the test by using Split half method and Pearson Product Moment Formula.

Pearson Product Moment Formula (Gay :1987).

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{\{(n \sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2\} \{(n \sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$

where:

r_{xy} = the correlation coefficient variable x and y (odd and even item)

x = the odd item score

y = the even item score

N = the number of students

\sum_{xy} = the total scores of cross xy

After that, the result of correlation coefficient was analyzed by using Spearman-Brown formula. It was found that the reliability of the test was 0.79.

Spearman - Brown formula (Arikunto, 2009)

$$r_{ii} = \frac{2r_{xy}}{1+r_{xy}}$$

Where:

r_{ii} = the coefficient correlation for the total test

r_{xy} = the coefficient correlation of the two halves of the test

After the data was collected, the researcher analyzed the data by using these procedures: a) the researcher calculated Mean; b) divided the students into two classifications: having difficulties and having no difficulties; c) finally, calculated the percentage of the students who have difficulties and who have no difficulties.

Finding and Discussion

1. Students' Difficulties in Comprehending Paragraphs in the Educational News of Jakarta Post.

The researcher found that the highest score was 23, the lowest score was 10 and mean was 14,7. 12 out of 32 students (37,5 %) was categorized had no difficulties to comprehend paragraphs in the educational news of Jakarta Post and 20 out of 32 students (62,5 %) was categorized had difficulties to comprehend paragraphs in the educational news of Jakarta Post.

The difficulties above might be caused by the lack of knowledge how to comprehend a paragraph as the whole deals with identify topic, main idea and supporting ideas, and also the low interest students in reading. In conclusion, this research signed that the second year students of English Language Teaching Department of Bung Hatta University who register in academic year 2012/2013 had difficulties in comprehending paragraphs in the educational news of Jakarta Post.

2. Students' Difficulties in Identifying the Topic of Paragraphs in the Educational News of Jakarta Post

It was found that the lowest score was 2, the highest score was 11 and the

mean of the students' score in identifying the topic was 6.2. The result of data analysis also demonstrated that there were 17 students (53.1 %) categorized had difficulty and 15 students (46.9 %) categorized had no difficulty in identifying the topic of paragraphs in the educational news of Jakarta Post.

It can be caused by the lack of knowledge of characteristics of a topic, and cannot differentiate between the topic that is not too specific and that is not too general. For example the question on "What is the best topic for paragraph 2?" could only be answered correctly by not more than 53.1% of students. The answer of such question was "Singapore's school and college", but most of the students answered "New Haven".

3. Students' Difficulties in Identifying the Main Idea of Paragraphs in the Educational News of Jakarta Post

The result of analyzing data gathered using reading test showed that the lowest score was 1, the highest score was 7 and the mean was 4.5. It was also found that there were 15 students (46.9%) categorized had difficulty and there were 17 students (53.1 %) categorized had no difficulty in identifying the main idea of paragraphs in the educational news of Jakarta Post.

It might be caused by the good of knowledge that students had on how to find main idea. As you know, the main idea commonly appear at the beginning or at the end of paragraph. More than half of students (53.1 %) could answered correctly on “What is the most appropriate main idea for paragraph 1?”

4. Students’ Difficulties in Identifying the Supporting Idea of Paragraphs in the Educational News of Jakarta Post

This research found that the lowest score of students in identifying the supporting idea of paragraphs in the educational news of Jakarta Post was 0 and the highest score was 7 and the mean was 4. The researcher also found that there were 22 students (68.7 %) were categorized had difficulty, and there were only 10 students (31.3 %) categorized had no difficulty in identifying the supporting ideas of paragraphs in the educational news of Jakarta Post.

This findings indicated that the students got difficulties to find the ideas which can reinforce the main idea. They did not know the relationship among sentences in each paragraph and also they might had lack of exercise in reading the newspaper especially in identifying the supporting ideas. As a matter of fact, most

students (68.7 %) could not answered correctly on “ What are the supporting ideas of paragraph 16?”. Most of the students answered that the supporting ideas were “The students do not need national exam”; however, the right one is “Nuh could only agree to a proposal that merged the final exam for elementary school and junior high school”.

Conclusion

After having discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher concluded that the second year students of English Language Teaching Department of Bung Hatta University who register in academic year 2012/2013 had difficulties in comprehending paragraphs in the educational news of Jakarta Post. The data revealed that there were more than half of the students (62.5 %) had difficulties to comprehend paragraphs in the educational news of Jakarta Post.

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