

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS' READING ABILITY IN  
UNDERSTANDING ARGUMENTATIVE PARAGRAPH IN BUNGHATTA  
UNIVERSITY**

Ayu Melida<sup>1</sup>, Welya Roza<sup>2</sup>, Lisa Tavriyanti<sup>2</sup>,

<sup>1</sup>The Student of English Department, the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Bung  
Hatta University

E-mail : [Ayu.Melida285@yahoo.com](mailto:Ayu.Melida285@yahoo.com)

<sup>2</sup>The Lecturers of English Department, the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of  
Bung Hatta University

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**Abstract**

**This research was attempted to describe the second year English students' reading ability in understanding argumentative paragraph in Bung Hatta University. The design of this research was descriptive in nature. The members of population of this research were 108. The researcher used cluster random sampling in taking the sample. The number of sample members was 40 students. In collecting the data, the researcher used reading test by using multiple choices. Before the researcher gave the real test, instrument was tried out. The result of the try out was used to analyze item difficulties, item discrimination and reliability of the test. To analyze the reliability of the test, the researcher uses split half method. It was found that the coefficient correlation was very high correlation (0.88). It means that the result of the test was reliable. Based on the result of this research, it was found that the students' reading ability in understanding thesis of argumentative paragraph was moderate (65%). Then, the students' reading ability in understanding argument of argumentative paragraph was moderate (57.5%). And, the students' reading ability in understanding conclusion was moderate (77.5%). Finally, based on findings, it can be concluded that reading ability in understanding argumentative paragraph was moderate (62.5%). In line with this conclusion, the researcher suggests the students to do more exercises about reading argumentative paragraph in the future, especially on understanding argument. And for the lecturer is expected to improve students' reading ability in understanding argumentative paragraph. For further researcher, the researcher suggests to find out the difficulty of students in understanding argumentative paragraph and other cases by the students in learning English.**

**Key words: Reading Ability, Understanding, Argumentative Paragraph**

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**A. INTRODUCTION**

Basically, English has four skills that should be mastered by students. They are listening, speaking, reading and

writing. All of them are integrated each other. Reading is one of the important language skills in English because the activity of reading is always a center of students' activity in school and university.

Based on the background above some people can get the benefits of reading like getting the point of what people talk about from one of the argumentative paragraph. For the students, reading can help them to understand the reading material and the target language so that the students can read and understand the paragraph effectively and efficiently.

Based on the researcher's interview with some second year students of English Department about January 30, 2014, when they studied reading II, it was found that there are still many problems faced by students in reading especially argumentative paragraph. They do not interested in reading the paragraph and they also lazy and get bored. Besides, they have a lack of knowledge about the paragraph. So the effect of that factors is the students difficult to understand the paragraph that they read.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher was interested to conduct the research entitled: "An Analysis of the Second Year English Students' Reading Ability in Understanding of Argumentative Paragraph in Bung Hatta University."

In general, the purpose of conducting this research was to describe

the reading ability of the second year students in Bung Hatta University in understanding argumentative paragraph. Specifically, the purposes of this research were to describe:

1. The reading ability of the second year students in Bung Hatta University in understanding thesis of argumentative paragraph.
2. The reading ability of the second year students in Bung Hatta University in understanding argument of argumentative paragraph.
3. The reading ability of the second year students in Bung Hatta University in understanding conclusion of argumentative paragraph.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study was aimed to describe the students' reading ability in understanding of argumentative paragraph. Relating to this, the researcher used descriptive research in nature. Descriptive research is used to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied (Wikipedia: 2013). Although the data are factual, accurate and systematic, the research cannot be described the causes or situations.

Gay (1987: 102) states that the population is the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which she or he would like the result of the study to be generalized. The population of this study was the second year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University who are registered in academic year 2012/2013. The total members of the population were 108 students. The members of population were distributed into three classes; class A, class B, and class C. The researcher chose the second year students as the population because they have passed three series of reading; Reading I, Reading II, and Reading III.

**The Distribution of the Members of  
Population by Class**

No	Class	Number of Students
1	A	40
2	B	40
3	C	28
<b>Total</b>		<b>108</b>

Because the number of population was large, the researcher took sample. The sample is a part of population. Sample is smaller number of population. According to Gay (1987:114), the minimum sample

for a descriptive research is 10% out of the total number of members of population.

In this research, the researcher used cluster random sampling technique to select the sample. Gay *et al* (2009: 129) state that cluster random sampling may be the only feasible method of selecting a sample when the researcher is unable to obtain a list of all members of the population. The researcher used cluster sampling because the members of population were distributed into groups or classes and they were homogenous. The members of population have the same curriculum, syllabus, material, and lecturer in reading subject.

In selecting sample, the researcher followed the following procedures. First she used three small pieces of papers and writes the name of each class (A, B, or C) on it. Then, she rolled it up and put them into a box. After shaking the box, she took one of the papers with closed eyes. The class which it is name written on the selected paper would became the class sample; all members of the class sample became the sample of this research. The selected class that would be the sample was class B.

In this research, the researcher collected the data by using reading test .It

was constructed in the type of multiple choices. The test consisted of six argumentative paragraph and each paragraph has 5 items.

A good test should be valid. A test is said valid if it is able to measure what it wants to measure. Before the researcher gave a real test, the researcher tried out the test to the students out of the sample because the test is nonstandardized test. Nonstandardized test is the test made by researcher. She tried it out to make sure whether the students understand the instructions of the test or not and whether the time allocation was sufficient. Besides that, the result of this try out would be used to analyze item difficulties, item discrimination, and to find out reability of the test :

#### **a. Item difficulty**

Item difficulty is the extent to which an item is easy or difficult for the proposed group of test-takers (Brown, 2010:70), to find out the index of the item difficulty, the researcher used the following formula (Arikunto, 2012: 223) :

$$P = \frac{B}{JS}$$

**Where:**

P = item Difficulty

B = the number of students answer correctly

JS = the number of students are given the test

The item difficulties range between 0.00 -1.0 and it is symbolized as “P” that refers to “ proportion”. The result of difficulty index is classified into the following categories stated by Arikunto (2012: 225):

P = 0.00 - 0.30 is difficult

P = 0.31 - 0.70 is moderate

P = 0.71 - 1.00 is easy

From the range above, the researcher used the item that has P between 0.31 – 0.70. because Arikunto (2012:225) states that the test is considered good if the item difficulty is between 0.31 – 0.70.

#### **b. Item discrimination**

Item discrimination (ID) is the extent to which an item differentiates between high- and low-ability test-takers (Brown, 2010:71). A test item that can or cannot be answered correctly by both smart and poor students is considered as a bad item because it does not have item discrimination. To do this item discrimination, all students are divided into two groups; upper and lower group.

According to Arikunto (2012: 227), for small size of sample, students who get score above mean will be classified as

upper group, which the students who get score below mean will be classified as lower group.

To analyze the item discrimination the researcher used the following formula (Arikunto 2012: 228):

$$D = \frac{BA}{JA} - \frac{BB}{JB}$$

**Where:**

- D : item discrimination
- BA : number of the students in the high group who answer correctly
- BB : number of the students in the low group who answer correctly
- JA : number of the students in the high group
- JB : number of the students in the low group

Item discrimination is symbolized as “D” that refers to “discrimination”. The result of item discrimination is classified into the following clasification ( Arikunto, 2012: 232):

- D : 0.00 – 0.20 = poor
- D : 0.21 – 0.40 = satisfactory
- D : 0.41 – 0.70 = good

D : 0.71 – 1.00 = excellent

According to Arikunto ( 2012:232), the test is considered good if the item discrimination is between 0.41 – 0.70.

Reliability is concerned with how consistently you measure what you are trying to measure (Ary *et. al*, 2010: 256). In other words, whenever we do the test, the result is still same.

To find out the coefficient of correlation of the test, the researcher used Pearson Product Moment formula (Arikunto in Syahfitri, 2012:87). As follows;

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

**Where:**

- $r_{xy}$  :The coefficient correlation between variable X and Y
- $\sum XY$  : The total of X and Y
- $\sum X$  : The total number of X score (odd item)
- $\sum Y$  : The total number of Y score (even item)
- $\sum X^2$  : The sum square of variable X
- $\sum Y^2$  : The sum square of variable Y
- N : The total number of sample

To find out the reliability of the whole test, the researcher used “Spearman Brown’s formula” (Gay, 1987:139) as follows:

$$r_{total\ test} = \frac{2r_{xy}}{1+r_{xy}}$$

**Where:**

$r_{total\ test}$  : The reliability coefficient for total test

$r_{xy}$  : The correlation between odd and even items.

The researcher classified the coefficient correlation of the test based on the criterion developed by Arikunto (2012:89) as follows:

0.80 – 1.00 = very high

0.60 – 0.80 = high

0.40 – 0.60 = enough

0.20 – 0.40 = low

0.0 – 0.20 = very low

After analyzing the data, the researcher found that the coefficient of correlation of the test was 0.88 (Very High).

The data of this study were students’ scores on students’ reading ability in understanding of argumentative

paragraph consisting of thesis, stated argument and conclusion. The researcher used some steps to analyze the data:

1. Calculated the mean by using the following formula ( Arikunto, 2012: 299).

$$X = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

**Where:**

X : Mean

$\sum X$  : The total number of x score

N : The total number of sample

2. Calculated the standard deviation by using the following formula ( Arikunto, 2012:299).

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2}{N} - \left(\frac{\sum x}{N}\right)^2}$$

**Where:**

SD : Standar deviation

N : The total number of sample

$\sum x$  : Total score

$\sum x^2$  : The total scores squared

3. Classified the students’ ability into high, moderate, and low by using the following criteria (Arikunto, 2012:299):

>M + SD = high ability

M- SD → M+ SD = moderate ability

<M – SD = low ability

4. Found the percentage of students who get high, moderate, and low ability by applying the following formula;

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

**Where:**

P : Percentage of the students' score

R : The sum of the students who get high, moderate, and low ability

T : The sum of the students.

## C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Findings

The purpose of this research was to describe the students' reading ability in understanding argumentative paragraph. Based on the purpose above, the researcher presented the findings and discussion of this research as follows:

After analyzing data, it was found that students' reading ability in understanding argumentative paragraph was moderate. The result of data showed that the highest score based on the answer sheet of the students was 27 and the lowest score was 7. Then, the researcher got that the mean was 16.2 and 4.70 for standard deviation. It can be supported by the fact that 6 students (15%) had high ability, 25 students (62.5%) had moderate ability and 9 students (22.5%) low ability. The

percentage of students' reading ability in understanding of argumentative paragraph is described in the chart below:

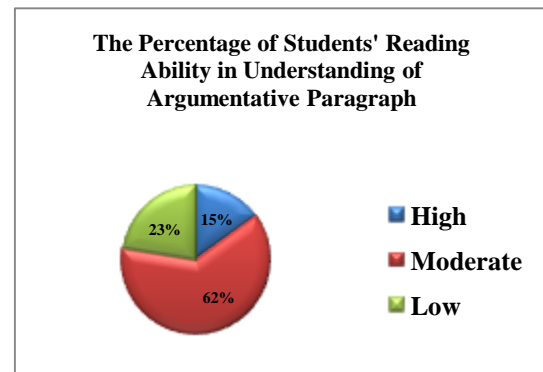


Figure 1

### 1.1 *The Students' Reading Ability in Understanding Thesis of Argumentative Paragraph.*

The result of data showed that the highest score based on the answer sheet of the students was 6 and the lowest score was 1. Then, the researcher calculated the mean and standard deviation, the researcher got that the mean was 3.25 and standard deviation was 1.29. The students' reading ability in understanding thesis of argumentative paragraph was moderate. The result showed that 8 students (20%) had high ability, 26 students (65%) had moderate ability and 6 students (15%) had low ability. The percentage of students' reading ability in understanding thesis of argumentative paragraph is described in the chart below:

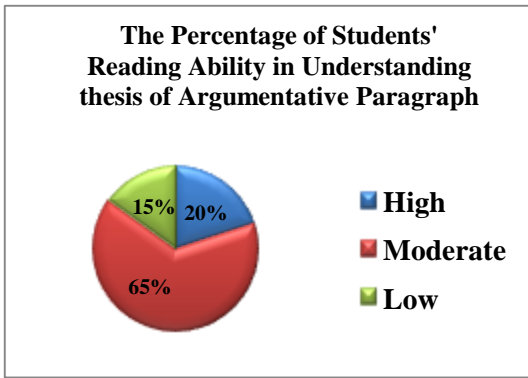


Figure 2

### 1.2 The Students' Reading Ability in Understanding Argument of Argumentative Paragraph.

This part presents result of data showed that the highest score based on the answer sheet of the students was 15 and the lowest score was 4. Then, the researcher calculated the mean and standard deviation, the researcher got that the mean was 9.97 and standard deviation was 2.84. the students' reading ability in understanding argument of argumentative paragraph was moderate. The result showed that 8 students (20%) had high ability, 23 students (57.5%) had moderate ability, and 9 students (22.5%) had low ability.

The percentage of students' reading ability in understanding argument of argumentative paragraph is described in the chart below:

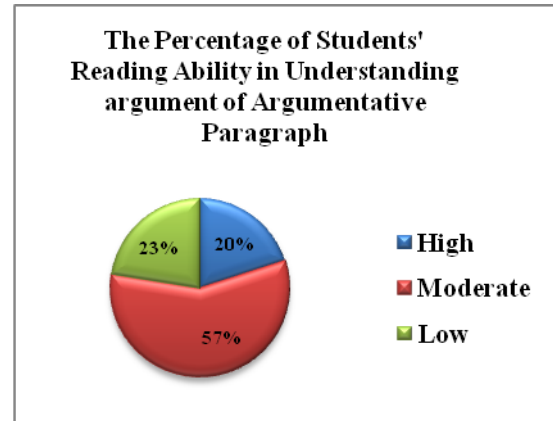
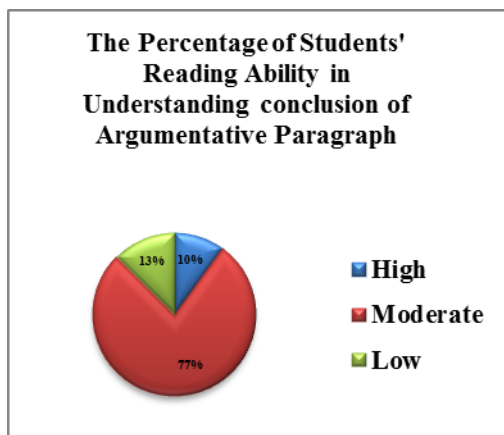


Figure 3

### 1.3 The Students' Reading Ability in Understanding Conclusion of Argumentative Paragraph.

The result of data showed that the highest score based on the answer sheet of the students was 6 and the lowest score was 2. Then, the researcher calculated the mean and standard deviation, the researcher got that the mean was 3.1 and standard deviation was 1.37. The students' reading ability in understanding conclusion was moderate; it was proved that 4 students (10%) had high ability, 31 students (77.5%) had moderate, and 5 students (12.5%) had low ability. The percentage of students' reading ability in understanding conclusion of argumentative paragraph is described in the chart below:





**Figure 4**

## **2 Discussion**

From the analysis, the researcher found that the students' reading ability to understand argumentative paragraph was moderate. It was indicated by the majority of the students got moderate ability and only a few students got high ability, while other got low ability.

As already discuss before, the ability of the first year students of English Department of FKIP Bung Hatta University in understanding of argumentative paragraph was moderate (62.5%) .It was indicated by the fact that many students still had problem in undestanding of argumentative paragraph. The researcher discusses as follows:

### ***2.1 The Students' Reading Ability in Understanding Thesis of Argumentative Paragraph.***

Based on the result of research, it was found students Students' reading ability in

understanding thesis of argumentative paragraph was moderate. From the test, it can be seen that not all students able to answer all items (6 items) that they have wrong answer for items number 6. This statement was supported by the fact that there were 8 students (20 %) had high ability. It mean that they are could not understanding thesis of argumentative paragraph clearly. This the example of the test which can be answered by most the students and which supported the result of students reading ability was moderate.

### ***2.2 The Students' Reading Ability in Understanding Argument of Argumentative Paragraph***

Based on the result of research, it was found students Students' reading ability in understanding argument of argumentative paragraph was moderate. This statement was supported by the fact that there were 57.5% who had moderate ability. It means that more than fifty percent of students who have understood about understanding argument of argumentative paragraph. And other students still had problem in understanding argument of argumentative paragraph. The researcher found 4 of 18 items could not be answered by the students. They were items number 18, 24, 26, and 29 . They

still confused in understanding argument of argumentative paragraph.

### ***2.3 The Students' Reading Ability in Understanding Conclusion of Argumentative Paragraph.***

Based on the result of research, it was found students' reading ability in understanding conclusion of argumentative paragraph was moderate. This statement was supported by the fact that there were 77.5 % who had moderate ability. The last for students' reading ability in understanding conclusion of argumentative paragraph, also 2 of 6 items could not be answered by the students. They were items number 10 and 15.

## **D. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **a. Conclusions**

Based on the result of the data analysis, the researcher made a conclusion of the ability of the second year students' reading ability at Bung Hatta University in understanding argumentative paragraph was moderate. This conclusion was indicated by the fact that there were 6 students (15%) who had high ability, 25 students (62.5%) who had moderate ability and 9 students (22.5%) who had low ability . The students' reading ability will be discussed as follows:

1. The reading ability of second year students' in understanding thesis at Bung Hatta University was moderate. There were 8 students (20%) who had high ability, 26 students (65%) who had moderate ability and 6 students (15%) who had low ability.

2. The reading ability of second year students' in understanding argument at Bung Hatta University was moderate. There were 8 students (20%) who had high ability, 23 students (57.5%) who had moderate ability, and 9 students (22.5%) who had low ability.

3. The reading ability of second year students' in understanding conclusion at Bung Hatta University was moderate. There were 4 students (10%) who had high ability, 31 students (77.5%) who had moderate and 5 students (12.5%) who had low ability.

### **b. Suggestions**

Based on the conclusion above, since the students' reading ability in understanding argumentative paragraph was moderate, the researcher give three suggestions as follows:

1. The lecturer is expected to improve students' reading ability in

understanding argumentative paragraph through:

- ✓ For reading ability in understanding thesis, the lecturer should explain more about what is the topic and point of view in the argumentative paragraph.
- ✓ For reading ability in understanding argument, the lecturer should explain more about what point that support the topic sentences in the argumentative paragraph.
- ✓ For reading ability in understanding conclusion, the lecturer should explain more about what is being argued for or against

and why in the argumentative paragraph.

- ✓ Ask the students to look for printed material or online material about argumentative paragraph exercises. The materials of all students are bundle and then discuss the material.
- 2. For the students, they are expected to do more exercises about generic structure of argumentative paragraph.
- 3. For further researcher, the researcher suggests to find out the difficulty of students in understanding argumentative paragraph and other cases by the students in learning English.

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