

AN ANALYSIS ON THE ABILITY OF THE THIRD YEAR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF BUNG HATTA UNIVERSITY IN COMPREHENDING RELATIONSHIP OF IDEAS THROUGH TRANSITIONAL WORDS

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Abstract

This research was aimed to describe the ability of the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University in comprehending relationship of Ideas through transitional words. The design of this research was descriptive. The number of population members was 83 students, and the number of sample was 24 students. The researcher used simple random sampling in choosing sample. The instrument used in this research was reading test in the form of multiple choices, and the reliability index of the test was 0.85. The result of the data analysis showed that the students had moderate ability in comprehending relationship of ideas through transitional words. In fact 4 students (16.66 %) had high ability, 17 students (70.83 %) had moderate ability and 3 students (12.50 %) had low ability. Specifically, the result of the research showed that: (1) 4 student (16.66 %) had high ability, 14 students (58.33 %) had moderate ability, and 6 students (25.00 %) had low ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through comparison and contrast; (2) 7 students (29.16 %) had high ability, 12 students (50.00 %) had moderate ability, and 5 students (20.83 %) had low ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through enumeration; (3) 4 students (16.66 %) had high ability, 15 students (62.50 %) had moderate ability, and 5 students (20.83 %) had low ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through addition; (4) 3 students (12.50 %) had high ability, 15 students (62.50 %) had moderate ability, and 6 students (25.66 %) had low ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through cause and effect.

Key words: ability, reading, transitional words

Introduction

In learning English, there are four skills that should be possessed by the students because all of the skills are integrated to each other. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading is one of skills that is very important for students who learn English as a foreign

language since it is a kind of process of language acquisition. Patel and Jain (2008: 114) state that reading activity can help the students in comprehending a target language. It means that having such skill will make them easier to learn target language.

Besides, reading activity is closed to the student's daily life; for examples, in looking for a job and to get the information. Through reading you expose yourself to new things, new information, new ways to solve a problem, and new ways to achieve one thing. In addition, through reading we can find the new hobbies within it. And explore one thing you really like and it may end up becoming your career and success in the future. Exploration begins from reading and understanding.

Reading also can gain experience from other people. When you are reading, you are actually gaining the knowledge and experience of someone. It can hasten your success towards a goal, as you don't need to repeat the same mistake while focusing on the right path in achieving one thing. It's like a mountain of gems for you to discover in books, which contain people's successes, failures and advice. Life is too short for you to keep repeating the mistakes that had been done by other people in the past, in order that you can reach the results that someone might already reached. There are more than four thousand billionaires and 12 million millionaires today. To become one of them, the first thing is to learn and get to know their past, what they did in the past that makes them read their ambition today.

Reading is a great path to get to know them, and learn from these great people. In addition, Reading exposes you to a world of imagination, showing you nothing is impossible in this world. By reading, you explore a different angle to see a thing you've known, on how different action leads to different results. Books are beyond imagination. It's like a huge spider web, where you keep linking to more and more to things you knew, and things you just learn, structuring new solutions and answers.

Relationship of ideas means how a paragraph is related to each other. As you know, there are some vehicles that the author commonly uses to link one idea with another one, and one of them is by using transitional words. It means that the readers can find and know the kinds or forms of relationship of ideas by understanding the function of transitional words that are used to link them.

However, based on the result of interview that researcher did towards some of the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University on February 23th 2015, she assumes that they did not really understand the relationship of ideas in reading texts. They got difficulties or problems in finding and

determining transitional words in a paragraph.

Based on the phenomena above, the researcher was interested in analyzing the ability of the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University in comprehending the relationship of ideas by using transitional words.

Understanding the function of transitional words is one of the way a reader can do to see the relationship to link an idea with the other one. In fact transitional words are used to connect and relate ideas, sentences, and paragraphs. They assist in the logical flow of ideas as they signal the relationship between sentences and paragraphs. In prose, the material is supported and conditioned not only by the ordering of the material (its position) but by connectives which signal such, relationship and movement.

Based on the function of words used as sentence connectors, transitional words are commonly classified into several categories. They are time-sequence, example, enumeration, addition / continuation, contrast, comparison and cause-effect (McWhorter 1986). Transitional words that signal time-sequence are used to arrange ideas in order in which they happened. Transitional words that signal example are used when we describe about example of something.

Transitional words that signal enumeration is marking or identifying each major point (something these may be used to suggest order to importance). Transitional words that signal continuing with the same idea and is going to provide additional information. Transitional words that signal comparison and contrast is used to when a writer is concerned only with similarities, he or she may identify the items compare two different things. And if a writer is concerned only with differences between something it is called by contrast. Often a writer will explain something by using comparison or contrast that is, by showing how it is similar to or different from a familiar object or idea. Transitional words that signal cause and effect is used to describe an event or action that is caused by another event or action. A cause and effect explains why or how something happened.

Generally, the main purpose of this study was to describe reading ability of English Department of Bung Hatta University in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional word. Meanwhile the specific purposes were as follows:

- (1) To describe the third year students' ability of English Department of Bung Hatta University in comprehending the relationship of ideas through

transitional words that signal comparison and contrast.

- (2) To describe the third year students' ability of English Department of Bung Hatta University in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal enumeration.
- (3) To describe the third year students' ability of English Department of Bung Hatta University in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal addition.
- (4) To describe the third year students' ability of English Department of Bung Hatta University in comprehending the relationship of ideas through

Research Method

According to Gay (1987: 77) research method can be classified into five categories, namely; historical, descriptive, correlation, casual comparative and experimental. This study uses descriptive research. Descriptive research involves collecting data through a questionnaire, survey, an interview, or observation in order to answer question concerning the current status of the subject of the study. She also states that a descriptive study determines and reports what the things are.

In conclusion, descriptive research is a research which describes the condition and the phenomenon in order to get the real

transitional words that signal cause and effect.

This study is expected to be able to give the benefit to the lecturers and the students. First, for the English lecturers, they get information about their students' ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal comparison and contrast, enumerate, addition & cause and effect. Such empiric information could be considered as input to find out the better way in teaching. Second, for the students, they know their own ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words.

information without experimental manipulation. In this case, the researcher aimed at describing the third year students' reading ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words.

The population of this research was the third year students of English Department of Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Bung Hatta University who register in academic year 2014/2015. Based on the data of English Department, the number third year students are 83 students that distributed into three class.

Due to the quite large of population, the researcher used sample to conduct this study. According to Creswell (2012: 1042) sampling is a subgroup of the target population that the researcher planned to study for generalizing about the target population. Good sample is representative of the population from which it is selected. Moreover, Gay (1987;114) states the minimum sample size is 10 %. In this study, the researcher took approximately 29% of 83 students. It means 24 students would be the sample of this research.

In selecting sample the researcher used simple random sampling technique. Creswell (2012: 142) states that simple random sampling technique is a technique that selects the participants for the sample randomly so that any individual had an equal probability of being selected from the population. She used simple random sampling because every individual has the same characteristics and probability of being selected and selection of one individual does not give affects to the selection of another individual. Also, simple random sampling is the best single way to obtain representative sample.

To choose the sample, the researcher wrote the name of all population members in 83 pieces of paper. Then, she rolled them and put them into a box. After shaking it, the researcher took 24 pieces of paper randomly with closed eyes. The students,

whose names were selected become the sample of this study.

In this study the researcher used reading test as the instrument to collect data on students' comprehension on the relationship of ideas through transitional words. The researcher constructed the test in the form of multiple choice and allocated 60 minutes for students to do the test. The instrument consists of 28 items covering the four kinds of transitional words. The students had to choose one of four alternative answers. After having tried it out to students out of sample, there were four items that should be discarded.

A good test should be valid and reliable. A test is valid if it measures what is supposed to be measured. The researcher used content validity in this study. Arikunto (2012; 82) states that to get a valid test; it should be constructed based the teaching materials given to the students. Therefore, to make this test valid, it was constructed based on the curriculum, syllabus and teaching materials of third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University.

Gay (1987: 135) defines that reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it measures. To find out the reliability of the test, the researcher used Split Half Method. It is kind of method, which divides the items of the

test into odd group and even group. The researcher calculated the coefficient correlation between two sets of score (odd item score and even item score) by using Person Product Moment formula as suggested by Arikunto (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 of correlation between x and y variable

N = the number of students

X = the odd item scores

Y = the even item scores

xy = the total scores of cross product xy

x^2 = the square of x

y^2 = the square of y

After that, to know the coefficient correlation of the whole test, the result of above correlation was analyzed by using Spearman-Brown formula (Arikunto, 2012;107)

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

Where :

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

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

Finally the researcher used the degree of coefficient correlation based on Arikunto's idea (2012; 89).

.81 - 1.00 = very high correlation

.61 - .80 = high correlation

.41 - .60 = moderate correlation

.21 - .40 = low correlation

.00 - .21 = very low correlation

Gay (2009) says that a test is reliable if its index of reliability is 0,70 or bigger. Based on the result of data analysis, it was found the reliability of the test was 0.85.

1. Item difficulty

Item difficulty is the percentage of students who answered a test item correctly. To analyze item difficulty of the test, the researcher used the following formula (Arikunto, 2012:223):

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

Where:

P = Item difficulties

B = The number of students who answer correctly

JS = The number of students who are given the test

The classification of item difficulties suggested by Arikunto (2012: 225) as follows:

P = 0.00 – 0.29 is difficult

P = 0.30 – 0.69 is moderate

P = 0.70 – 1.00 is easy

2. Item discrimination

Item discrimination is the ability of the item to differentiate between students who get high achievement and students who get low achievement. The item discrimination is analyzed by separating the students into high and low group. The researcher divided students into high and low group in analyzing the item discrimination. Because the size of the sample is quite small, she decided the students who get scores half above as a high group and students who get scores half below as a low group. The researcher used the following formula (Arikunto, 2012: 228) to find out the item discrimination of the test.

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

Where:

D = Item discrimination

BA = The number of students in the high group who answer the item correctly

JA = The number of students in the high group

BB = The number of students in the low group who answer the item correctly

JB = The number of the students in the low group

Arikunto (2012: 232) suggests the classification of the item discrimination as the following:

D = 0.00 – 0.19 is poor

D = 0.20 – 0.39 is satisfactory

D = 0.40 – 0.69 is good

D = 0.70 – 1.00 is excellent

According to Arikunto (2012: 233), a good test item is an item which has difficulty in the range 0.30 – 0.69, and the discrimination in the range of 0.40 – 0.69. However, that items in the range 0.20 or 0.80 for item difficulty and the item discrimination can be modified. Based on the result of data analysis, the researcher got 22 items 1, 2, 3,4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 as accepted items, and 2 items were revised (10 and 14). It means that 4 items (12, 18, 21 and 28) were discarded because they could not be accepted as good items for the test.

The researcher collected the data of this study through the following procedures:

- (1) The researcher checked the students' answer sheet one by one
- (2) The researcher gave score for each score. She gave 1 for correct answer and 0 for wrong answer. The highest possible score is 24 and the lowest one is 0.
- (3) The researcher counted the total score for each student

In analyzing the data, the researcher used descriptive analysis technique to

measure the students' reading ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words. To analyze the data, the researcher followed the steps below:

(1) The researcher presented the row score for each sample

(2) The researcher calculated mean (M) by using the following formula:

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Where:

M = Mean

$\sum x$ = Total score of students

N = Number of the sample

(3) The researcher calculated Standard Deviation, by using the following formula:

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

Where:

SD = Standard Deviation

Findings

In measuring the students' ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words in general, the researcher counted the students' scores. It was found that the lowest score was 4 and the highest score

$\sum x$ = The total of x

$\sum x^2$ = The total of x^2

(4) The researcher classified the students' ability into high, moderate, and low by using the following categories:

$>M + SD$ = High Ability

$(M-1SD) \rightarrow (M + SD)$ = Moderate Ability

$>M - 1 SD$ = Low Ability

(5) The researcher calculated the percentage of the students who got high, moderate, and low ability, by using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100$$

Where:

P = The percentage of students

F = Frequency of the right answer

N = The Number of Student

was 21. Then the researcher calculated the score and got 15.91 for mean and 4.35 for standard deviation.

1. Students' Ability in Comprehending the Relationship of Ideas through Transitional Words That Signal Comparison And Contrast

The students' ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal comparison and contrast was moderate. It was indicated by the percentage of students whose ability was included that 14 students (58.33 %) into moderate category.

2. Students' Ability in Comprehending the Relationship of Ideas through Transitional Words That Signal Enumeration

The students' ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal enumeration was moderate. It was indicated by the percentage of students whose ability was included that 12 students (50.00 %) into moderate category

3. Students' Ability in Comprehending the Relationship of Ideas through Transitional Words That Signal Addition

The students' ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal addition was moderate.

It was indicated by the percentage of students whose ability was included that 15 students (62.50 %) into moderate category.

4. Students' Ability in Comprehending the Relationship of Ideas through Transitional Words That Signal Cause and effect

The students' ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal cause and effect was moderate. It was indicated by the percentage of students whose ability was included that 15 students (62.50 %) into moderate category.

Discussions

In general, the data showed that the ability of the students in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words (comparison and contrast, enumeration, addition & cause and effect) was moderate. It was indicated by the fact that majority of the students (70.83 %) had moderate ability. It means that many students still had problems in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words. It

might be caused by the students' inability to differentiate the functions of each category of transitional words.

1. Students' Ability in Comprehending the Relationship of Ideas through Transitional Words that Signal Comparison and Contrast

This study also found that 58.33 % students had moderate ability to comprehend relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal comparison and contrast. It is assumed that many students had problems in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal comparison and contrast. It is probably caused by the students' unfamiliarity with words or phrases that function to introduce comparison and contrast ideas.

2. Students' Ability in Comprehending the Relationship of Ideas through Transitional Words that Signal Enumeration

The next finding of this study was that 50.00 % of students had moderate ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal enumeration. It means students still

had difficulties to comprehend the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal enumeration. It might be caused by the students' limited knowledge about word or phrases that function to introduce enumeration.

3. Students' Ability in Comprehending the Relationship of Ideas through Transitional Words that Signal Addition

The result of this study also demonstrated that 62.50 % students had moderate ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal addition. It means students still had difficulties to comprehend the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal addition. It might be caused by the students' limited knowledge about words or phrases that function to introduce addition.

4. Students' Ability in Comprehending the Relationship of Ideas through Transitional Words that Signal Cause and Effect

This study also found that 62.50 % of students had moderate ability to comprehend the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal cause and effect. It

indicates that students still had difficulties to comprehend the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal cause and effect. It might be caused by the students' unfamiliarity with words or phrases that function to introduce cause and effect.

Conclusion and Suggestions

1. Conclusion

Based on the findings as already discussed, the researcher drew some conclusions. In general, the ability of the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words was moderate. The data showed that 17 students (70.83 %) had moderate ability. It means that the most of the students could identify the relationship of ideas through transitional words, but some of them still had problems in comprehending it. The specific conclusions of this study were drawn as follows:

(1) The ability of the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional

words that signal comparison and contrast was moderate. It was proved by the fact that ability of majority of 14 students (58.33 %) was categorized as moderate.

- (2) The ability of the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal enumeration was moderate. It was proved by the fact that ability of majority of 12 students (50.00 %) was categorized as moderate.
- (3) The ability of the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal addition was moderate. It was proved by the fact that ability of majority of 15 students (62.50 %) was categorized as moderate.
- (4) The ability of the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words that signal cause and effect was moderate. It was proved by the fact that ability of majority of

15 students (62.50 %) was as categorized moderate.

2.1 Suggestions

Based on the conclusions of this study, the researcher proposes several suggestions for students and lecturers as follows. The students are suggested to do more exercise in order to improve their ability in reading especially in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words. The students have to comprehend in using appropriate transition signal. The lecturers should give the students more exercises to improve their ability in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words. Reading lecturers also should develop their method, strategy and teaching material in Reading subject and dealing with especially in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words. Further researchers are suggested to conduct a research on factor making students have problems in comprehending the relationship of ideas through transitional words.

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