AN ANALYSIS ON THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE THIRD YEAR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT AT BUNG HATTA UNIVERSITY IN INTERPRETING A CONNOTATIVE MEANING IN READING A PARAGRAPH

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Abstract

This research was aimed to find the difficulties of the third year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University in interpreting connotative meaning in reading paragraph. The design of this research was descriptive. The population of this research was the third year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University. The number of population membersof this research was 113 students. Because the population was quite large, the researcher chose the sample by using cluster random sampling, it was used because they had divided into three classes, (class A, B, and C), and finally the researcher got class A as the sample, it was consisted of 30 students. The instrument used to get the data was a reading test and its reliability index was .70, it means the test was having high reliability. The result of data analysis revealed that the students have difficulties in interpreting words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning in positive and negative impressions. It was proved by the fact that there were 14 (36.84%) students had no difficulties in interpreting words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning and 24 out of 38 students (63.16%) had difficulties in interpreting words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning. Meanwhile, for positive connotation, there were 13 students (34.21%) had no difficulties and 25 students (65.79%) had difficulties. Afterwards, it was also found that there were 11 students (28.95%) had no difficulties and 27 students (71.05%) had difficulties in interpreting words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning for negative connotation.

Key words: Reading, Paragraph, Difficulty, Interpreting Meaning, Connotative meaning,

Introduction

Language is an important part for communication in our life. By language we could interact, communicate and have socialization with people. This is the reason why language is taught at schools, colleges, institutes and universities in all over the world. The language that is most commonly taught and learned in all over the world is English and it makes English becomes an international language. In Indonesia, English is taught as the foreign language and it has some skills that should have be mastered in learning English.

There are four skills in English that learners should posses in learning English, they are listening, speaking, reading and writing. According to Vaughn &Linan-

Thompson in Luckner& Handley (2008:6) Reading has been defined as "the active process of constructing meaning from text; it involves accessing previous knowledge, understanding vocabulary and concepts, making inferences, and linking key ideas".

Reading is a process to understand and comprehend the text, look for the meaning of the text. Some of the reading processes arre drawing conclusions and making inferences. In making inferences and drawing conclusions, students should comprehend and understand the paragraph that they read. To have a good constructing and comprehending on a paragraph, student or someone should know every word`s meaning in order to build a good understanding on a paragraph being read and to find out what is the idea of the paragraph is. In learning English, it is not easy to understand the paragraph that has connotative meaning.

According to O`Grady&Drobovolsky (1991: 217), meaning must be something that exist in mind rather than the world and that it is more abstract than pictures and more complex that features. In interpreting meaning, we know several meanings, they are literal meaning, literal meaning belongs to the meaning that stated in the dictionary and literal meaning has relationship with denotative meaning. And we also know about non-literal meaning that belongs to connotative meaning that we have to imply

the meaning, analyze the meaning because we cannot find it in the dictionary. For others, we also have another meaning that we have to interpret; implied meaning, grammatical meaning, contextual meaning, lexical meaning, and many others.

Generally, there are two kinds of interpreting meaning; denotative and connotative meaning. A denotative meaning is the meaning stated in the dictionary- its literal meaning. According to McWorther (1986: 206), a connotative meaning is the additional implied meanings, or shadings, that a word may take on. For examples, the "skinny" and "slim, "intelligent" and "smart" notice these couples of words have different meaning in connotative meaning.

A connotative meaning is related to social overtones, cultural implications and emotional meaning, it means the meaning is not stated in the dictionary, we are guided to analyze based on the context to find the meaning. Example a word *snake* could be a wild, dangerous, poisonous reptile in the dictionary but for connotative meaning the word *snake* could be an evil or cruel. Connotation is created when you mean something else, something that might be initially hidden, we should find the meaning.

Connotation refers to the wide array of positive and negative associations that most words, phrases and sentences

naturally carry with them, whereas denotation is the precise, literal definition of a word that might be found in a dictionary. They could not be separated each other. Connotation or connotative meaning is the emotional and imaginative association surrounding words. The connotative meaning or connotation can be both positive and negative; for example, the words *snake* could be an *evil* in a negative sign and could be a *tremendous* in positive sign.

The main purpose of this study was to describe the difficulties of the third year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University in interpreting words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning. The specific goals of this study were as the followings;

(1) To find out the difficulties that the students` have in interpreting words, phrases, and sentences having connotative meaning with positive impression in reading a paragraph.

(2) To find out the difficulties that the students` have in interpreting words, phrases, and sentences having connotative meaning with positive impression in reading a paragraph.

This research is considered to be significant because the result of this study can contribute scientific information for the better process of teaching reading. For the lecturers, it gives information about students' difficulties in interpreting words, phrases, sentences having connotative meaning to understand paragraph in reading paragraph. With this information, teacher could provide students to interpret connotative meaning in paragraph. Furthermore, it is expected that the research of this problem could give valuable contribution for students, so that they could improve and develop their reading comprehension ability when they know when they should interpret connotative meaning.

Research Method

According to Kothari (2004), research is an academic activity and as such the term should be used in a technical sense. It comprises defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting, organizing and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; and at last carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis.

In conducting this research, researcher used a descriptive research design. It just described the phenomena existing in field. Gay (1987: 189) says that

descriptive research involves collecting data, in order to answer the questions concerning on the current status of object study.

The population of this research was the third year students at English Departments of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Bung Hatta University. Creswell (2012: 143) defines about population as a group of individuals who have the same characteristics. Researcher chose them because they have learned about how to draw conclusions and make inferences of the paragraph in Advanced Reading by the end this semester. In making inferences and drawing conclusions; they should know the meaning of each words, phrases and sentences of the paragraph. The total number of population was 113 students and they were divided into three classes as shown in the Table 1:

Table 1 Research Population

No	Class	Number of Population
1	PING 12 A	38
2	PING 12 B	37
3	PING 12 C	38
	TOTAL	113

Sources: Pustikom of Bung Hatta University

The researcher used sample to study because the members of population were quite large. According to Cothari (1990: 55), a sample design is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. It means sample is small part of population that researcher would take. Furthermore Gay (1987: 101) says that sampling is a process, or technique of selecting a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining the characteristics of the whole population. Good sample is representative of the population from which it is selected.

The researcher took the sample by using cluster random sampling technique, because the students have been grouped into three classes and they got same teaching materials, used the same syllabus and had the same period of time in learning English subject, especially in making inferences and drawing conclusions, where the students shoud know the meaning of the paragraph in which students have to interpret each meaning bof the words, phrases and sentences. Cluster random sampling is a sampling in which groups are randomly selected. It usually involves less time and less expense and it is generally more convenient to take sample of the population in cluster. Gay (1987:114) states that the minimum sample size is 10%. In this research, researcher used 38 out of 113 (33.63%) population as sample.

It means class A became the sample in this research.

In order to find out the students' difficulties in interpreting connotative meaning, the researcher administered a reading test in form of multiple-choice. Researcher used six short texts. The first text consisted of four paragraphs with two items. For the second text, it consisted of three paragraphs with two items, the third text consisted of two paragraphs with two items, the fourth text consisted of two paragraphs with six items. For the fifth text, it consisted of two paragraphs with two items, and the sixth text consisted of two paragraphs with four items. The total items of this research were 18 items. Before giving the real test, the researcher tried out the test to the students out of samples (some of member of class B and some C)

3.3.1 Validity of the Test

The criteria of a good test are valid and reliable. A test is said valid if it measures what it is supposed to be measured. To see the validity, the researcher used the content validity. Content validity is the degree to which a test measures an intended content area (Gay, 1987: 129). this test was constructed based on the syllabus and teaching materials of reading subject at the third year students at English department of Bung Hatta University.

To find out the reliability, the researcher used the split half method. By this method, the test items were divided into odd and even items. To find out the correlation coefficient of the two groups of score, the researcher used Pearson Product Moment Formula. After that, the correlation of coefficient was analyzed by using Spearman- Brown formula suggested by Gay (1987: 139) to know the reliability coefficient of the whole test.

According to Gay (1987: 141), a test would be reliable if the index of reliability is .90 or bigger than .90. According to the result of data analysis. The reliability of the test was .70 and it means that the test was having high reliability.

Before giving the real test, researcher have calculated the item difficulties and the item discrimination. And it was found that, for positive items, there were seven items that accepted (items 1, 2, 7, 9, 10, 13, and 18) and two items were revised (items 8 and 17) and an item was discarded (item 11). For negative connotation, there were seven items were accepted (items 3, 5, 12, 15, 16, 19, and 20), two items were revised (items 4 and 6) and item 14 was discarded.

It means that, there were 9 items for positive connotation with three items for words, three items for phrases and three items for sentences. For negative connotation was the same way with positive connotation.

In collecting data, the researcher distributed the reading test used as instrument to the students. Before the researcher asked the students to do the test, the researcher explained the direction of doing the test to the students. Researcher did the following steps in gathering the data:

- The researcher gave the test to the sample
- The researcher collected the test
- The researcher read and checked the students` answer sheet one by one.
- The researcher gave score 1 for a correct answer and 0 for incorrect answer.
- The researcher counted the total score of each student.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used the following steps. Firstly, researcher counted mean and standart deviation for each categories, The researcher classified the students who had difficulties in interpreting the words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaninginto

having difficulties and having no difficulties. And the last The researcher calculated the percentage of: students who had difficulties in interpreting words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning in positive impression/ connotation and the students who had difficulties in interpreting words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning in negative impression/ connotation.

Findings and Discussions

This chapter presents findings and discussions on the students` difficulties in interpreting connotative meaning in positive connotation and negative connotation. The findings of the study were the result of data analysis on the reading test which had been given to the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University.

Findings

Students` Difficulties in Interpreting Connotative Meaning

Based on the result of the data analysis, this study found that 14 out of 38 students (36.84%) had no difficulties in interpreting connotative meaning and 24 students out of 38 (63.16%) had difficulties in interpreting connotative meaning.

This study also found that 11 out of 38 students (28.95%) had no difficulties in

interpreting words having connotative meaning and 27 students (71.05%) had difficulties. Meanwhile, for interpreting phrase, it was found that 20 students (52.63%) had no difficulties and 18 students (47.73%) had difficulties. For interpreting sentences, it was found 18 students (47.73%) had been found that students had no difficulties and 20 students (52.63%) having difficulties.

Students` Difficulties in Interpreting Connotative Meaning in Positive Connotation

Based on the result of the data analysis, this study found that 13 out of 38 students (34.21%) had no difficulties in interpreting connotative meaning in positive connotation and 25 students out of 38 (65.79%) had difficulties in interpreting connotative meaning in positive connotation.

For more detailed analysis in positive connotation. The study was also found that 8 out of 38 students (21.05%) had no difficulties in interpreting words having connotative meaning and 30 students (78.95%) had difficulties. Meanwhile, for interpreting phrase, it was found that 14 out of 38 students (36.84%) had no difficulties and 24 out of 38 students (63.16%) had difficulties. For interpreting sentences, it was found 15 out

of 38 students (39.48%) had been found that students had no difficulties and 23 students (60.52%) had difficulties.

Students` Difficulties in Interpreting Connotative Meaning in Negative Connotation

Based on the result of the data analysis, this study found that 11 out of 38 students (28.95%) had no difficulties in interpreting connotative meaning in negative connotation and 27 students out of 38 (71.05%) had difficulties in interpreting connotative meaning in positive connotation.

For more detailed analysis in negative connotation, the study was also found that 11 out of 38 students (28.95%) had no difficulties in interpreting words having connotative meaning and 27 students (71.05%) had difficulties. Meanwhile, for interpreting phrase, it was found that 18 out of 38 students (47.37%) had no difficulties and 20 out of 38 students (52.63%) had difficulties. Interpreting sentences, it was found 10 out of 38 students (26.32%) had been found that students had no difficulties and 28 students (73.68%) had difficulties.

Discussions

Students` Difficulties in Interpreting Connotative Meaning

The purpose of this section is to describe the third year students difficulties in iterpreting words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning. Based on the result of the reading test, the students have difficulties in interpreting connotative meaning. As previously discussed, reading is process of constructing meaning (Vaughn and Linan- Thomson in Luckner and handley, 2008: 6), as well as. It means students should interpret each meaning of words, phrases and sentences inside the paragraph. Paragraph is organization of some sentences with one main idea (Oshima and Hogue, 1999: 16). Meanwhile, McWhorther (1986: 70) and Reid in Sultana (2014) define that paragraph as group of sentences with a single topic and one main idea.

The result of reading test has shown that, the students still had difficulties in interpreting connotative meaning. According to McWhorther (1986: 211), making interpretation means following the authors` thoughts, being alert for ideas that is not directly stated. It means that students have to analyze instead look the meaning in the dictionary of each words, phrases and sentences that would be interpreted.

Hudson (2015: 6) says that, there are three kinds of difficulty that always rises when interpreting the meaning, they are ambiguity, linking and variation. According to Khawalda and Al- Saidat (2012: 1), ambiguity is happened if the words, phrases, and sentences have more than one interpretation, variation is happened when the words, phrases and sentences are interpreted, based on the context, cultural situation, it could be interpreted according to the accent and dialect of a group, social situation, it is also supported by Wallace (2003: 4), she says that reading is social interpretative process. Meanwhile, linking is happened when one element has relation or linked to another element. The result was confirmed that, mostly students got difficulties in ambiguity when they interpreted the words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning when they read the paragraph.

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Students` Difficulties in Interpreting Connotative Meaning in Positive Impression/ Connotation.

The purpose of this section is to describe the third year students difficulties in interpreting the words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning in positive connotation. As previously discussed, connotative meaning brings two impressions, positive impressions and negative impressions. According to McWhorther (1986: 206), positive impression is the positive connotation that brought by connotative meaning.

The result of the reading test has shown that, they still have difficulties in interpreting words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning in positive connotation when they read the paragraph. According to McWhorther (1986: 211), making interpretation means following the authors` thoughts, being alert for ideas that is not directly stated. It means that students have to analyze instead look the meaning in the dictionary of each words, phrases and sentences that would be interpreted.

According to the data analysis, most of students have difficulties in interpreting words having connotative meaning. Words are composed of one or more morphemes and are either the smallest units susceptible of independent use. For interpreting words, students have to know the literal meaning of the words firstly, According to Borjesson (2011: 5), literal meaning is listed in their lexical items. Crane, Yeager and Whitman (1981: 139), states that dictionary entries the information about the different aspects of meaning that lexical items may have. There are some lexical items, synonym, antonym & converse, homophone & polysemi, and hyponym and hypernym.

Most of difficulties that the students have in interpreting words having connotative meaning is ambiguity. According to Khawalda and Alsaidat (2012: 1), ambiguity is happened when the words having two or more meaning interpretation. It might be happened when the words are having synonym or the other lexical items.

In conclusions, students still have difficulties in interpreting words, phrases, and sentences having connotative meaning in positive connotation, especially for interpreting words. They still got difficulties in analyzing when the words have two or more meaning possibility.

Students` Difficulties in Interpreting Connotative Meaning in Negative Impression/ Connotation.

The purpose of this section is to describe the third year students difficulties in interpreting the words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning in negative connotation. As previously discussed, connotative meaning brings two impressions, positive impressions and negative impressions. According to McWhorther (1986: 206), negative impression is the positive connotation that brought by connotative meaning.

The result of the reading test has shown that, they still have difficulties in interpreting words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning in negative connotation when they read the paragraph. According to McWhorther (1986: 211), making interpretation means following the authors` thoughts, being alert for ideas that is not directly stated. It means that students have to analyze instead look the meaning in the dictionary of each words, phrases and sentences that would be interpreted.

According to the data analysis, most of students have difficulties in interpreting sentencess having connotative meaning. Sentences are the combinations of words, at least having a single subject and verb,

Most of difficulties that the students have in interpreting sentences having connotative meaning is variation and linking. According to Khawalda and Alsaidat (2012: 1), variation is happened when the sentences are interpreted by the context, the social condition and cultural condition, according to Smith (2004: 2), comprehending means to interpret and understand the context for making construction of what we have read. Meanwhile, linking happened when the items are having linking into another items. It related to expressive and social meaning as previously discussed, they have to analyze the meaning for their appropriate interpretation.

In conclusions, students still have difficulties in interpreting words, phrases, and sentences having connotative meaning in positive connotation, especially for interpreting sentences. They still got difficulties in analyzing when the sentences have two or more meaning possibility, the meaning based on the cultural, situation and social conditions. It is supported by Horn in Mahmoud (2012), he says that reading of written language involves a large number of factors: lexical, grammatical and cultural meaning; connection between sentences, paragraph structure; the organization of longer selection; and many other elements.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Based on the findings and discussions of this research as discussed previously, the researcher drew some conclusions and proposed some suggestions.

Conclusions

Based on the data analysis, the researcher made conclusions are the third year students of English department of Bung Hatta University still had difficulties in interpreting words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning for positive and negative connotation in reading paragraph. The students still got difficulties in interpreting words having connotative meaning, it happened because,

the words having two or more related meaning, they still got ambiguities in interpreting them because the words having lexical variation. They also still got difficulties in interpreting phrases, in the cases are same with the words interpretation. Mostly students were also having difficulties in interpreting sentences having connotative meaning, it happened, the sentences have to be interpreted by the condition of social, cultural and situational condition. If they read the paragraph and analyze the paragraph carefully, they may not have difficulties in interpreting this. It is related to teaching strategies. Teaching strategies have a significant relationship with students' learning achievement. So, it is very influential on reducing students` difficulties.

The researcher used descriptive research design. It describes the students' difficulties in interpreting words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning for positive and negative connotation. There are some finding studies of this research:

1.The students still got difficulties in interpreting words having connotative meaning in positive and negative connotation in reading paragraph.

2. The students still got difficulties in interpreting phrases having connotative

meaning in positive and negative connotation in reading paragraph.

3. The students still got difficulties in interpreting sentences having connotative meaning in positive and negative connotation in reading paragraph.

The three difficulties above are probably caused by students who less understand about the meaning and how to interpret the meaning, they are still doubt and ambigu in interpreting the meaning of each words, phrases and sentences in the paragraph and the lecturers probably may less give the students exercise, giving more exercises would help the students to enrich their ability and reduce ther difficulties in interpretting words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning in reading paragraph, because reading is the process of simultaneously extarcting and constructing through interaction and involvement with written language(Snow, 2002: 19).

Suggestions

Based on the conclusions above, the researcher proposed some suggestions for students, and further researchers as follows:

✓ Since the result of this study showed that students' still have difficulties in interpreting words,

phrases and sentences having connotative meaning for positive and negative connotation in reading paragraph, it is suggested to the lecturer to enrich the students' exercise in reading the paragraph which having the connotative meaning.

✓ The students are expected to understand and analyze the item that they read more for improving their abilities and reducing their difficulties in interpreting words, phrases and sentences having connotative meaning, in positive and negative connotation, because interpreting meaning is need for constructing meaning of the item that we read (text or paragraph). It is could be by reading more the paragraph which consisted of connotative meaning.

✓ For further researcher, it is suggested to study about some factors that make students have problems in interpreting words, phrases, sentences having connotative meaning in positive and negative impression or connotation. Actually, researcher has found that the students have difficulties in interpreting connotative meaning by some factors, but the further researcher

should find where the difficulties arosen and what is it caused.

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