

**AN ANALYSIS OF THIRD YEAR STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES
IN COMPREHENDING THE UNSTATED MAIN IDEA PARAGRAPHS AT
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF BUNG HATTA UNIVERSITY**

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Abstract

This research was attempted to describe the third year students' difficulties in comprehending the unstated main idea of paragraphs at English Department of Bung Hatta University. To be more specific it was aimed to describe the students' difficulties in comprehending the topic, supporting details and main idea of unstated main idea paragraphs. The design of this research was descriptive. The population was the third year student at English Department of Bung Hatta University. The members population were 83 students. The researcher used cluster random sampling technique in taking the sample since the students were distributed into classes. The class sample of this research was class A. In collecting data, the researcher used reading test in form multiple choices. Before she gave real test, it was tried out in class B. Based on the result of the try out, the researcher found the reliability coefficient for total test was 0.80. Based on the finding, the researcher found that 17 students had difficulties in identifying topic, 19 students also had difficulties in identifying the supporting details and 15 students had difficulties in comprehending the main idea of unstated main idea paragraphs. Based on this conclusion, the lecturers are suggested to give more exercise to the students to comprehend the unstated main idea paragraphs. The students are suggested to do more exercise to understand the topic, supporting details and comprehend the main idea of paragraphs. The further researchers are suggested to study about factors that make students have difficulties in comprehending unstated main idea paragraphs.

Key words: *Students' difficulties, Reading Comprehension and Unstated Main Idea Paragraphs.*

Introduction

English is one of the international languages that is used by many people in the world and it has been used in many areas of daily life. Therefore, using English is the easiest way to communicate with people from other countries about

many aspects in human life such as technology, economy, social, education and politics. That is why English is learned by many people in all around the world.

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language. Learning a foreign language is an integrated process that the learner

should study the four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. We use them to understand and get information and ideas through listening and reading and to communicate our feeling, need, and desires through speaking and writing. By having more knowledge about language skills we have much better chance of understanding and getting what we need.

Reading is one of four basic skills. It is the most important skills that should be acquired and learned by college students in learning English. By reading, the students will get much information and knowledge that is very useful for them in learning process. For example, they will catch the point that their teacher explains to them easily, because they have read before. Through reading, they also can explore about what have been read and share it during the learning process.

At English Department, there are many subjects that relate with reading skill. The college students should comprehend these materials when they do the reading process. They will be good in those subjects if they have good ability in reading. In contrast, there are many difficulties in reading process if their reading skill is poor.

Paragraph is one material of reading subject that consists of one or more sentences. McWhorter (2009 : 140)

says that a paragraph is a group of connected sentences that develop an idea about a topic. It has four essential elements such as topic, the topic sentence or main idea, supporting details and transitions. **The topic** is the most important subject or phrase in paragraph so the students have to know about it during reading process. **The topic sentence (main idea)** is a sentence that indicates in a general way what idea the paragraph is going to deal with. **The supporting details** are the specific ideas that develop the topic and main idea. it has two kinds-**major** and **minor**. The main idea and its major supporting details form the basic framework of paragraphs. **The major detail** are the primary points that support the main idea. Paragraphs often contain minor details as well. While the major details explain and develop the main idea, they, in turn are expanded upon **the minor supporting details**.

To link details, the writers used transitions. **Transitions** are words or phrases that connect one idea to another. This connection can occur within a paragraph or between paragraphs. Transitions are used to show how sentences or paragraphs are related to each other and how they relate to the overall theme of the paper.

One of important part to develop reading skill is finding main idea. Main

idea can be stated or unstated. When the main idea is stated, the readers may be found it in the first, middle, the last or both first and last paragraph. On the other hand, the main idea of paragraph may be unstated exactly. The unstated main idea is a main idea that is not stated clearly. Henry (2004) says that the implied main idea must be general enough to cover all the details, but it can not be so broad that it becomes an overgeneralization or a sweeping statement that suggests details not given. It must be neither too broad nor too narrow. To find the implied main idea, you should create a summary from the major supporting details.

Based on the research's experience while she was taking reading IV subject at English Department at Bung Hatta University. The students studied the unstated main idea of paragraphs. The lecturer explained the unstated main idea and gave exercises for more understand about it. In contrast, many students still got difficulties to comprehend unstated main idea paragraph. They could not identify the topic, classify the supporting details into major or minor ones. As a result, they also could not easily formulate the unstated main idea of paragraph.

Based on this phenomena, the researcher was interested in conducting a research entitled "An Analysis of the Third Year Students' Difficulties in

Comprehending the Unstated Main Idea Paragraphs at English Department of Bung Hatta University".

In reading comprehension, we have studied about many sources such sentences, paragraphs, essays. Sentences are a group of words, usually containing a verb, which expresses a thought in the form of a statement, question, instruction, or exclamation and starts with a capital letter when written. Paragraphs are a self-contained unit of a discourse in writing dealing with a particular point or idea. Finally, essays are generally scholarly pieces of writing giving the author's own argument, but the definition is vague, overlapping with those of an article, a pamphlet and a short story. Essays can consist of a number of elements, including: literary criticism, political manifestos, learned arguments, observations of daily life, recollections, and reflections of the author.

A paragraphs is one of important source in reading comprehension. It consists four parts such topic, main idea, supporting details and transitions. All of them will help us to understand the paragraphs during reading process. There are two kind of paragraphs such paragraphs with stated and unstated main idea paragraphs.

Topic is a subject in a paragraph or category of a group of specific ideas. Based on the topic, the reader can formulate what is the main idea about. Main idea is one of important part in reading a paragraph. Main idea can be divided into two types; stated and unstated main idea paragraphs. By paragraphs with stated main idea, we have known that the main idea is stated clearly in one of the sentences in a paragraph. We can be found the stated main idea in the first sentence, in the middle, in the last of paragraph, also both first or last of paragraph. We can construct our understanding by stated main idea because it always give us clues to find where the position the main idea exactly.

Futhermore, Some writers also write paragraphs with the main idea is not directly stated. This paragraph is called unstated main idea paragraphs. It does not give us clues about their positions. To formulate the paragraphs with unstated main idea, we can ask ourself by following questions: (1) What is the topic, or subject, of the paragraph?; (2) What are the major supporting details?; (3) Based on the details about the topic, what main point or main idea is the author trying to get across?. After that, try to formulate the main idea by using our own words based on the topic and supporting details of paragraph.

Supporting details may guide the reader to find the main idea. They are major and minor detail that explain about the topic and topic sentence. In addition, transition also help the reader to connects one idea to another. Transitions are used to show how sentences or paragraphs are related to each other and how they relate to the overall theme of the paper.

Based on the identification of problem above, the reseacher limited the problem of her research about unstated main idea paragraphs. The researcher focused to find the the third year student's difficulties in comprehending the topic of unstated main idea paragraphs, the supporting details and to formulate the main idea of the unstated main idea paragraphs at English Department of Bung Hatta University.

The researcher formulated the problem of this study into following question " what difficulties do the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University have in comprehending unstated main idea paragraphs?

Relating with the formulation of problem above, the research questions were formulated as follows:

- a. Do the third year students of English Department of Bung University have difficulties to identify the topic of unstated main idea of paragraphs?

- b. Do the third year students of English Department of Bung University have difficulties to identify supporting details of unstated main idea of paragraphs?
- c. Do the third year students of English Department of Bung University have difficulties in comprehending the main idea of the unstated main idea of paragraphs?

Generally, the main purpose of this research was to describe the difficulties that the third year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University have in comprehending unstated main idea of paragraphs.

More spesifically the purposes of this research were as follows:

- a. To find out whether the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University have difficulties in identifying the topic of unstated main idea of paragraphs.
- b. To find out whether the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University have difficulties in identifying the supporting details of unstated main idea of paragraphs.
- c. To find out whether the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University have difficulties in comprehending the main idea of the unstated main idea of paragraphs.

Research Method

Research Design

This research was designed to find out students' difficulties in comprehending the unstated main idea paragraphs. Kothari (2004 : 31) says that research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure.

Therefore, the researcher used descriptive methode in this research. Gay (1987:189) says that descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the curent status of the subject of study.

Based on definition above, we can conclude that descriptive research is a research which describes the condition and the phenomena in order to get the fact and real information. The researcher conducted this research to describe and analyze the difficulties of third year students in comprehending unstated main idea paragraphs.

The population of this research was the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University who register in academic 2014/2015. The total number of population members was 83 students, and they were disributed into

three classes. To make it clear, it is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
The Population of Research

Class	Number of member
A	28
B	28
C	27
Total	83

In this research, the researcher studied the sample of the population because the population are large. Gay (1987 : 103) states that a good sample is one that is representative of the population from which it is selected. According to Gay (1987:114), the minimum sample size of population is 10%. Relating to this opinion, the researcher used 33% of the members of the population.

To select the sample, the researcher used cluster random sampling technique. She used cluster random sampling technique because the members of population were distributed in groups or classes. She used it because the population was homogeneous. It means that the population had similar characteristics. They had been taught based on same syllabus, materials and lecturer.

The researcher chose the group randomly. First, she wrote the name of each class in three peaces of paper. Then,

she put them into a box. After shaking it, she chose one of papers by closing her eyes. The class selected as class sample was class A, and all member of the class sample became the sample of this research.

In this reseach, the reseacher used reading test as the instrument with 7 unstated main idea paragraphs. She used multiple choices test; the number of the question was 34 items. The students had 60 minutes to do the test. The researcher tried out the test to students out of sample to find out whether it is reliable or not.

The criteria of good test are valid and reliable. To see the valididy of the test, the researcher used content validity. It means that the test will be valid if it fixes with the materials that has been given to the students. In this case, The test was constructed based on the curriculum, syllabus and teaching material given to the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University. The specification for instrument of the test is shown in **Table 3.2**.

Tabel 3.2
The Specification of Test

No	Research indicators	Item number
1.	Identifying the topic	7
2.	Identifying major supporting details	20
3.	Comprehending main idea	7
	Total	34

Another criteria of good test is reliable. Creswell (2012:159) claims that reliability means that scores from an instrument are stable and consistent. To find out the reliability of the test, she used split half method. It meant the researcher calculated the correlation coefficient between the odd item scores and even item scores. The researcher used Pearson Product Moment Formula as suggested by Arikunto (2010:213) 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 of x and y (first half and second half items)

N = the number of the students who followed the test

X = the odd item score

y = the even item score

$\sum x$ = the sum of scores of the odd test items

$\sum y$ = the sum of scores of the even test items.

$\sum xy$ = the total product of xy .

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

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

where:

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

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

After that, the researcher categorized the degree of coefficient correlation of the test based on Arikunto's idea (2012:89):

0.81-1.00 = very high correlation

0.61-0.80 = high correlation

0.41-0.60 = moderate correlation

0.21-0.41 = low correlation

0.00-0.21 = very low correlation

The result of calculating coefficient correlation was 0.80. it means that the test was categorized as high correlation. It can be classified as reliable one.

Item Difficulties Analysis

The researcher used the following formula suggested by Arikunto (2012:223):

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

Where :

P = item difficulties

B = the total number of students who answers correctly

JS= the total number of students who follows the test.

The result of difficulty index (P) is classified into the followings :

P= 0.00 -0.30 = difficult

P= 0.31 - 0.70 = moderate

P =0.71 – 1.00= easy

According to Brown (2010:71) A good item of test is an item that has difficulty index between .15-.85. However, the researcher used difficulty index between .15-.85. Based on the finding, the researcher found that 7 items were easy, 22 items categorized as moderate and 5 items ware difficult.

Item Discrimination Analysis

To get item descrimination, the reseacher used formula stated by Arikunto (2012:228). The formula as follow:

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

Where:

D= item discrimination

JA= sum of students in high group

JB= sum of the students in the low group

BA= sum of the students in the high group who answer correctly

BB= sum of the student in low group who answer correctly

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

D 0.00 – 0.20 poor

D > 0.21 -0.40 satisfactory

D > 0.41 – 0.70 good

ID > 0.71 – 1.00 excellent

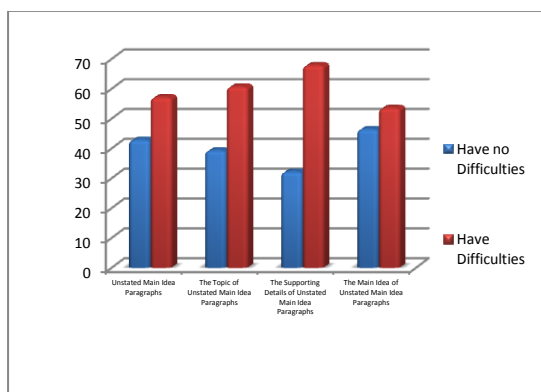
The reseacher used the items that have D > 0.21 – 80 as test items which were included in the instrument in order to find a good test items for real test. Based on finding, the researcher found 18 items were categorized as poor, 11 items were satisfactory, 4 items were good and 1 was exellent.

Based on the result of both analysis, the member of items that are ok was 13 items (1, 3, 6, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 25), 7 items were revised (2, 4, 12, 13, 17, 19, 23) and 14 items were discarded (5, 6, 7, 8, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34) and 20 items of them was selected as real test.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Diagram 5.1: The Percentage of students who had difficulties and had no difficulties in comprehending the unstated main idea paragraphs



Based on the data analysis, This reasearch found that most of the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University had difficulties in comprehending the unstated main idea paragraphs. They had difficulties in identifying topic, and supporting details, and in comprehending the main idea of unstated main idea paragraphs. It was indicated by the fact that 16 students (57.14%) had difficulties in comprehending unstated main idea paragraphs, 17 students (60.71%) had difficulties in identifying topic, 19 students (67.86%) had difficulties to identify supporting details and 15 students (53.57%) also had difficulties in comprehending main idea of unstated main idea paragraphs.

Discussions

Based on the data analysis, This reasearch found that most of the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University had difficulties in comprehending the unstated main idea paragraphs. it could be seen in table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Students Difficulties in Comprehending The Unstated Main Idea Paragraphs

Score	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
≥ 13.71	Have no difficulties	12	42.86%
<13.71	Have difficulties	16	57.14%

As already discussed previously, it was found that the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University had difficulties in comprehending the unstated main idea paragraphs. As you know, to be able to comprehend the unstated main idea paragraphs, the readers should have knowledge about the components of a paragraph. As a matter of fact, the first, the students could not identify the topic of unstated main idea paragraphs. Then they could not identify the supporting details of the unstated main idea paragraphs. As a result, they could not comprehend and formulate the main idea of unstated main idea paragraphs.

Another finding of this study was that the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University had difficulties in identifying the topic of unstated main idea paragraphs. it shown clearly in table 4.1:

Table 4.2: Students' Difficulties in identifying the Topic of Unstated Main Idea Paragraphs

Score	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
≥ 3.33	Have no difficulties	11	39.29 %
<3.33	Have difficulties	17	60.71 %

The data analysis also found that the third year students' of English Department of bung Hatta university had difficulties in identifying the supporting details of unstated main idea paragraphs. its shown in table 4.3:

Table 4.3: Student's Difficulties in Identifying Supporting Details of Unstated Main Idea Paragraphs.

Score	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
≥ 7.91	Have no difficulties	9	32.14%
<7.91	Have difficulties	19	67.86%

The researcher also found that many students had difficulties in comprehending the main idea of unstated

main idea paragraphs. it could be seen in table 4.4:

Table 4.4: Students' Difficulties in Comprehending the Main Idea of Unstated Main Idea Paragraphs

Score	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
≥ 2.77	Have no difficulties	13	46.43%
<2.77	Have difficulties	15	53.57%

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusions

1. In general, based on the finding of this research, it can be concluded that the the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University had difficulties in comprehending the unstated main idea paragraphs. It was proved by the fact that 16 students (57.14%) were classified as having difficulties.
2. Another conclusion that can be draw was the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University still had difficulties in identifying the topic of the unstated main idea paragraphs. It was indicated by the fact that there were 17 students (60.71%) were classified as having difficulties in identifying the topic.

3. The researcher can also conclude that the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University still had difficulties in identifying the supporting details of unstated main idea paragraphs. It supported by the fact 67.86% students were classified as having difficulties in identifying supporting details.
4. The last conclusion of this study was the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University still had difficulties in comprehending the main idea of the unstated main idea paragraphs. It was proved by the fact that there were 15 students (53.57%) had difficulties in comprehending main idea.

Based on the conclusions above, the researcher had some suggestion for the lecturer, the students and further researcher as follows:

1. It is necessary for the lecturers to improve students' ability in comprehending the unstated main idea paragraphs; therefore, the researcher suggests to them to give more explanation and to provide more exercises about understanding main idea paragraphs.
2. The students should do more exercises about unstated main idea paragraph on purpose of improving their

understanding about topic, supporting details, main idea and transitions.

3. The further researchers are suggested to study about factors making students have difficulties in comprehending unstated main idea paragraphs.

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