A STUDY ON THE THIRD YEAR ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS' ABILITY IN IDENTIFYING ROUND AND FLAT CHARACTERS OF READING SHORT DRAMA SCRIPTS, AT RIAU UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: This study is aimed at investigating the level of the students' ability at English Study Program of FKIP of University of Riau in identifying round and flat characters in reading short drama scripts and it what factors contributing to the ability of the students. The research design is a descriptive quantitative and qualitative research (mixed-method). There were 25 students chosen as the samples of this research. The instruments of the research were 30 multiple choice questions assesed by using Heaton's formula that were analyzed by using Harris' measurement. Then, interview questions were analyzed by using Gay (2000) ways. The quantitative data show that there were no students who were in excellent ability level, 5 students (25%) who were in good ability level. Then, there were 15 students (50%) who were in mediocre level and 5 students (25%) who were in very poor level. The qualitative data show that there are some factors which contributed to the students' ability in identifying round and flat characters. They are related to students' reading strategy (the beginning and the ending of the story), vocabulary mastery, guessing strategy and the length of the story

Key words: student, ability, round, flat, characters

PENELITIAN TERHADAP KEMAMPUAN MAHASISWA FKIP BAHASA INGGRIS TAHUN KETIGA DALAM MENGIDENTIFIKASI KARAKTER *ROUND* DAN KARAKTER *FLAT* PADA NASKAH DRAMA PENDEK SCRIPTS, RIAU UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi level kemampuan mahasiswa tahun ketiga FKIP Universitas Riau dalam mengidentifikasi karakter *round* dan *flat* didalam naskah drama pendek dan untuk mengetahui faktor yang berkontribusi terhadap level kemampuan mahasiswa tersebut. Desain penelitian ini adalah penelitian campuran (deskriptif-kualitatif). Terdapat 25 mahasiswa sebagai sampel penelitian. Instrumen penelitian ini adalah tes *reading* (membaca) yang tersusun atas 30 soal pilihan bergandadan di nilai dengan rumus Heaton. Lalu, dianalisa dengan menggunakan cara penilaian Harris. Jawaban hasil interview dianalisa menggunakan rumus Gay. Dari hasil penilaian dan analisa dapat dilihat bahwa data kuantitatif menunjukkan tidak ada siswa yang berada pada level unggul, kemudian 5 siswa (25%) berada pada level baik. Lebih lanjut, terdapat 15 mahasiswa (50%)yang berada pada level medium dan 5 mahasiswa (25%) berada pada level rendah. Data kualitatif menunjukkan hasil dimana faktor yang sangat berkontribusi dalam menentukanlevel siswa dakam mengidentifikasi karakter *round dan flat* adalah strategi membaca, kemudian diikuti dengan penguasaan kosakata, strategi menebak dan panjangnya naskah drama.

Kata Kunci: mahasiswa, kemampuan, round, flat, karakter

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

One of the most important languages in the world due to its function as the international language that makes this language widely-used in all over the globe. Like any other languages, there are four ultimate skills that will be focused in learning English, they are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading is one of the skills that plays a very important role for learners to be able to communicate in the context of English as an international language. This is because many important sources of learning are written in English.

Considering the importance of reading skill, at university reading is no longer just an activity used in learning the English language. Moreover, it has been varied widely. The process of reading is not as simple as it is thought previously. Moreover, the reading strategies and the level of difficulties increase. Then, students are intended to read better and have so many reading activities.

Nowadays university students are not only reading their course books, but also reading many other sources of reading materials, such as novels, e-books, magazines, and so forth. Unfortunately, not all the students are able to identify the meaning or the content of what they have read. The students may be good at reading the materials, but they have less comprehension to elaborate the details of the content of what they have read.

Furthermore, reading the script of a drama or a short drama is also a process of reading. It is quite impossible for the casts to perform drama without reading the scripts prepared. The casts must understand at least the story of their scenes in the short drama. They have to know what characters they are taking let alone how the character plays the role.

One of the subjects offered in English study program is Drama which is learnt by the third year students. There are some commonly known elements of drama like stage direction, theme, setting and characters. In this study, the writer will focus on the character elements; flat and round characters. Perrince (2003) stated that reading for character is more difficult than reading for plot, as it is much more complex, various, and ambigous. Everyone can imitate what the characters are doing in a short story but it is quite difficult to describe what a person is.

Based on an informal interview conducted by the writer to some of third year students of English Department FKIP University of Riau, it is known that the questions about identifying which character takes a flat character and which character has the round character is always asked to the students. The answers showed that the students tended to mention that major character is round and minor character is flat. The answers are not wrong even they are close in meaning. But, the characters in the drama may sometimes first be flat and then they change into the round one. Let's take an example of a Korean drama (drama that the people are now crazy about) entitled "Innocent Man". When one of students was asked during the interview to read the short synopsis of the drama, she/ he automatically answered that the first cast was the owner of round character. The student said that " Kang Ma Roo is the round character and Jae Hee Noona is the flat character". Then, the writer wanted to know the background knowledge of the interviewee by asking what they knew about the difference between round and flat characters. The interviewee told the writer that Kang Ma Roo was the round character because he was the major character and Jaehee was the flat character because she was the minor cast. But, actually, the character of Kang Ma Roo as a

medical student, if he were no more than that is flat. Then, when he transforms into an officer, he is round character since he moves into cold rude man. This phenomenon indicates that the students are not able to interpret the language used in the drama. Moreover the tendency to think that the major cast is always the one whose character is round has made the students think that there is no more chance to dig the flat character of the major cast.

The use of short drama scripts in order to know students' problem as mentioned above is really reliable. A short drama script is an authentic reading material. It is one of media used in teaching drama in order to limit the time used in learning process, to make the students easier to catch up the lecturer's explaination about drama lesson. It also has intermediate to advance levels to develop language learning skill of the students. The ease of using short drama is thought to guide the students in understanding the elements of the drama especially, characters.

Considering the phenomena as described above, the writer is interested in conducting an investigation entitled "A Study on the English Department Students' Ability In Identifying Round and Flat Characters of Reading Short Drama Scripts, Riau University."

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted at the English Study Program, Riau University, Pekanbaru City, on May 25th, 2016. This research belongs to descriptive research. According to Gay (1987), the descriptive research involves collecting data to test hypothesis or to answer question concerning the status of the research. The method used in this research is mixed methods. Creswell (2010) revealed that mixed method is a research step that combines two kinds of research; qualitative and quantitative research. Moreover, Sugiyono (2011) mentioned that mix method is a research methodology that combines quantitative and qualitative methods simultaneously. These methods are used in order to get comprehensive, valid, reliable and objective data.

The population of this study was the third year students of English Department of University of Riau. Gay (1987) states that population is the group of interest to be researched. In this research, the population included all the third year students of English department of University of Riau in the academic year 2015-2016 that were 74 students. The students were divided into 3 classes, Class A, B, C. The writer used Cluster Random Sampling method in order to get the sample. The writer picked three small papers. Then, the papers were rolled and put in a box. One of the papers was written the word SAMPLE on it. The writer asked the chairman of each class to pick out one rolled paper. The chairman who got the paper with the word SAMPLE on it, his class was the sample of the investigation. Then, the sample of this research is 25 third year students of class B.

In this research the writer used quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was in form of multiple choice questions. Before the students did the test, they had been given a blue print in order to make them easier to do the test. Then, to do the real test, the students were given four drama scripts together with the questions related to round and flat characters. The method used in getting qualitative data was semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview is a verbal interchange where one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person by asking

questions. Although the interviewer prepares a list of pre-determined questions, semi-structured interviews unfold in a conversational manner offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important (Longhurst, 1996).After knowing the result of quantitative data, 8 students were selected purposively to be interviewed in order to further investigate the contributing factors in identifying round and flat characters of reading short drama scripts. Finally, There were mainly 14 questions delivered to each student when conducting the interview.

Before giving the test to the students of English Department of University of Riau, the test was tried out in order to know the validity and reliability of the test by using Heaton's (1988) way :

$$F.V = \frac{R}{N}$$

Where :
F.V   = difficulty level
R   = the number of correct answer
N   = the number of student taking the test

The test item was accepted if F.V stays between 0.30-0.70 and will be rejected if F.V stays below 0.30 or over 0.70. The standard deviation and reliability of the test were calculated by using these formulas:

$$s.d= \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N}} \text{(Heaton, 1988)}$$

$$r= \frac{k}{k-1}\left[1 - \frac{m(k-m)}{k v_t^2}\right] \text{(Kuder Richardson)}$$

if the result is above (>0.70) the test is reliable

To achieve the validity and the reliability of the instrument, the try out data was carried out at class A of the third year students of English Department of FKIP, Riau University. This group of students were taken because they had similar characteristics to the students taken as samples. There were 25 students who did the test. Since the try out was conducted to see whether the question was accepted or not, then, the difficulty level was needed to be analyzed. The difficulty level of the item showed the level of difficulty of each question provided in the test. According to Heaton (1988), a test is accepted if the degree of difficulty (facility value) is between 0.30-0.70, and it is rejected if the degree is below 0.30 (too difficult) or over than 0.70 (too easy). After analyzing the test items, it was found that there were 6 questions that were rejected. All the questions were too difficult to do. So, the rejected items were necessary to be revised to have reliable and valid items. After calculating the students' scores, the mean score of the try out was got, it was 40,23 and the standard deviation was 26,51. The reliability of the try out was known after getting the mean score and the standard

deviation of the try out. The reliability of the try out was 0.908>0.70. Then, it means that the reliability of the try out was *reliable* according to Kuder Richardson.The quantitative data was analyzed by using this formula:

$$M = \frac{X}{N} \times 100$$

Wayan and Sunartana (1986)
Where :
M= individual score
X=correct answer
N=number of item

The scores of the students were classified into five levels of mastery. The classification of Harris's 1974:

Table 1. The Interpretation of the Students' Scores in Term of the Level of Ability

No	Classification	Score
1	Excellent	81-100
2	Good	61-80
3	Mediocre	41-60
4	Poor	0-40

Referring to qualitative data, they were analyzed by using Gay (2000) suggestion on qualitative data analysis. He describes that the steps in analyzing qualitative data are as follows: data managing, reading or miming, describing, classifyingand interpretting.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

As mentioned before, the data collection was carried out at class B of the third year students of English Department of FKIP, Riau University. There were 25 students who did the test. In this section, the writer presents the findings focusing on the students' ability in identifying round and flat characters in reading short drama scripts. The result of the test was analyzed based on four kinds of characters; round, flat, dynamic and static characters. However, in this study, the focus was only one; round and flat characters, while dynamic and static were just used as the distractions of the test items.

The following table describes the results of the test on the third year students' ability in identifying round and flat characters of reading short drama scripts.

Table 2. The Third-Year Students' Ability Levels in Identifying Round and Flat Characters in Reading Short Drama Scripts

No	Score	Ability Level	F	P
1	81-100	Excellent	0	0
2	61-80	Good	5	25
3	41-60	Mediocre	15	50
4	21-40	Poor	5	25
5	0-20	Very Poor	0	0
	Total		25	100

Note : F=Frequency P=Percentage

Table 2 shows the third-year students' ability levels in identifyying round and flat characters in reading short drama scripts. It can be seen that there were no students who were in excellent ability level, 5 students (25%) who were in good ability level. Then, there were 15 students (50%) who were in mediocre level and 5 students (25%) who were in very poor level.

The mean score of the students in identifying round and flat characters in reading short drama scripts was **51,56**. According to Harris (1986) it can be concluded that the students' ability is *mediocre.*

To be more specific, the following table 4.2 describes students' ability in identifing round characters and flat characters of reading short drama scripts.

Table 3. The Third-Year Students' Ability in Identifying Round Characters of Reading Short Drama Scripts

No	Score	Ability Level	F	P
1	81-100	Excellent	0	0
2	61-80	Good	2	8
3	41-60	Mediocre	15	60
4	21-40	Poor	6	24
5	0-20	Very Poor	2	8
	Total		25	100

Table above table shows the students' ability in identifying round characters of reading short drama scripts. From the table, it can be seen that there was no student who was in excellent level in identifying round characters of reading short drama scripts. Then, there were 2 students (8%) who were in good ability level. Moreover, there were 15 students (60%) who were in mediocre level and 6 students (24%) in poor level. Last but not least, there were only 2 students who were in very poor level.

Table. 4 The Third-Year Students' Ability in Identifying Flat Characters of Reading Short Drama Scripts

No	Score	Ability Level	F	P
1	81-100	Excellent	3	12
2	61-80	Good	12	48
3	41-60	Mediocre	5	20
4	21-40	Poor	5	20
5	0-20	Very Poor	0	0
	Total		25	100

The table shows the students' ability in identifying flat characters of reading short drama scripts. There were 3 students (12%) who were in excellent level, then 12 students (48%) who were in good level. Moreover, there were 5 students (20%) and 5 students (20%) in mediocre and poor level and there was no student who was in very poor level.

From the presentation of the data, it can be interpreted that the ability of the third year student of English Study Program of FKIP Riau University in identifying round and flat characters of reading short drama scripts is *mediocre,* athough they had learned about round and flat characters previously. This *mediocre* level might be caused by the relative periods (less than 5 months) to learn both round and flat characters of short drama scripts. Therefore, the lecturer could probably divide times to learn all of the elements of drama, including round and flat characters.

Perince (2003) in Ikariya's (2009) revealed that reading for character is more difficult than reading for plot, as it is much more complex, various and ambigous. Character here, based on what Perince said, needs more attention than plot that is also the element of drama, since character has complicated features. The more times to learn the character, the better the students' ability is. Meanwhile, since the students had to master all of the elements of drama the periods to learn characters, especially round and flat characters became limited. This limitation did not make maximum ability in identifying round and flat characters. Yet, there was still exposure to learn the characters, the students' ability was still in the mediocre level. The students' ability might be different (higher) if in one semester the students learnt only characters let alone just round and flat characters.

It can also be interpreted that the ability of the students in identifying round characters is lower than their ability in identifying flat characters. It can be seen from the result of score analysis that shows that the students' ability in identifying round character is *mediocre* and the students' ability in identifying flat characters is *good.* It means that, for the third year students of English Department FKIP Riau University, identifying flat characters of reading short drama scripts is *easier* than identifying round characters of reading short drama scripts. It can also be seen from one of the interviewees' answers as follows:

"According to me, round character they tend to be recognizable, major cast, and also they are eee I mean the <u>main character.</u> so, they know about other thing in the story, they are more highlight than other characters"
- Participant 2

This answer was related to the problem which has been mentioned in the background of this study. Indicating that there was a perception in students' mind in which the main character is always the round character.

This perception is totally wrong for the main character can also be the flat character. This perception has made the students failed in identifying the round characters of short drama scripts. Then, when the writer asked an interviewee "in which part is it difficult?" (the difficulty in identifying round and flat characters) the interviewee reported,

" to... for me to find out the round character"- Participant 3

It means that round character is more challanging to find than flat character. One of the reasons from the interviewee's answer was that it was more difficult (round character) to identify since the students had to read all the stories while they thought that the language used was difficult to understand.

After conducting interview and making the transcripts, the writer analyzed the data collected using the theory of Gay's (2000); data managing, reading or miming, describing, classifying and interpretting. Having analyzed each participant's interviews, it was found that there were some factors contributing on students' ability in identifying round and flat characters.

The following elaborations are the analyses of interviews transcripts from eight participants in relation to answering research question 2 - What factors contribute to the students' ability in identifying round and flat characters of reading short drama scripts at English Study Program FKIP University of Riau?

Reading Strategy

As seen from the Table 4.4, it is found that the most significant factor contributing on students' ability in identifying round and flat characters of reading short drama scripts is related to students' **reading Startegy; the beginning and the ending of the stories.** This means that the character that appeared in the beginning and the ending of the stories together with his or her traits helped them a lot in identifying whether the character was round or flat. The kinds of characters could be seen by them by reading the characters' dialogues or the narrations at the beginning and at the ending of the stories as one participant reported:

"I read the first story eh the beginning of the first story first. Then, try to know the characters in that story. Then, I try to look at the end of the story and then, ehhh look some dialogue of the characters...."- Student 1

This strategy is related to Robert and Jacob's theory (2007) in character for identification as described in the previous chapter. He revealed that it is important to know the ways of bringing characters to life in which one of the strategies is by reading the playwrights' narration/ description tell about characters.

After knowing the way participants identifying round and flat characters of reading short drama scripts, it can be concluded that many students still got difficulties in identifying round and flat characters. One of them, for instance, mentioned:

"I think ya! (identifying round and flat character is difficult) because we should understand the story. So, we know this character is flat or round"

- Participant 1

Perince (2003) had revealed the same statement in which he stated that reading for characters was more difficult than reading for plot, as it was much more complex, various and ambigous.

Referring back to the quantitative data it can be seen that the students' ability in identifying flat characters is better than identifying round characters. In other words, the quantitative data showed that many students got difficulty in identifying round characters. However, after conducting interviews, all of the interviewers were able to theoritically elaborate the meaning of both round and flat characters. Furthermore, they could answer every single question related to round and flat characters correctly.

This is an interesting finding in which there is a slight inconsistency between students' answers in two different methods of data collection. This might happen because the students knew the theory of round and flat characters, but they just knew it without understanding the theory. They knew the meaning of round and flat character but they did not understand that not all the main characters were the round characters. This fact was found in an interview conducted to one of the third year students, as mentioned before. Furthermore, the students could answer all the interview questions related to round and flat characters because they got keys word when the writer delivered the questions, for instance, *complex, unrecognizable* as keywords for round character questions &*not complex and recognizable* as keywords for flat character questions. (See Appendix 4)

Vocabulary

Many interviewees found it difficult to identify round and flat characters in drama scripts because they did not know the meaning of the story. This is very likely due to limited vocabulary they had. Therefore, it can be said that vocabulary is another important factor which contribute on students' ability as can be seen in the Table 4.4. it can be seen from a statement of one of participants :

" What I've learned before it is very hard for me to identify the characters, so I have to know the single word of the story........."- Participant 2

It is quite obvious as to understand the beginning and the ending of the stories without having rich vocabulary and vocabulary had become the second contributing factor based on Table 5.

Guessing Strategy

The third contributing factor in identifying round and flat character based on Table 4.4 is guessing strategy. When the students were given a test in form of multiple choice-question and the questions were related to drama scripts, and they dis not know the answer, they would guess the answer. it can be further interpreted that multiple choice questions are not always able to reveal students' real ability. According to Reed (2014), a professor of Central Queensland University, Australia, multiple choice questions could not really give the real review of students' ability. It just examined students' memory and guessing. In the context of this research, this might happen since when the writer directly asked the students in an interview section, the question was not

in form of multiple choice questions but it was in form of questions that were mainly about the meaning of round and flat characters, like:

"Do you know the meaning of round and flat characters?" - Interviewer

Then, the students could freely answered the questions without being afraid whether their answer`would be wrong or right. Then, when it came to multiple choice questions, the freedom to express the answers was limited since there were only four options (A, B, C and D) after reading the short drama scripts. the common anticipation made by the students was by guessing the option.

Moreover, when the students were asked the way to identify round and flat character in short drama scripts with no options like in multiple choice questions, they just guessed the characters as one participantreported:

"eh, I read` the... the end of the story.. that is the first miss, I find the character and how's the story. The character, for example eeeee..............................after that I can conclude I can guess, oh he is round oh he is flat"- Participant 3

The Length of the story

Last but not least, it was all found that another factor contributing to students'ability in identifying round and flat characters of reading short drama scripts was the length of the drama scripts. One of the interviewees said that the shorter the drama script was, the harder she identified the round and flat character of the drama script.

"Yes, I think especially if the drama is short, it is difficult to find the where is the round character and where is the flat character"- Student 4

This difficulty might be caused by the shortness of the drama scripts which made the exposure to analyze the characters was limited. The dialogues were also short and they had made students get difficulty in identifying round and flat characters. Seeing the traits deeply in a short drama script is indeed more difficult than a longer drama scripts since the students will have enough stories and times to analyze the characters scene by scene.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that the ability of the third year students of English Study Program of FKIP Riau University in identifying round and flat character is in *mediocre* level. Moreover, from the result findings, it could be seen that the students' ability in identifying flat characters was better (good) than their ability in identifying round character (mediocre).

The qualitative results indicate that there are some factors which contributed on the students' ability in identifying round and flat characters. They are related to students' reading strategy (the beginning and the ending of the story), vocabulary, guessing strategy and the length of the story, as discussed in chapter IV.

SUGGESTION

        After looking at the results of the research, the writer would like to offer some suggestions. Firstly, the students have to learn more about how to identify round caharcters since from their score results, the students were not really able to identify round characters compared to flat caharacters. Secondly, the students also have to enrich their vocabulary since it will help them a lot in understanding the meaning of each word in short drama scripts. The more vocabulary they master the better they are in identifying round and flat characters of reading short drama scripts.

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