

**THE ABILITY OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF SMPN 32
PEKANBARU IN USING APPROPRIATE PREPOSITION IN
A READING TEXT**

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to find out the ability of the second year students of SMPN 32 Pekanbaru in using appropriate preposition in a reading text. In particular, this research focuses on their ability in using preposition of place, time and direction. There were 40 students selected using cluster random sampling as sample of this quantitative study. The data were collected using a reading text test with 20 multiple choice tests. The try out was conducted to check the validity and reliability of the test. It was found that the ability of the second year students in using appropriate preposition is poor to average level with mean score 58,88. This research recommended the students to make themselves familiar with more elaborated use of prepositions. Students can also comprehend more about the conceptualization of prepositions in many contexts by practicing writing and speaking that would require them to use prepositions. Further research can focus on how to overcome the high level of difficulties of English prepositions materials.*

Keywords: *Students' Ability, Preposition.*

SEBUAH KAJIAN TENTANG KEMAMPUAN SISWA KELAS 2 SMPN 32 PEKANBARU DALAM MENGGUNAKAN KATA DEPAN PADA SUATU TEKS BACAAN

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Abstrak : Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kemampuan siswa SMPN 32 Pekanbaru dalam menggunakan kata depan pada suatu teks bacaan. Penelitian ini menguji kemampuan siswa dalam menggunakan kata depan tempat, waktu, dan arah. Penulis menggunakan teknik sampel acak kelompok untuk menyeleksi populasi penelitian ini. Sampel penelitian kuantitatif ini berjumlah 40 orang. Data diperoleh dari tes penggunaan kata depan pada sebuah teks bacaan dengan 20 soal pilihan ganda. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, diketahui bahwa kemampuan siswa kelas 2 SMPN 32 Pekanbaru dengan menggunakan kata depan, yakni level rendah menuju rata-rata dengan nilai rata-rata 58,88. Hasil demikian menyarankan siswa untuk sebaiknya semakin familiar dan memahami penggunaan kata depan yang benar. Penelitian selanjutnya diharapkan mampu mengatasi kesulitan pada level tinggi penggunaan kata depan.

Kata kunci: Kemampuan siswa, Kata depan.

INTRODUCTION

When we learn English, we learn both productive and receptive skills. As its name suggest, productive skills are the skills which the learners use the language to produce a message. It is important to make sure that what the learners write is grammatically correct, so that it will be understandable for the receivers of their messages. In writing, for instance, writers use prepositions to make clear of the ideas they are writing. Understanding the use of prepositions will help the learners construct good sentences, follow the standard format of English, and communicate with international citizen. In order to use appropriate sentences in spoken and written forms, they have to know the classification of words and how to use them in a sentence.

Felice and Pulman (2009) state that preposition is one of the most frequent language elements used by English learners. It is a word or a group of words, such as *in*, *from*, *to*, *out of* and *on behalf of*, used before a noun or pronoun to show place, position, time or method. It becomes the most frequent words in a language. Based on the British National Corpus (BNC, Burnard, 2000), four out of the top-ten most-frequent words in English are prepositions (*of*, *to*, *in*, and *for*). While prepositions are limited in number, they are important because they act as vital markers to the structure of a sentence and mark special relationships between persons, objects, and locations.

Therefore, the importance of using appropriate preposition can not be ignored nor neglected. According to Uddin and Alam (2015), most of the time the wrong use of prepositions changes the meaning of a sentence. Sometimes the meaning of a sentence depends on the preposition so much that the using of a wrong preposition totally changes the meaning of the sentence. Hence, we may get a message totally opposite to the intended message. Therefore, a study of students' ability in using preposition was necessary to investigate their ability based on real data.

METHODOLOGY

The type of the research is descriptive. According to Gay (2000) descriptive research involves collecting data to answer question concerning the current status of the subject of the study. This research was designed to analyze the ability of the second year students of SMPN 32 Pekanbaru in using appropriate preposition. Lottery technique was used to pick the sample group among the five classes. The writer gave a piece of paper to each class, and the representative of the class took one from the six pieces of paper given to them. The classes that got "sample" word on the pieces of paper is class VIII² that consist of 40 students. In collecting the data, a written multiple choice test was conducted to the students. The test consisted of 20 items.

The classification of students' scores by Harris (1974) were used to classify the students' scores in using appropriate prepositions.

Table 1 The Classification of Students' Scores

No	Test Score	Ability Level
1.	81-100	Good to Excellent
2.	61-80	Average to Good
3.	41-60	Poor to Average
4.	21-40	Poor

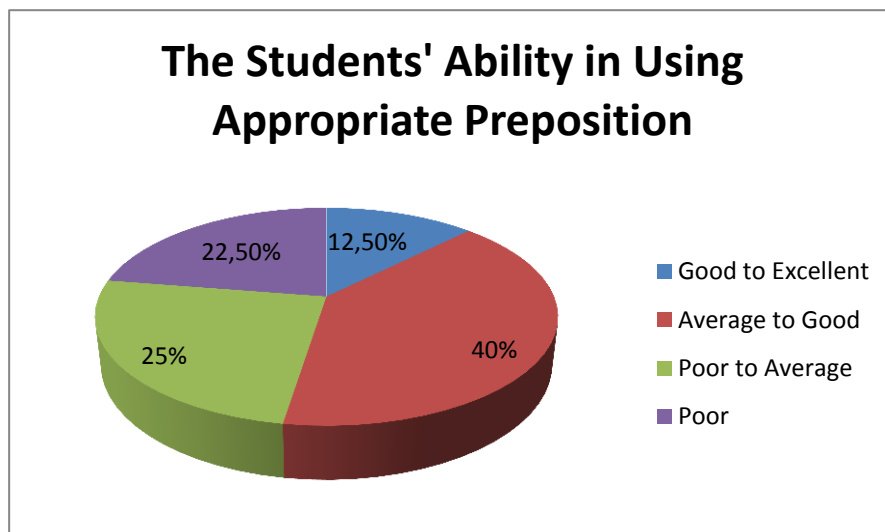
(Adopted from Harris, 1974)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

The data of the research was analyzed to find out the ability of the second year students of SMPN 32 Pekanbaru in using appropriate preposition in a reading text. The description of the students' scores and their level of ability can be seen in the figure 1 below:

Figure 1. The Students' Ability in Using Appropriate Preposition



From the chart above, it can be seen that from 40 students who took the test, there are five students (12,5 %) classified into good to excellent level, sixteen students (40 %) classified into average to good level, ten students (25 %) categorised into poor to average level, and nine students (22,5 %) grouped into poor level.

The students' average score in using appropriate preposition is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 M &= \frac{\sum FX}{N} \\
 &= \frac{2355}{40} \\
 &= 58,88
 \end{aligned}$$

Based on the mean score, it can be concluded that ability of the second year students of SMPN 32 Pekanbaru in using appropriate preposition (preposition place, time, and direction) in reading text is in **poor to average level**. It can be understood that students do not understand about all types of preposition well. Although not all of students have poor ability level, but they still have to learn further about how to use appropriate preposition then elaborate the preposition in different contexts of sentence. It will also impact their writing skill because the preposition is the frequent word which is used in each sentence. The description of students' mean score in using each component of prepositions can be seen in the table 2 below.

Table 2. The Classification of Student' Mean Score in Using Appropriate Preposition.

Type of Preposition	Component of the Test	Mean Score	Ability Level
Preposition of Place (Mean Score 58,75 / Poor to Average Level)	On	53,75	Poor to Average
	In	82, 5	Good to Excellent
	At	32, 5	Poor
	Near	80	Good to Excellent
	Next to	65	Average to Good
	Between	25	Poor
Preposition of Time (Mean Score 73,3 / Average to Good Level)	On	43, 75	Poor
	In	36, 25	Poor
	At	77, 5	Average to Good
	For	30	Poor
	From-to	75	Average to Good
	Since	62, 5	Average to Good
Preposition of Direction	To	73, 3	Average to Good
Mean Score		57	Poor to Average

The table above shows that the component of test *between* (preposition of place), *on*, *in* and *for* (preposition of time) are the most difficult aspects that the students face. In the opposite, *in* and *near* (preposition of place) are the highest score of the test. This means that they are able to use these preposition so well.

Discussion

Based on the result of the test, it was found that their mean score is 58,88. According to Harris (1974), this score indicates a poor to average level. Moreover, only 5 out of 40 students that classified into good to excellent level. The result also showed that *Between* (preposition of place) is the lowest score that the students have and *in* (preposition of place) is the opposite. It indicates that the students did not have a good understanding about how to use appropriate prepositions in reading text.

Given as the subject of this study, which is the second year students of SMPN 32 Pekanbaru can be categorized as foreign language learners, the finding of this study is in line with previous study. For example, this finding is in line with the result obtained by Forutan (2015) who found in his study that many EFL students do not fully understand how to use preposition correctly.

In short, it can be said that the result of this study has answered the research question: *“How is the ability of the second year students of SMPN 32 Pekanbaru in using appropriate prepositions in reading text?”*. It can be concluded that the ability of the second year students of SMPN 32 Pekanbaru in understanding the using of appropriate preposition in reading text was barely poor to average. It means that the use of preposition was not poorly understood but it was not excellently understood either.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to find out the ability of the second year students of SMPN 32 Pekanbaru in using appropriate preposition in a reading text. After conducting the research, it can be concluded that the students' ability in using preposition is on poor to average level with mean score of 58,88. Moreover, among 13 components of preposition, *between* (preposition of place) is the most difficult aspect because it has lowest score and *near* (preposition of place) is the highest score.

Based on the score of each type, it was known that the students' ability in identifying preposition of time was at the lowest score. This could be due to the less frequency of using preposition of time in English that lead to unfamiliarity of the students. In addition, the students' highest score was at the understanding of preposition of direction. This could be caused by the familiarity of the students in using preposition of direction.

Suggestions

From the conclusion above, the writer would like to suggest students to make themselves familiar with more elaborated use of prepositions. This can be achieved by a lot of reading and listening to articles, papers, and other sources in English which use many of prepositions. Students can also comprehend more about the conceptualization of prepositions in many contexts with writing exercise that would require them to use appropriate prepositions. Second, further research can focus on how to overcome the high level of difficulties of English prepositions materials.

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