

**A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS
OF ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM, UNIVERSITAS RIAU
IN COMPREHENDING NARRATIVE TEXTS**

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Abstract: *This descriptive research is aimed at finding out the ability of the first year students of English Study Program, Universitas Riau in comprehending narrative texts. The population of the students were about 118 students. The sample were chosen by using cluster sampling technique, the sample size was as big as 78 students out of 118 students. The instrument of the research was a multiple choices test about narrative texts. The result shows that the mean score of the test of the first year students of English Study Program Universitas Riau is 73.77, categorized as good level. Based on the classification of students scores, there are 14 students (17%) are in excellent level, 50 students (64.1%) are in good level, 13 students (16.3%) students are in mediocre level and 1 students (1.3%) is in poor level. The lowest score of the components of the test is finding the generic structures of narrative text with the mean score 67.95, considered as good level. Meanwhile, the highest score of the components is finding references with the mean score 82.05, considered as excellent level. Therefore, it can be concluded that the ability of the first year students' of English Study Program, Universitas Riau, is in the range of good level.*

Key Words: *Ability, Comprehending, Narrative Texts.*

STUDI TENTANG KEMAMPUAN MAHASISWA TAHUN PERTAMA PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS, UNIVERSITAS RIAU DALAM MEMAHAMI TEKS NARATIF

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Absrak: Penelitian deskriptif ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kemampuan mahasiswa tahun pertama Program Studi Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Riau dalam memahami teks naratif. Populasi dari mahasiswa tersebut adalah 118 mahasiswa. Sampel dipilih menggunakan teknik area sampling, jumlah sampel adalah 78 mahasiswa dari 188 mahasiswa. Instrument penelitian ini adalah tes pilihan ganda tentang teks naratif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan nilai rata-rata dari test mahasiswa tahun pertama Program Studi Bahasa Inggris adalah 73.77, dikategorikan sebagai tingkat baik. Berdasarkan dari klasifikasi nilai-nilai mahasiswa, ada 14 mahasiswa (17%) yang berada di tingkat sangat baik, 50 mahasiswa (64.1%) di tingkat baik, 13 mahasiswa di tingkat biasa-biasa saja dan 1 mahasiswa (1.3%) di tingkat buruk. Nilai terendah dari komponen-komponen tes penelitian ini adalah menemukan struktur generik teks naratif dengan nilai rata-rata 67.95, dikategorikan sebagai tingkat baik. Sementara nilai tertinggi dari komponen-komponen penelitian ini adalah menemukan referensi dengan nilai rata-rata 82.05, dikategorikan sebagai tingkat sangat baik. Oleh karna itu bisa disimpulkan bahwa kemampuan mahasiswa tahun pertama Program Studi Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Riau ada dalam tingkat baik.

Kata Kunci: Kemampuan, Memahami, Teks Naratif.

BACKGROUND

There are four language skills that need to be learned when learning language and reading is one of them. According to Nunan (2003), reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning. Nuttal (1982) defines reading as the meaningful interpretation of printed or written verbal symbols. Reading is a result of interaction between the perception of graphic symbols that represent language and the reader's language skills, cognitive skills, and the knowledge of the world.

The first year students of English study program have learnt about text types at the senior high school. They have learnt kinds of genres of text types as report text, narrative text, analytical exposition text, spoof text and also hortatory exposition text. Therefore the first year of students' must be able to identify or understand about what the texts mean and the language component. The students must do reading in the process to comprehend text types in English and find out what the texts tell about and comprehending is one of the ways to support the students' knowledge about English as a language learnt. Comprehending reading materials is their ideas, however, it cannot be identified whether all students comprehend the texts or not.

Reading is an activity to gain knowledge or to get entertained from a written or printed material. The reader can read a book that full of science or read a story from a novel or a short story that printed in news or magazine; it depends on the purpose of the reader. There are many experts have given their definitions about the meaning of Reading.

There are four types of strategies and skills that use in reading: skimming, scanning, extensive reading and intensive reading.

These four types will be explained as follows:

1. Skimming

Skimming is used to quickly gather the most important information. In this technique the readers only are looking important information. For example: reading a newspaper (quickly to get the general news of the day).

2. Scanning

Scanning is used to find a particular piece of information. In this technique the readers only looking for the specific of information that the readers need. For example: reading a train schedule.

3. Extensive Reading

Extensive reading is used to obtain a general understanding of a subject and includes reading longer texts for pleasure, as well as business book. This reading technique is used to improve the reader general knowledge. The readers are not expected to understand each of the words. For example: reading a novel before going to bed.

4. Intensive Reading

Intensive reading is used on shorter texts in order to extract specific information. It includes very close accurate reading for detail. The readers use intensive reading skills to grasp the details of a specific situation. In this case, it is important that we understand each word, number or fact. For example: reading a contract.

Based the explanation above, the writer conclude that reading is a process to get the message or information on texts. In this study reading means the students' activity to grasp the meaning of the content and the writer idea about the topic. To have good ability in reading the readers should practice in reading comprehension.

Rebecca (2003) states that narrative text is a story connected with events based on the plot. A text that relates to a series of logically and chronologically related events that caused or experienced by factors. A key to comprehend a narrative is a sense of plot, theme, characters, events and how they relate. According to Djuharie (2007) narrative text is a text focusing specific participants.

1. Social Function

It is to tell stories or past events, and entertain the readers.

2. Generic Structure

The Narrative structure most often features a beginning, middle and an ending. A narrative text has three main parts (Hartono, 2005). They are:

a. Orientation

It tells about the setting in time, place and character.

b. Complication(s)

This part tells about problem(s) to be solved by the character.

c. Resolution

It describes the solution to the complication(s) and gives an ending to the story.

3. Language Used

Jan (2003) also explains the language used in narrative text. They are as follows:

a. Action Verbs.

b. Written in the first person (I, we) or the the third person (she, he, they).

c. Usually past tense.

d. Connectives, linking words to do with time.

e. Specific nouns: Strong nouns have more specific meanings, eg. Oak as opposed to tree.

f. Active nouns: Make nouns actually do something, eg. It was raining could become rain splashed down.

g. The use of adjectives and adverbs.

h. Use of the sense: Where appropriate, the sense can be used to describe and develop the experience, setting and character.

i. Imagery

(a) Simile: A direct comparison, using like or as or as though, eg. The wind wrapped me like a cloak.

(b) Metaphor: An indirect or hidden comparison, eg. She has a heart of stone.

(c) Onomatopoeia: A suggestion of sound through words, eg. Crackle, splat, ooze, eg. The tyres whirl on the road.

(d) Personification: Giving nonliving things (inanimate) living characteristics, eg. The steel beam clenched its muscles.

j. Rhetorical Questions: Often the author asks the audience questions, knowing of course there will be no direct answer.

k. Variety in sentences beginnings. There are several ways to do this, eg. By using:

1) Participles: "jumping with joy I ran home to tell mum my good news."

2) Adverbs: "Silently the cat crept toward the bird."

- 3) Adjective: “Brilliant sunlight shone through the window.”
- 4) Nouns: “Thunder claps fill the air.”
- 5) Adverbial Phrases: “Along the street walked the girl as if she had not care in the world.”

Conversation/Dialogue: these may be used as an opener. This may be done through a series of short or one-word sentences or as one long complex sentence.

RESEARCH METHOD

This is a descriptive research which is used to describe the students’ ability in reading. According to Gay (2000), a descriptive research involves collecting data to test hypothesis or to answer question concerning the status of the study. It means that the descriptive research is used to summarize the distribution of a variable or more but limited to sample data only, not to be generalized to population.

The population of this research were all the first year students from English Study Program at Riau University in academic year 2018-2019. The numbers of the population were 118 students that consist of three classes.

In conducting this research, the researcher took sample from this population. According to Gay (2000), if the population is large and spread out in an intact group that has similar characteristic, cluster sampling is useful. Cluster sampling is a sampling technique where the entire population is divided into groups, or clusters and a random sample of these clusters are selected. According to Gay (2000), if the population is more than one hundred, the minimum sample taken is 15% from the population and in this research the writer used students as sample and it is consist of 2 classes with 78 students.

The data used in this research is quantitative data. The researcher constructed the instrument in multiple choices. The test refers to text types learnt by Senior High School students. The researcher used a test as an instrument to collect the data and the tests consist of 35 items. The sources of the texts for the instrument are from books used for this level. The books that used are English books for Senior High School, such as Penerbit Erlangga, Intan Pariwara and others. The researcher using these sources as the instrument of the test because it’s is based on the English Syllabus. The test consists of 35 questions that composed by the researcher based on the narrative texts.

To find out the students’ ability in comprehending narrative texts, the researcher collected the data by administrating a test. The test form is a multiple choices. Before the real test given to the students, there will be a tryout to the students who are not involved as the sample to find out the validity and reliability of the test. Heaton (1975) say that from the try out, it could be seen whether the index of difficulty of a particular item is easy or difficult. Heaton (1991) states that the test items are accepted if the score is between 0.30-0.70 and it is rejected if the degree of the difficulty is less than 0.30 (too difficult) and over 0.70 (too easy).

1. To know the difficulty level

The difficulty level on the items will show how easy or difficult the particular items provided in the test. It is expressed as the percentage of the students answer the item correctly. In calculating it, the following formula will be used:

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

Where:

F.V= Facility Value/ Difficulty level

R= The number of correct answer

N= The number of the students

(Heaton, 1991)

2. To know the discrimination index

Items discrimination shows the extent to which the items discriminated between the students separating the more able students and the less able students. It was calculated by using the formula:

$$D = \frac{\text{correct}U - \text{Correct}L}{n}$$

Where:

D = Discrimination index

U = Upper group answering

L = Lower group answering

n= Number of candidates in one group

(Heaton, 1991)

3. To know mean score

After knowing the difficulty level of the try out test items, the writer will measure the central tendency by calculating the mean score. To know the average score of the students' ability in reading comprehension, the writer presented the data by using the formula:

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

Where:

M= The mean score in each topic

$\sum fx$ = The sum of the respondents' scores

N= The number of the respondents

(Hatch and Farhady, 1982)

4. To know the reliability

According to Heaton (1975), reliability is a necessary characteristic of any good test. A test is said valid when it is reliable as a measuring instrument. The reliability of whole test will be calculated by using the formula:

$$R_{ii} = \frac{N}{N-1} \left[1 - \frac{m(N-M)}{NX^2} \right]$$

Where:

R_{ii} = the reliability of the test

N = the number of the items in the test

M = the mean score on the test for all the tests

X² = the standard deviation of all the test scores

(Heaton, 1991)

Reliability is expressed based on the coefficient correlation; the high coefficient indicates the high reliability. The reliability of a test is considered as follows:

Coefficient 0.00 – 0.20: The reliability is low

Coefficient 0.21 – 0.40: The reliability is sufficient

Coefficient 0.41 – 0.70: The reliability high

Coefficient above 0.71: The reliability is very high

To analyse the quantitative data, the writer will use procedures as follows:

1. To know each of students' score individually, the data will calculate by using the following formula:

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{n} \cdot 100$$

Where:

M = Individual score

X = Correct answer

n = Number of items

(Wayan and Sumartana, 1986)

2. After getting all of students' score, the students' ability can be seen. Next, to find out the mean score of the students in reading comprehension, the following formula is used:

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

Where:

M = the mean score of each topic

$\sum fx$ = the sum of the respondents' scores

N = the number of the respondents
(Hatch and Farhady, 1982)

Furthermore, the level of the student's score will be classified into five levels of mastery. The classifications are when the score is 81-100 is categorized as *excellent* level, 61-80 as *good* level, 41-60 as *mediocre* level, 21-40 as *poor* level and 0-20 as *very poor* level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among 78 students, 14 students (17%) are in *excellent* level, 50 students (64.1%) are in *good* level, 13 students (16.3%) students are in *mediocre* level, 1 student (1.3%) is in *poor* level and no students in *very poor* level. The mean score of the students in reading narrative texts is 73.77, it shows the level of the ability of the first year English Study Program students' in reading narrative texts are classified as *good*.

For finding main ideas, 14 students (17.9%) are in *excellent* level, 29 students (37.2%) are in *good* level, 23 students (29.5%) are in *mediocre* level, 8 students (10.3%) are in *poor level* and 4 students (5.1%) are in *very poor* level. The mean score of the students' ability in finding main ideas is 70.26. It can be concluded that their ability is in *good* level.

For the finding factual information there are 18 students (23.1%) are in *excellent* level, 35 students (44.9%) are in *good* level, 15 students (19.2%) are in *mediocre* level, 8 students (10.2%) are in *poor level* and 2 students (2.6%) are in *very poor* level. The mean score of the students' ability in finding factual information is 74.87, which can be categorized as *good* level.

For finding contextual meaning there are 14 students (17.9%) are in *excellent* level, 34 students (43.6%) are in *good* level, 18 students (23.1%) are in *mediocre* level, 9 students (11.5%) are in *poor* level and 3 students (3.8%) are in *very poor* level. The mean score of the students' ability in finding contextual meanings is 72.05, which can be categorized as *good* level.

For finding the references there are 32 students (41%) are in *excellent* level, 27 students (34.6%) are in *good* level, 14 students (17.9%) are in *mediocre* level, 5 students (6.4%) are in *poor level* and no students in *very poor* level. The mean score of the students' ability in finding references is 82.05, which can be categorized as *excellent* level.

For finding restatement there are 14 students (17.9%) are in *excellent* level, 29 students (37.2%) are in *good* level, 22 students (28.2%) are in *mediocre* level, 8 students (10.2%) are in *poor* level and 5 students (6.4%) are in *very poor* level. The mean score of the students' ability in finding restatements is 70.00, which can be categorized as *good* level.

For finding the generic structures of the text there are 13 students (16.7%) are in *excellent* level, 29 students (37.2%) are in *good* level, 20 students (25.6%) are in *mediocre* level, 11 students (14.1%) are in *poor* level and 5 students (6.4%) are in *very poor* level. The mean score of the students' ability in finding generic structures of narrative text is 67.95, which can be categorized as *good* level.

The last is for finding the language features, there are 30 students (38.5%) are in *excellent* level, 28 students (35.9%) are in *good* level, 9 students (11.5%) are in *mediocre* level, 9 students (11.5%) are in *poor* level and 2 students (2.6%) are in *very poor* level. The mean score of the students' ability in finding language features of narrative text is 79.23, which can be categorized as *good* level.

The mean score of the test was 73.77 and was analysed based on Hatch and Farhadys' formula. It means the average of the students' ability is in good level even though there is one student is in the poor level. However, it is still took place at low range, which means the students' ability was not satisfied enough considering they are trained to be a teachers.

The students' ability from each component can be describes as six components with good level and one component with excellent level. The most difficult components is finding the generic structures of narrative text with the mean score 67.95, considered as in good level. Meanwhile, the easiest components is finding references with the mean score 82.05, considered as excellent level. The students mean score of finding main ideas is 70.26, considered as good level. The students mean score of finding factual information is 74.87, considered as good level. The students mean score of finding contextual meaning is 72.05, considered as good level. The students mean score of finding restatements is 70.00, considered as good level. The last component is finding language features of narrative text with the students mean score 79.23, considered as good level.

Based on the explanation above the researcher analyse that the first year students of English Study Program, Universitas Riau are in the good level of ability in comprehending narrative texts. The difficulties that the students found are in finding generic structures. While in comprehending narrative text it is one of the important things to be able of.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on the research findings in comprehending narrative texts, there are 14 students got excellent level. It means they are able to comprehend the narrative text very well. There are 50 students got good level. It means they have good ability in comprehending narrative texts. There are 13 students got mediocre level and one student gets poor level. It means that they should learn more to comprehend the narrative texts. The researcher also found out that the mean score of the students is 73.77. It means the students' ability in comprehending narrative texts is in good level.

There are 7 components in comprehending narrative texts. From all the sevens, finding references got the highest means score with the score 82.05 and categorized as excellent level. Followed by finding language features (79.23) and categorized as good level. Finding factual information (74.87), categorized as good level. Finding contextual meanings (72.05), categorized as good level. Finding restatements (70.00), categorized as good level. Finding main ideas (70.26), categorized as good level and the last is finding generic structures with the score 67.95.

Recommendation

The researcher believes this research still has a lot of weaknesses. However, from this research finding, the researcher would like to give some recommendations as follows; first, considering the students' ability in comprehending narrative text is in good level but there are few students that still considered in low level, one of them is in poor level. It is important to them to have an excellent ability in comprehending narrative texts in all components. The students should do more practice in comprehending narrative texts since they are trained to be a teacher and will teach a student in the future. Second, the researcher recommended other researchers to continue the research findings in other kinds of texts.

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