

A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS OF SMAN 1 BANGUN PURBA IN IDENTIFYING MAIN IDEAS OF THE PARAGRAPHS IN READING TEXTS

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Abstract: Reading is one of the skills that students should master in learning English. To get the information from the English paragraph, the learners have to be able to read the paragraph effectively and efficiently. This is a descriptive research. This research was intended to analyze the ability of the second year students of SMAN 1 Bangun Purba in identifying main ideas of the paragraphs in reading texts. The writer collected the data by giving the students multiple choice tests which consist of 20 items with 20 different short paragraphs. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the students' ability in identifying main ideas of the paragraphs in reading texts is in "good" level.

Keywords : *Descriptive Research, Reading Skill, Main Idea*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the skills that students should master in learning English. To get the information from the English paragraph, the learners have to be able to read the paragraph effectively and efficiently. The fundamental goal of reading activities is to know enough scientific and the language itself.

Of the four language skills, reading is very helpful for Indonesian students to learn English. First, it will enlarge their vocabulary, which will make it easier to understand the English sentences. Second, it will make students be familiar with the structure of English sentences. From the reading, someone can take the understanding and comprehend what she or he reads.

Nuttall (1991: 20) explains that reading lessons have different ways that have been written for any authentic purpose of writing are to inform, to entertain and so on, even if the language has been modified to suit the level of learner. The purpose of the text must be first and foremost to convey a message. Second, the aim of reading lessons is to develop the student's ability to extract the message the text contains.

In reading text, the students are expected to gain the main idea in a paragraph, in order to get information from a text. Actually the first thing, that we should know is the meaning of the main idea itself. By getting the main idea in each paragraph, the students are easy to understand the context of the text, what the writer aims and then they can answer the question based on the reading text.

Whorter (1985: 76) states that the main idea of the paragraph is what the author wants you to know about the topic. It is the broad important idea that the writer develops throughout the paragraph. The entire paragraph, then explain, develops, and support this main idea. Without main idea, the paragraph would be nothing but confusion or unrelated, undeveloped parts of different idea.

In this research, the writer limits the problem on the student's ability in identifying main idea of the paragraph in reading text at the second year students of SMAN 1 Bangun Purba.

Hopefully, the result of this research will give a meaningful contribution to the language teachers and English learners about identifying main ideas of the paragraphs and as information for SMAN 1 Bangun Purba to improve their reading, especially in identifying main ideas.

METHODOLOGY

The population of this research is the second year students of SMAN 1 Ujung Batu. The number of the students is 40 students. Because the population is large enough, it is necessary to have sample. According to Gay (2004), sampling is the process of selecting number of individuals for a study that represented the larger group from which they were selected. There are several appropriate techniques for selecting a sample which is suitable in certain situations. In this research, the writer use cluster random sampling technique. Cluster random sampling is sampling in which groups, not individuals, are randomly selected. The reason for choosing this technique is less time and easier to obtain permission to use all the students in certain class than several students in many classes. So, the writer takes only one class out of 2 classes as the sample of this research. The process of choosing the class is by using lottery.

To collect the data, the writer uses test to know the ability of the students. Test is an instrument which is more appropriate to measure the student's ability. Therefore, to know the students' ability in identifying main idea in reading texts, the writer collect the data by giving them multiple choices test. The number of items is 20 items which have 20 different short paragraphs.

The Blueprint of Research Instrument

Class	Kind of the test	Topic	The position of the main idea	Explanation
The second year students of SMAN 1 Bangun Purba	Objective test	1. ASEAN Declaration 2. Chemical Manufactures 3. HurtTofu and Meatballs Vendors' Business 4. Bank loan 5. Bank Account 6. Painting in the past 7. Why many Americans are fat 8. Community Various Organism 9. Nuclear plant 10. Repairing the public facilities damaged 11. Secretary duties 12. Chemical Insecticides 13. Plant pets 14. The population in Mexico City 15. Process Distribution of NumerousManufactures 16. Communication 17. Job Opportunities 18. Typical two job family of the future 19. Socialization 20. United Nation	1. Implicit 2. Beginning 3. End 4. Middle 5. Middle 6. End 7. End 8. Implicit 9. Implicit 10. Implicit 11. Middle 12. Implicit 13. Beginning 14. End 15. Beginning 16. Beginning 17. Middle 18. Beginning 19. End 20. Middle	Choose the correct answer of the following question by crossing mark (X) A, B, C, or D on the answer sheet provided.

After distributing a set of test for the second year students of SMAN 1 Bangun Purba as the sample, the writer analyze the data by using:

$$P = \frac{x}{n} \times 100\%$$

P = Individual Score

x = Correct Answer

n = Number of Items

(Nurkencana and Sumartana, 1993: 26)

The percentage of the classification of the ability of second year students in identifying main ideas of the paragraphs in reading texts can be calculated by using the formula:

$$P = \frac{f}{r} \times 100\%$$

P = percentage

f = number of frequency

r = number of respondents

(Hatch and Farhady, 1982: 43)

The Classification of Students' Score (Carol and Hall 1945: 134)

No	Classification	Scores
1	Excellent	81 – 100
2	Good	61– 80
3	Mediocre	41 – 60
4	Poor	21– 40
5	Very Poor	0 - 20

Then, to know the average score of the students in identifying main ideas, the writer uses the formula as follows:

$$M = \sum \frac{Fx}{n}$$

M = Mean

Σfx = The number of the score

N = Total number of Students

(Heaton 1991: 169)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After collecting the data and computing the scores, the writer classified them to show their ability based on their scores. It can be seen as follows:

Table 1
The Students' Individual Score and Level of Ability

Students	Correct Answer	Score	Level of Ability
1	14	70	Good
2	13	65	Good
3	13	65	Good
4	10	50	Mediocre
5	9	45	Mediocre
6	13	65	Good
7	9	45	Mediocre
8	9	45	Mediocre
9	14	70	Good
10	14	70	Good
11	16	80	Good
12	15	75	Good
13	13	65	Good
14	13	65	Good
15	14	70	Good
16	12	60	Mediocre
17	11	55	Mediocre
18	9	45	Mediocre
19	12	60	Mediocre
20	12	60	Mediocre
21	15	75	Good
22	11	55	Mediocre
23	10	50	Mediocre
24	12	60	Mediocre
25	12	60	Mediocre
26	11	55	Mediocre
27	12	60	Mediocre
28	16	80	Good
29	14	70	Good
30	14	70	Good
31	13	65	Good
32	14	70	Good
33	12	60	Mediocre
34	10	50	Mediocre
35	9	45	Mediocre
36	12	60	Mediocre
37	11	55	Mediocre
38	12	60	Mediocre
39	12	60	Mediocre
40	13	65	Good
Total	490	2.45	Good
Average	12.25	61.25	

The scores of 80, 75, 70 and 65 are classified into good level of ability. The scores 60, 55, 50 and 45 are classified as mediocre level of ability. From the table 1, it indicates that the highest score obtained by the students is 80, while the lowest score is 45. From the test given, no student could reach the level of excellent and none of them reached poor and very poor level.

Table 2
The Students' Average Score

Score	Frequency	F.X
80	2	160
75	2	150
70	7	490
65	7	455
60	10	600
55	4	220
50	3	150
45	5	225
Total	40	2.450

From the students' score above, the mean score of the students in Identifying Main Ideas can be calculated by using the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Mean} &= \frac{\sum fx}{N} \\
 &= \frac{2450}{40} \\
 &= 61.25
 \end{aligned}$$

From the above calculation we know that the students' ability in Identifying Main Ideas of the Paragraphs in Reading Texts is in Good level (61.25). It means that Identifying Main Ideas of the Paragraphs in Reading Texts is easy enough for the second year students of SMAN 1 Bangun Purba.

The following table is the frequency distribution of the students' level ability which offers the answer to the research problem about students' ability in Identifying Main Ideas of the Paragraphs in Reading Texts.

Table 3
Frequency Distribution of Students' Level of Ability

Score	Frequency	Percentage	Level of Ability
81-100	-	-	-
61-80	18	45%	Good
41-60	22	55%	Mediocre
21-40	-	-	-
0-20	-	-	-

The frequency distribution indicates the number of the students at their level of ability. The above shows that 40 students who have been taken as sample, 18 students (45%) have *good* ability, 22 students (55%) have *mediocre* ability.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This is a descriptive research. The objective of this research is to find out the ability of the second year students of SMAN 1 Bangun Purba in Identifying Main Ideas of the Paragraphs in Reading Texts.

There were 40 students involved in the test. After analyzing the data presented in previous chapter, their average score is 61.25. So, it is concluded that the ability of the second year students of SMAN 1 Bangun Purba in Identifying Main Ideas of the Paragraphs in Reading texts is in good level. From the data, we can see that none of the students are classified as *excellent* (0%), 18 students (45%) are in *good* level, 22 students (55%) are in *mediocre* level, none in *poor* and *very poor* level (0%).

Based on the result of this research, the writer would like to give some suggestions; in order to improve the students' ability in identifying main ideas of the paragraphs in reading texts:

1. The students are suggested to enrich their English vocabulary in order to understand the English texts easily.
2. The students need to read a lot of reading materials as a mean of their intellectual request fulfillment in one side, and as a mean to improve their reading skills in another side.
3. The English teachers are suggested to explain about the main idea and how the paragraphs are constructed clearly by giving more examples and exercises dealing with finding main idea continuously.

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