A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF READING COMPREHENSION WITH TRANSLATION ABILITY

Riesma, Urai Salam, Iwan Supardi
English Education Study Program FKIP Untan
Email: dwiriesma@gmail.com

Abstract: The purpose of this research was to find out the correlation between reading comprehension and translation ability. The population of this research was the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program at FKIP Tanjungpura University Pontianak. The data were derived from reading comprehension test and translation test. The result showed that the students’ reading comprehension has positive correlation with their translation ability since the r-calculation (0.897) is higher than r-table (0.462). The interpretation of correlation could be categorized high to very high. The hypothesis was tested by using t-test formula and found that t-observed was 10.61, it is higher than t-table 2.46 with df= n-2 (28) in level of significance 0.01. In short, the research hypothesis which stated that there was a significant correlation between students’ reading comprehension with their translation ability was accepted.

Key words: correlational study, reading comprehension, translation ability

Abstrak: Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan korelasi antara pemahaman membaca dengan kemampuan menerjemah. Populasi dari penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa semester lima program studi bahasa inggris di FKIP Universitas Tanjungpura Pontianak. Tes pemahaman membaca dan menerjemah digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ada korelasi positif di antara pemahaman membaca siswa dengan kemampuan mereka menerjemah, karena nilai r yang dihitung (0.897) lebih tinggi dari nilai r pada tabel (0.462). Nilai korelasi ini dapat ditafsirkan tinggi hingga sangat tinggi. Hipotesa diuji dengan menggunakan rumus t–test dan didapatkan nilai t hasil observasi sebesar 10.61, lebih tinggi dari nilai t pada tabel yaitu 2.46 dengan df= n-2 di level signifikansi 0.01. Singkatnya, hipotesa penelitian yang menyatakan bahwa ada korelasi positif antara pemahaman membaca siswa dengan kemampuan mereka menerjemah diterima.

Kata kunci: penelitian korelasi, pemahaman membaca, kemampuan menerjemah
English is one of foreign languages which are taught in Indonesia from elementary schools until universities. It is not only as an international language but also considered as language which is rich with its modern culture. Every person may have different reasons and purposes in learning a foreign language. To master it, learners need to learn both spoken and written forms of the target language. They will not only deal with oral activity, but also with reading activity.

Reading is one of the skills that students should have in their life. It is generally accepted that reading is one of the most crucial skills needed by the students of secondary school, senior high school and university. By reading, the learners can have further practice of language that they have already met through listening and speaking, they will also get much information, such as education, science, technology and culture, they require from the text as well.

Reading skill is no doubt a means of gaining information and knowledge. In the process of reading, information is understood through the sight of eyes, discrimination of letter shapes, association of letter with language and association of text with meaning. The reader applies many strategies to reconstruct the meaning that the author is assumed to have intended. The reader does this by comparing information in the text to his or her background knowledge or prior knowledge. Understanding a written text is not enough to understand the gist of the text, but more detailed comprehension is necessary.

Reading can be challenging, particularly when the material is unfamiliar, technical or complex. Moreover, for some readers, comprehension is always challenging. They may understand each word separately, but linking them together into meaningful ideas often does not happen as it should. These readers can decode the words, but have not developed sufficient skills to comprehend the underlying, deeper meaning of the sentences, the paragraphs, and the entire text. Rasinki and Brasell (2008: 15) claim reading refers to the ability to comprehend or make meaning from written text.

Comprehension refers to the ability to go beyond the words, to understand the ideas and the relationships between ideas conveyed in a text. Comprehension is not always effortless and fast, of course. When beginning students struggle over individual words, reading is slowed down to a near halt and deeper levels of comprehension are seriously compromised.

Comprehension is the main goal of reading that refers to the process of understanding what is being read. Readers usually make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand the written text. Comprehension requires a high level thinking and demanding the readers to identify the information from the reading materials or text that they have read. Students must use information already acquired to filter, interpret, organize, reflect upon and establish relationships with the new incoming information on the page. In order to understand text, a student must be able to identify words rapidly, know the meaning of almost all of the words and be able to combine units of meaning into a coherent message.
In learning English, there are four basic skills that must be mastered by the students. Those are listening, reading, writing and speaking. However, there is another skill whose role in teaching and learning English as foreign language cannot be ignored. That skill is translation which is defined as a process of replacing the textual material in one language (the source language) by equivalent textual material in another language (the target language).

Beside comprehension, translation process also happens in reading. Translation cannot be separated from the other abilities in learning a foreign language. When students are reading, listening or speaking English, as a foreign language, they are actually translating. They translate from the source into the target language.

According to Newmark (1998: 80), the work of translation is started by reading the original text in order to get understanding and ends with re-writing it into the target language. Moreover, he explains that translation involves four processes: comprehension of the vocabulary of the original source-language, comprehension of the meaning of the source-language message, reformulation of the message in the target language, and judgment of the adequacy of the target language text. Schulte (2013: 1) states that reading is already translation, and translation is translation for the second time. The process of translating comprises in its essence the whole secret of human understanding of the world and of social communication.

According to Mininni, Nida and Seleskovitch in Bialystock (1991) the processes involved in the comprehension of text can be better understood through translation and interpretation. Translation is a process based on the theory that it is possible to abstract the meaning of a text from its forms and reproduce that meaning with the very different forms of a second language.

Translation is basically a change of form. In translation, the form of the source language is replaced by the form of receptor (target) language. It can be concluded that translation is a process of transferring the meaning of the source language into the target language.

It is assumed from the previous descriptions that the comprehension process happens in translation same as the comprehension process happens in reading. Macizo and Bajo (2004: 181) say that language comprehension includes a set of processes going from speech processing, lexical access, and sentential processing to discourse processing and all of these comprehension processes are involved during both reading and translation. In both translation and reading, comprehension of the text is needed to reformulate the message to the target language. Those similarities show that there is a relationship between reading comprehension and translation ability.

Dealing with the above discussions, it is assumed that there is a correlation between students’ reading comprehension and their translation ability. This research designed to investigate the correlation of those two variables. This research was conducted at English Language Education Study Program. The data were collected through reading comprehension test in the form of multiple choices, and translation ability test where the students have to translate texts into Bahasa Indonesia.
RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher conducted a correlational study. Correlational research is concerned with establishing relationships between two or more variables in the same population or between the same variables in two populations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The purpose of correlational research is to discover relationships between two or more variables. Relationship means that an individual’s status on one variable tends to reflect his or her status on the other. Correlational research helps us to understand related events, conditions, and behaviors. It is to predict how one variable might predict another.

Correlation coefficients can provide for the degree and direction of relationships. It allows the researcher to analyze the relationship among a large number of variables. The research method is purely observational in nature and the researcher merely examines the variables without any kind of manipulation. To determine the relationship between two variables, a correlational coefficient is used, which is denoted by “r”. The range of correlational coefficient is between 1 and +1. The value tells us two things about the nature of the relationship between two or more variables, the intensity and the direction.

This research took a whole number of population as a sample. In conducting this research, the researcher chose the fifth semester students of English Language Education Study Program in Tanjungpura University Academic Year 2015/2016 as the population and sample. The population and sample are chosen because in fifth semester the students already took four levels of reading and translation subject between the first and fifth semesters.

A research requires the source of data called population. A population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the result of the research (McMillan, 1992: 62).

The population of this research was the fifth semester students of English Language Education Study Program in Tanjungpura University Academic year 2015/2016. The total amount of students in fifth semester is 109. Besides, sample is a part of population, the source of the research data. Arikunto (2006: 131) refers sample to a small part of a population which is integrated. All the total of fifth semester students as sample is very big for an undergraduate thesis-based research. Thus, this research did not take all population as the research sample. The numbers of sample were only 30 students from B+ class.

The focus of this research were finding and computing the significant correlation between students’ reading comprehension with their translation ability. In order to get the data, the writer used a reading comprehension test section from Longman Introductory Course for the TOEFL Test.

This research applies the measurement technique. The data were collected using comprehension test and translation test. It is intended to know the students achievement on reading comprehension and translation test.

A tool of research is a device that is intentionally chosen or constructed based on the characteristic of a research (Marczyk, et al 2005: 23). The tool of data collecting in this research is written test. It is focused on students’ reading comprehension. The test consists of two sections. Section One is for reading
comprehension test. In this section TOEFL reading comprehension test is used to measure students’ reading ability in comprehension reading academic English texts.

TOEFL reading comprehension test is used to measure students’ reading ability in comprehension reading academic English texts. Furthermore, the writer has made the table of specification for reading comprehension as follows:

### Table 1
**Table of Specification of the Test Items**
**Reading Comprehension Section**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Level of Comprehension</th>
<th>Number of test items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students are able to identify supporting details from the text</td>
<td>Literal</td>
<td>2, 7, 8, 11, 20, 22, 27, 30,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students are able to predict the main idea, inference and vocabularies</td>
<td>Interpretative</td>
<td>1, 3, 6, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 23, 24, 28, 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are able to conclude the information from the text given such as identify the generic structure of the text</td>
<td>Applied</td>
<td>4, 5, 13, 17, 19, 21, 25, 26,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section Two is for translation test where the students have to translate the first text that they already read from TOEFL test in The Section One into Bahasa Indonesia. To know the students’ translation ability Waddington’s Rubric is applied as shown in Table 2.

### Table 2
**Rubric for Translation Assessment**
**Translation Section**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Accuracy of transfer of ST (source text) content</th>
<th>Quality of expression in TL (Target language)</th>
<th>Degree of task completion</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 5 Complete transfer of ST information; only minor revision needed to reach professional standard</td>
<td>Almost all the translation reads like a piece originally written in ST. There may be minor lexical, grammatical, or spelling errors.</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>90/100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Almost complete transfer; there may be one or two insignificant inaccuracies that require a certain amount of revision to reach professional standard.</td>
<td>Large sections read like a piece originally written in ST. There are a number of lexical, grammatical, or spelling errors.</td>
<td>Almost completely successful 70/80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Transfer of the general idea(s) but with a number of lapses in accuracy; Needs considerable revision to reach professional standard.</td>
<td>Certain parts read like a piece originally written in ST but others read like a translation. There are considerable numbers of lexical, grammatical, or spelling errors.</td>
<td>Adequate 50/60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Transfer undermined by serious inaccuracies; thorough revision required to reach professional standard.</td>
<td>Almost the entire text reads like a translation; there are continual lexical, grammatical, or spelling errors.</td>
<td>Inadequate 30/40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Totally inadequate transfer of ST content; The translation is not worth revising.</td>
<td>The candidate reveals a total lack of ability to express himself/herself adequately in target language.</td>
<td>Totally inadequate 10/20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>(Adapted from Waddington: 2001)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To compute the correlation of reading comprehension achievement with translation ability, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Formula is applied. The formula is presented below.

\[ R_{xy} = \frac{N \Sigma XY - (\Sigma X)(\Sigma Y)}{\sqrt{\left(N \Sigma X^2 - (\Sigma X)^2 \right) \left(N \Sigma Y^2 - (\Sigma Y)^2 \right)}} \]

**Legends:**
- \( R_{xy} \) = Correlation coefficient between variable X and Y
- \( \Sigma X \) = The sum of reading comprehension scores
- \( \Sigma Y \) = The sum of translation scores
- \( \Sigma X^2 \) = The sum of the square of reading comprehension test
- \( \Sigma Y^2 \) = The sum of the square of reading comprehension test
- \( N \) = The number of students in the sample
To calculate how significant the correlation of reading comprehension test with students’ translation ability, t-test formula (Sugiyono, 2008) is applied. The formula is presented below:

\[ t = r \sqrt{\frac{n - 2}{1 - (r)^2}} \]

**Legends:**
- \( t \) = The coefficient correlation
- \( r \) = Correlation between variable X and Y
- \( n \) = Number of students

The criteria used for the evaluation of the coefficient will be classified as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.00 to .20</td>
<td>Neglible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.21 to .40</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.41 to .60</td>
<td>Substantial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.80 to 1.00</td>
<td>High to Very High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To compute the achievement of reading comprehension test and the achievement of translation test this following formula is applied.

\[ M = \frac{X}{N} \]

**Legends:**
- \( M \) = The mean of the test scores
- \( X \) = The sum of students’ scores in reading comprehension test
- \( Y \) = The sum of students’ scores in translation test
- \( N \) = The number of the students who take the test

**RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

**Research Finding**

After the data has been collected and the score for both variables that is students’ reading comprehension as a variable x, and the achievement in translation as variable y have been calculated, the researcher calculated the data to find the correlation between these two sets of data through the formula of Pearson’s Product Moment.
In order to gather the mean score from students’ achievement in reading comprehension, the data were calculated by using Mean formula.

\[ M = \frac{2120}{30} \]
\[ M = 70.67 \]

Based on the students’ reading comprehension score, the researcher found that the mean score was 70.67. It indicated that students’ reading comprehension achievement is classified into Average to Good. The total of score used as X in correlation formula.

In collecting the data of translation, the researcher used all of the passages in reading comprehension section. It consisted of 3 items. After the students’ score in Translation ability were gathered, the researcher used the Mean formula in order to get the mean score of students’ performance in translation.

\[ M = \frac{1921}{30} \]
\[ M = 64.03 \]

The researcher found that the mean score for student’s translation ability was 64.03. It indicates that the students’ translation ability is classified into Average to Good. The total of score used as Y in correlation formula.

1. **Correlation Calculations between Students’ Reading Comprehension with Translation Ability**

   In order to determine the coefficient correlation between students’ translation ability and their reading comprehension, the researcher calculated the data by using Pearson Product Moment Formula. The computation as follows:

   \[ r = \frac{N (\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{N (\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2} \{N (\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2 \}} \]

   \[ r = \frac{162070}{180699.62} \]

   \[ r = 0.897 \]

   Based on the calculation above the correlation between students’ reading comprehension and translation ability is 0.897. This means that the result of this research is there is a high to very high positive correlation between these two variables.
2. **The Significance of Correlation between reading comprehension with students’ translation ability**

By obtaining the correlation score \( r \), the \( t \) test formula is applied to find whether the correlation is significant or not. The formula of \( t \)-test is as follow:

\[
t = r \sqrt{\frac{n - 2}{1 - (r)^2}}
\]

\[
t = 0.897 \ (11.83)
\]

\[
t = 10.61
\]

The degree of freedom (df) of this research is 28. According to the fixed value of \( t \)-table, the \( t \)-table of df= 28 with \( t \) (1%) is found that the \( t \) score (10.61) is higher than \( t \)-table (2.46), therefore the correlation is significant.

3. **Testing Hypothesis**

By seeing the \( r \)-table, the number of df is 28, the score of \( r \)-table with 1% level of significant, it is found that the \( r \)-obtained (0.897) is higher than \( r \)-table (0.462). It shows that the correlation coefficient is significant, therefore the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted.

**Discussion**

As a student of university, reading independently is very important to fulfill the demand of the study. It is a basic skill for college students including foreign language learners because reading activities generate learning power that helps students know themselves and everything around them which can help them in gathering knowledge. The aim of reading is to attain an optimal level of comprehension of meaning.

Translation is also important, because translation is ultimately a human activity which enables human beings to exchange ideas and thoughts regardless of the different language used. The students need to read the text first before they start translating the text. The concrete problem between reading and translating that often happens can be seen in the teaching and learning process. When the students do not read the text better, they will get difficulties in translating.

In both reading and translation, comprehension of the text is needed to reformulate the message to the target language. It is support by El Shafey (cited in Abdellah, 2002) who said that translators should be aware of the fact that incorrect comprehension of a text considerably decreases the quality of the translation, it means, comprehension of the text is important in order to make a good translation.

This research is set out to investigate the correlation between students’ reading comprehension with their translation ability. This research had two research variables; they are students’ reading comprehension and students’ translation ability. In taking the data of students’ reading comprehension the writer used three passages taken from Longman Introductory Course for the
TOEFL Test, it is consist of three passages with 30 multiple choice items. While in gathering the data about students’ translation ability, the writer used the same passages used in reading comprehension section test.

These two sets of data were collected to answer the research problem of this study, stated in the previous chapter; the result of the computation of the correlation coefficient of students’ reading comprehension and translation ability is also presented before. Based on the computation of the two variables, students’ reading comprehension and translation ability, it is found that the correlation is 0.897. In other words, there is significant correlation between students’ reading comprehension and their translation ability.

The result of this research shows that the students’ reading comprehension correlates positively with translation ability. It means that the high scores of students’ reading comprehension tend to be followed by the high scores of translation. On the other hand, the low scores of their translation tend to be followed by the low scores of their reading comprehension.

The finding of this research shows that there is a positive correlation between students’ reading comprehension and their translation ability in fifth semester of English Department Tanjungpura University Academic Year 2015/2016. It can be seen from these several examples: the high score of reading comprehension on the sample 30 (YJ), the score of its reading comprehension is 97 and translation ability is 80. Sample 20 (MP) is the second sample which has high score in reading comprehension score and translation.

Meanwhile, the lowest achievement score that appears on sample 17 (MF), where the score of reading comprehension is only 33 and followed by the score of translation that is 43.

The result implies that there is a tendency that the higher score of translation is, the higher score of reading comprehension score will be. The data indicates that the reading comprehension achievement contributes to the improvement of students’ translation ability.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the results of research findings, the writer found that reading comprehension correlates significantly with translation ability of the fifth semester students of English Language Education Study Program in Tanjungpura University Academic year 2015/2016. Furthermore, the writer would like to conclude several points of this research as follows: First, the total score of reading comprehension of 30 students from the fifth semester of English Language Education Study Program in Tanjungpura University Academic Year 2015/2016 is 2120, and the Mean score is 70.67. Based on student’s achievement criteria taken from David P. Harris, it is classified to “Average to Good”. The total score of the translation ability of 30 students from the fifth semester of English Language Education Study Program in Tanjungpura University Academic Year 2015/2016 is 1921, and the Mean score is 64.03. Based on student’s achievement criteria taken from David P. Harris, it is classified to “Average to Good”. Second, based on the computation using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Formula and
SPSS, the correlation between students’ reading comprehension with translation ability of the fifth semester students of English Language Education Study Program in Tanjungpura University Academic Year 2015/2016 is 0.897. This indicates that the correlation between these two variables is *High to Very High*. Third, The correlation shows that r obtained is 0.897 and r table is 0.462. It is found that the r-obtained is higher than r-table. It shows that the correlation coefficient is significant, therefore the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted.

**Suggestion**

Considering the conclusions stated above, some suggestions can be stated as follows: First, the students should be motivated to read more foreign language reading materials because the lecture would contribute to the translation ability. Second, reading comprehension as the first variable in this research is only one of several aspects in reading. Further research might use the other aspects such as reading frequency or reading speed, than correlate it with the translation ability. Third, this research involved in small number of population and sample, so it would be better for subsequent researcher to involve more population and samples with better instrument to optimize the objectivity of the research.

**REFERENCES**


