

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING AND THEIR READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan apakah ada hubungan yang *signifikan* antara berpikir kritis siswa dan kemampuan pemahaman membaca. Desain penelitian ini kuantitatif menggunakan *ex post facto design*. Populasi dari penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas tiga di SMPN 3 Natar Lampung Selatan tahun pelajaran 2014/2015. Peneliti menggunakan *sampel* penelitian sebanyak 35 siswa. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah tes berfikir kritis dan tes membaca. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis menggunakan *Pearson Product Moment Correlation*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai r dari siswa berpikir kritis dan tes kemampuan pemahaman membaca adalah 0.746. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa ada hubungan yang *signifikan* antara berpikir kritis siswa dan kemampuan pemahaman membaca.

The objective of this study was to find out whether there was significant correlation between students' critical thinking and their reading comprehension ability. This was quantitative research applying *ex-post facto design*. The population of this study was the third grade students of SMPN 3 Natar South Lampung in 2014/2015 academic year. The sample consisted of 35 students. The instrument of this research was critical thinking test and reading test. The data collected were analyzed by using *Pearson Product Moment Correlation*. The result showed that r of students' critical thinking and reading comprehension ability test was 0.746. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was significant correlation between students' critical thinking and their reading comprehension ability.

Keywords: correlation, critical thinking, reading comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication which is very important for us to adapt to the society. Language is used by human beings to interact with others and to express feeling and thought. It is their tool for carrying on their affairs, working, trading, and living together. So, we can say that language is very important to individually to live in a society in order that they can survive.

As it known, language is an important tool used by the people in the world to communicate each other. English is one of widely spoken languages in the whole world, that is the reason today English becomes an international language. As an international language, English is used in many fields all over the world. It is also a fact that English is widely needed by people, for example to transfer new modern science, technology, and information. Transferring new modern science, technology, and information can be done through reading process.

Meanwhile, reading is the process of looking at a series of written symbols and getting meaning from them. When people read, they use eyes to receive written symbols (letters, punctuation marks and spaces) and they use brain to convert them into word, sentences and paragraphs that communicate something to them. Reading plays an important role in developing knowledge, through reading students can absorb all the information, experience and ideas provided in books.

Reading text is also providing some benefits in improving students' skill and language teaching as well. It helps students find new vocabulary in real context,

grammar and punctuation. Moreover, good reading texts can introduce interesting topics, which can stimulate discussion.

According to Davenport (2007: 61) common types of question found in reading comprehension are included as follow:

1. Identifying main idea, main point, author purpose or an alternate title for the passage.
2. Recognizing the tone of the passage or identifying the style.
3. Comprehending information directly stated in the passage (finding supporting detail).
4. Answering relational questions about the researcher's opinion, even if not stated directly.
5. Recognizing the structural methodology employed to develop the passage, for example sequence, vocabulary, and represent pronoun (reference).
6. Extended limited information given by the researcher to a logical conclusion using inference (inference meaning).

From the types of question found in reading comprehension, the researcher is used reading test. This research is focused on critical thinking on the objective in this research by using critical thinking test.

Based on the pre-observation in SMPN 3 Natar South Lampung, the teacher found several problems in reading. The researcher found the students still got difficulties on students' critical thinking and their reading comprehension, such as understanding the content of the paragraph, difficulties understanding the idea, and the difficulties determining main idea. Realizing to the phenomenon, the

researchers' interested to conduct further research relating to the students' problems in using critical thinking. To find out the students' critical thinking and their reading comprehension, the researcher gave a critical thinking test to measure on their critical thinking is contained 40 questions and reading test to class IXC students is contained 40 questions.

Critical thinking is a skill that requires instruction and practice. Business education instructors at both the secondary and post-secondary levels can enhance students' critical thinking skills by using instructional strategies that actively engage students in the learning process rather than relying on lecture and rote memorization, focusing instruction on the process of learning rather than solely on the content, and using assessment techniques that provide students with an intellectual challenge rather than memory recall. In the same line, Watson and Glaser (2002), the authors of Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal, define critical thinking as a composite of attitudes, knowledge and skills. They point out that this composite includes: (1) attitudes of inquiry that involve an ability to recognize the existence of problems and an acceptance of the general need for evidence in support of what is asserted to be true; (2) knowledge of the nature of valid inferences, abstractions, and generalizations in which the weight or accuracy of different kinds of evidence are logically determined; and (3) skills in employing and applying the above attitudes and knowledge. Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and valuating information gathered or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication as a guide to belief and action. The purpose of critical thinking is to achieve

understanding, evaluate viewpoints, and solve problems. Therefore, since all three areas involve the asking of questions, we can say that critical thinking is the questioning or inquiry we engage in when we seek to understand, evaluate, or resolve.

METHOD

This research quantitative research because it was focused on the product (result of the test) not the process of teaching learning and the objectives was to find out the correlation between students' critical thinking and their reading comprehension ability. In this research, the researcher used co-relation study, which was one of the kinds of *ex-post facto design*. Correlation study here means the researcher used one group and took the data in one time without giving treatment. The data collected by seeing the correlation between cause and effect that might happen (after the fact). (Setiyadi, 2006: 133).

In this research there were two variables, i.e. dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable was students' critical thinking and independent variable was reading comprehension ability. The score showed a data about students' critical thinking and their reading comprehension ability which can be used to identify the correlation between students' critical thinking and their reading comprehension ability. The population of this research was all the students of the third grade of SMPN 3 Natar South Lampung. There were 3 classes of the third grade students that consist of 35 students for each class. The researcher determined the sample by using random sampling where every individual in population had probability to be chosen one class IX C as a sample

in order to find the validity, reliability, difficulty level, and discrimination power of the test item. After getting a good test items, by the random sampling technique, the researcher used IX C at the SMPN 3 Natar South Lampung as the subject to collect the data.

In this research, the researcher used some instruments for conducting the research. The instruments were test of critical thinking test and reading test. So, the researcher gave 40 items of critical thinking test and reading test. The test conducted 60 minutes for critical thinking test and 90 minutes for reading test.

The researcher analyzed the data by using Correlation in SPSS (Statistical Program for Social Science) 17.0. The researcher collected the data by looking at the result of test of critical thinking and reading comprehension ability to find out the result of students' critical thinking and reading comprehension ability. The result of the test was in form of score or interval data. After getting the result, the researcher analyzed data the correlation between students' critical thinking and their reading comprehension ability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Correlation between Students' Critical Thinking and Their Reading Comprehension Ability

In order to know the coefficient correlation between students' critical thinking and their reading comprehension ability, the researcher calculated the data by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation in SPSS 17. Based on the calculation, the researcher found the coefficient correlation students' critical thinking and their

reading comprehension ability (r) was 746. The coefficient correlation is higher than critical value of r_{table} ($746 > 33$). Meanwhile, the contribution simultaneously of students' critical and their reading comprehension ability (r^2) was 557 or 55.7% and 543 or 54.3% was affected by others variable.

DISCUSSION

The main finding of this research was whether there is significant correlation between students' critical thinking and their reading comprehension ability. Based on the result above, it is line with has been found by previous research. It was describe of each point bellow.

Critical Thinking and Reading Comprehension

As mentioned in the frame of theories done by Day and Park (2005), it was found that students had successfully in comprehending reading text. Grabe & Stoller (2002) define comprehension as processing words, forming a representation of general main ideas and integrating it into a new understanding. It suggests that comprehension is achieved when a reader successfully extracts the useful knowledge from a text and constructs it into a new understanding of their own. This statement is also supported by Day and Park (2005) also propose several types of comprehension, as follows; (1) Literal comprehension is to have a straight forward understanding meaning of a text, such as vocabularies and facts, which is not explicated in that text,. (2) Inferential comprehension is to conclude information from a text and build new information which is not explicitly stated on the text. (3). Reorganization is rearranging information from various parts of a

text in order to get new information. (4). Predictive comprehension is integrating reader's understanding of a text and their own knowledge about that text in order to determine what might happen next or after it is finished. (5). Evaluative comprehension is like inferential comprehension. The difference is that evaluative comprehension requires readers' comprehensive judgment about some aspects in a text and ability to redevelop an understanding by using related issues. (6). Appreciative or personal comprehension is reading in order to gain an emotional or other value response from a text, and it demands reader to respond a text also with their feelings. From the definitions above, reading comprehension refers to the understanding of what has been read. Comprehension is a thinking process that depends not only on the comprehension skills but also on the readers' experience and background knowledge.

Based on the statement above it is revealed critical thinking and reading comprehension which are the important skill to analyze the text easier than the students' used dictionary because critical thinking will check the students to think critically and logical based on their knowledge.

Besides, the students comprehend the text. Students must be mastered of their critical thinking. By using critical thinking, students had increased their schemata to analyze the text without students open dictionary when they found difficult words in text reading. So, critical thinking has relationship between reading comprehension ability to improve their skill in reading.

CONCLUSION

There is a significant positive correlation between students' critical thinking and their reading comprehension ability. It means that the higher students' critical thinking, the higher students' get reading comprehension ability.

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