

STUDENTS' MASTERY IN USING CONTEXT CLUE IN READING TECHNICAL MATERIAL AT FOURTH SEMESTER STUDENTS OF STIBA PERSADA BUNDA PEKANBARU

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ABSTRAK

Teknikal material adalah bacaan yang disusun khusus untuk bidang keahlian. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui penguasaan mahasiswa dalam menggunakan petunjuk teks dalam membaca teknikal material. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif. Subjek penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa semester empat tahun ajaran 2016/2017 sebanyak 20 orang dari STIBA Persada Bunda Pekanbaru. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data adalah test tertulis berbentuk test objektif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa : (1) Penguasaan mahasiswa dalam menggunakan petunjuk sinonim dalam teknikal material dikategorikan bagus. Dalam memahami petunjuk persamaan kata, mahasiswa kesulitan dalam mengambil petunjuk untuk menentukan arti kata sulit. (2) Penguasaan mahasiswa dalam menggunakan petunjuk lawan kata dalam teks teknikal material dikategorikan cukup. Kesulitan mereka disebabkan keterbatasan kosakata, sedangkan teknikal material memiliki tingkat kesulitan kosa kata yang tinggi karena disusun untuk penutur asli. (3)Penguasaan mahasiswa dalam menggunakan petunjuk teks definisi dalam teknikal material tergolong bagus . Mereka mengartikan kata sulit dengan akurat karena petunjuknya tercantum secara jelas dan mereka menggunakan pengalaman dan pengetahuan umum tentang isi teks dengan baik. Walaupun hasil yang diperoleh telah dikategorikan bagus, akan tetapi kemampuan mahasiswa masih terus perlu ditingkatkan karena kosa kata mereka masih rendah.

ABSTRACT

Technical materials refer to the material which is designed specifically to prepare a specialized career. This research is a descriptive research. The research conducted with an attempt to find out the students' mastery in using context clue in reading technical material. The subject of the research was twenty students of fourth semester STIBA Persada Bunda Pekanbaru in academic year 2016/2017. The instrument used to collect the data was in the form of objective test. It was found that: (1) the students' mastery in using synonym clue was in good category. They had problem in mastering synonym clue as they made mistake in taking the clue. (2) The students' mastery in using antonym clue was in fair category. The problem occurred due to their vocabulary whereas the vocabulary used in technical material is high as it designed for native speaker. (3) The students' mastery in using definition clue was in good category. The students were able to do the test because the clues were stated clearly. Besides, they also had sufficient experience and background knowledge to deduce meaning. Thus, it can be concluded that the students' mastery in using context clue in reading technical material is needed to be improved because they still had limited vocabulary.

Keywords : *Context Clue, Technical material*

INTRODUCTION

Technical materials refer to the material which is designed specifically to prepare a specialized career. It consists of scientific text which is communicated mostly through printed document. The characteristics of scientific text is also different from the other text. One of them is condensed information. Halliday (1985:124) says that scientific text is coded in writing mode in different linguistic aspects. Everyone who wants to study such skills is required to understand the material which is designed for native speakers.

Mastering technical material is very crucial today, especially for English majoring students. The students are demanded to achieve high score of many kinds of standardized English test, one of them is TOEFL. Technical material usually appears in both of reading and listening section. By understanding it, hopefully will help them to handle the test well.

Realizing the importance of mastering technical material, College Foreign language of Persada Bunda Pekanbaru includes it in their course

outline syllabus. It emphasizes on the technique to handle technical material easily. One of the technique that can be mentioned is the use of context clue. According to Brown (1987:31), context refers to the writing a word or group of words-surrounding a word. Further, Heilmann et al (1984:295) define context as the phrase, sentence, or paragraph in which a word is located and its part of speech in that location. Based on the previous definition, it can be inferred that context clues are hints found within a sentence, paragraph, passages that reader can use to understand the meaning of new or familiar words. Students are guided to be aware of the technical vocabulary which seems unfamiliar for them.

Context clues are commonly included into technical writing. There are several techniques in finding the clue surround the text. It can be definition or restatement, synonym, antonym, and example (Kimmelman et al, 1984:305). A definition clue is most frequently used when a word is introduced for the first time.

In order to make the students are able to understand context clue, a lecturer is intended to teach its types and usages in the text. It is hoped that they will recognize it and able to find the clue around the text. The lecturer is also expected to teach them the importance of technical vocabulary to understand the text due to the vocabulary would be very different from general English. In teaching context clue, lecturer should guide the students to recall their memory on the related field. So, they can sense the context easily.

Based on the preliminary study which had been conducted on March, 2017 by giving technical material test, it was found that most of fourth semester students in academic year 2016/2017 got the lowest score, their average score was 67. Based on the interview, it was found that they faced difficulties in understanding technical material due to some problems.

First, they had limited vocabulary to understand some words or phrases used in technical material. In technical material,

especially in scientific text, the vocabulary is different from general English. They are chosen for specific purposes which are also called technical vocabulary. For example the word “*saw*” will be translated as a hand tool for cutting wood or other material. It will be wrongly to be translated as the past verb of “*see*”.

Second, they were confuse with the fact density or condensed information. Since the technical materials consist of fact density, technical writing seems crowded with information and difficult to read. Students who were lack of background knowledge with the related field will have problem to sense the context. They cannot imagine the object because the writer mostly presents fewer description about it. For example, *Nutmeg is a spice derived by grating the kernel of the fruit produced by nutmeg tree. This tree belongs to the nutmag family. Mysris ti cacaе, genus Mysrisca, species M. Fragrance.*

Based on the previous reason, it is necessary to conduct a study to find out the students’ mastery in

using context clue in reading technical material. In reading technical material, a word or phrase can be a clue to unfamiliar technical vocabulary. Those words or phrases can be determined as a clue if the readers are able to recognize it. However, the fourth semester students of STIBA Persada Bunda Pekanbaru seemed not recognize the clue. Therefore, they faced big problem in understanding technical material. The fourth semester students were chosen because context clue stated in their reading course syllabus. While, technical material was chosen for this research due to its condensed information which words had been selected into specific purpose. So, the vocabulary used is different from general English form.

Based on the previous explanation, the purposes of the research were formulated: “how is the students’ mastery in using context clue in reading technical material?”

METHODOLOGY

This study was descriptive research. It was intended to find out the students’ mastery in using context clue in reading technical material. Best (2005: 25) says that descriptive research describes the situation or thing that exists at the same time of the study. It means that this research does not tend to find a new theory but only to verify and describe the existing one. By implementing quantitative approach, it attempts to find out the students’ mastery in using context clue in reading technical material.

This research was conducted at STIBA Persada Bunda Pekanbaru, Jalan Diponegoro number 42 Pekanbaru. The subject of the research was 20 students of fourth semester in academic year 2016/2017 STIBA Persada Bunda Pekanbaru.

The data were collected by using objective test. The data were analyzed by scoring the test, determining the standard of mastery based on their minimum achievement criteria that was 80, counting the

mean score, then compared with the standard of level mastery in order to determine the level of students' mastery in using context clue in reading technical material..

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Students' Mastery in Using Synonym Context Clue

The students' mastery in using synonym clue was good. The average score was 70. Thus, their score were insufficient with their minimum achievement that was 80. Their level of mastery can be seen in the following table.

Score	Number of students	Percentage	Category
80 – 100	6	30 %	Excellent
60 – 79	9	45%	Good
40 – 59	4	20%	Fair
0 - 39	1	5%	Poor

Even they have no idea about the meaning of some words, they were able to identify the certain word to be a noun, a verb, an adjective, and so on. By examining how the words are organized in a sentence pattern, they

can guess the class of word. By examining how the words are organized, they can guess the part of speech of certain word. Then, most of the students were easily recognize a word as a verb from the inflectional –ed that is attached in several words which should be guessed. The inflectional –ed attached in the root word do not change the part of speech. It is only the marker of time signal or passive sentence, as technical material were written in passive voice (Halliday, 1985:124). However, some students got difficulty to infer the exact meaning of the certain words as they confuse to find the clue. This condition leads them to deduce inaccurate meaning. For example:.

The detectives were deluded by all false evidence. They were completely deceived and they arrested the wrong person.

Deluded means _____

Type part of speech _____

Word or phrase which give you clue to the meaning of word _____

Most of the students had the correct guessing about the meaning of the word “deluded”. They recognized the word “deluded” as an adjective

by seeing the verb be in the past “were”. They pay attention to the phrase “arrested the wrong people” as the synonym clue for them to find out the meaning of the word “deluded” is mislead

2 The Students’ Mastery in Using Antonym Context clue

The students’ mastery in using synonym clue was low. Their average score was 63. In other word, their score were insufficient with their minimum achievement. Their level of mastery can be seen in the following table.

Score	Number of students	Percentage	Category
80 – 100	1	5 %	Excellent
60 – 79	9	45%	Good
40 – 59	10	50%	Fair
0 - 39	-	-	Poor

Antonym clues might be the most difficult. Most of them were able to identify the function words and sentence pattern, but they found difficulty to turn to semantic clue.

Even they had employed various types of syntactic clue, yet they were fail to infer the meaning. Some students were also fail to find out the clue, especially the clue stated implicitly. The students who were able to identify the meaning of the clue surround the text, sometimes did not guarantee they would have the correct answer. They had incorrect meaning because they were wrong to take the clues to infer the meaning. For example:

Rather than demolished the tenement building, the construction workers started to build a housing project using the tenement’s frame and wood supply.

Demolished
means _____

Type part of speech _____
Word or phrase which give you clue to the meaning of word

Students found difficulties to find the meaning of the word “demolished” even most of them were able to identify the word class of “demolished”. It can be easily recognized as a verb from the inflectional suffix “-ed” which is attached to the base *demolish*. But

they failed to infer which word or phrase to be the antonym clue.

3 The Students' Mastery in Using Defenition clue.

The students' mastery in using defenition clue was good. Their average score was 63, but their score were insufficient with the minimum achievement. Their level of mastery can be seen in the following table.

Score	Number of students	Percentage	Category
80 – 100	6	30 %	Excellent
60 – 79	13	65%	Good
40 – 59	1	5%	Fair
0 - 39	-	-	Poor

The defenition clue was the easiest one. Since the clue was stated clearly in the text, the students adopted this defenition as the clue and give the correct meaning. Some other students even skip the defenition and take other phrases. These students were also able to infer quite close to the meaning. Another students did not use the defenition, but they use experience or

background knowledge. For example:

Sometimes other kinds of setting are used in the theatre. The backdrop or drop, usually theatrical canvas that scretches across the stage, is wighted at the bottom and painted to represent either outdoor and indoor scenes. With drops, top curtains called teaser and side curtains called tormentors mask the backstages areas and fly space, the asrea behind the top of the arch above the floor of the stage

Backdrop

means _____

Type of part

speech _____

Word or phrase which give you clue to the meaning of word

Teaser means _____

Type of part

speech _____

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data presented in the previous chapter, some conclusions are as follows:

1. The students' mastery in using synonym context clue in reading technical material was good. Most of them achieved the minimum achievement criteria which had been determined, 75. They had problems in mastering synonym

clue as they made mistake in taking the clue.

2. The students' mastery in using antonym clue was in fair category. Most of them achieved the minimum achievement criteria which had been determined 75. The problems occurred due to their vocabulary whereas the vocabulary used in technical material is high as it designed for native speaker.
3. The students' mastery in using definition clue is good. The students were able to do the test because the clues were stated clearly, and they had sufficient experience and background knowledge to deduce meaning.

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