

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN READING COMPREHENSION AND TRANSLATION ABILITY: A Correlational Study on Fourth Year Students at English Department of UNP

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to reveal the correlation between reading comprehension and translation ability of fourth year students in English department of UNP. The population and samples of this research was the fourth year students who took translation subject in the seventh semester of academic year 2012 in English Department of UNP. The instrument of this research was a reading comprehension test and translation test. The result of this research showed that the r-calculated (0,677) > r-table (0,355). The hypothesis was tested by using t-test formula and found that t-observed (4,952) > t-table (1,699) with df= n-2 (29) in the level of significance 0,05. In short, the research hypothesis which stated that there was a significant correlation between students' Reading Comprehension and their Translation Ability was accepted.

Kata kunci : *Correlation, Translation, Translation ability, Reading Comprehension*

A. Introduction

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/SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (the target language/TL). According to Newmark (1988), translation from L1 to L2 and L2 to L1 in the advanced or final stage of foreign language teaching is recognized as the fifth skill since it has the special purpose of demonstrating the learner's knowledge of the foreign language, either as a form of control or to exercise their intelligence in order to develop their competence. Because of the importance of translation for foreign language learner, English Department of State University of Padang (UNP) puts translation as one of the subjects in the curriculum.

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Basically, translation is a process of rendering meaning from source language to the target language. According to Bell (1991), translation is the replacement of a representation of a text in one language (SL) by a representation of an equivalent text in a second language (TL). Likewise, Tawbi (1994) explains that translation is a process of conveying message from source language to the target language. Based on Larson (1998), translation consists of transferring the meaning of the source language into the receptor language. Furthermore, Nida and Taber (2003) defines translation as a process of reproducing the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message.

According to Newmark (1988), the work of translation is started by reading the original text in order to get understanding and ends with re-writing it in the target language. Moreover, he explained that translation involves four processes: comprehension of the vocabulary of the original source-language text; comprehension of the meaning of the original source-language message; reformulation of the message in the target-language; and judgment of the adequacy of the target-language text. It means that, after reading and comprehending the text, the translator then both reformulate the meaning into the target language equivalently and insert that meaning into an appropriate target-language sentence structure to convey the meaning.

Beside in translation, comprehension process also happens in reading because comprehension is the main goal of reading that refers to the process of understanding what is being read. According to Mc Whorter (1994), 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 written text.

Grabe (2009) explains that reading is a receptive skill where the reader is expected to decode the visual form of the text into comprehension messages in the brain. To get the comprehension, the reader needs to understand vocabulary and see the relationship among the word concept, organize ideas, recognize the writer's purpose, make judgment and evaluating.

It seems that the comprehension process happens in translation same as the comprehension process happens in reading. It is supported by Macizo and Bajo (2004), they say that language comprehension includes a set of processes going from speech processing (segmentation and classification of the incoming input), lexical access (recognition of isolated words and access to information associated with them), and sentential processing (extraction and combination of syntactic information to obtain a sentence interpretation), to discourse processing (integration and interpretation of successive sentences to arrive at a global mental representation) and all of these comprehension processes are involved during both reading and translation. So, in both translation and reading, comprehension of the text is needed to reformulate the message to the target language. Those similarity shows that there is a relationship between translation and reading.

In English department, the students' ability in translation is good enough. Among 173 students who took Translation subjects in their seventh semester (Juli-Desember 2011), 17% got mark A, 76% got mark B, 5% got mark C, 1% got

mark D, and 1% got mark E. Likewise, students' reading ability is as good as their translation ability. Among 126 students who took Reading 3 subjects in their fourth semester (January-June 2010), 11% got mark A, 72% got mark B, 9% got mark C, 6% got mark D, and 2% got mark E. Relating to the theory proposed by Macizo and Bajo (2004) that says that comprehension process occurs in translation is same as comprehension process occurs in reading, the students' score in both subjects should be equal. If student get good mark in translation, they will also get good mark in reading, and vice versa.

Dealing with the discussion above, it is assumed that there is a correlation between students' reading comprehension and their translation ability. It is predicted that, the students who are good in comprehending the texts will be able to translate well. With regard to the assumption above, the goal of this research is to investigate the correlation between students' reading comprehension and their translating ability.

B. Research Methodology

In relation to the aim of the study, this research used the correlational method. As stated by Gay (2009), a correlational research involves collecting data to determine whether, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more variables. Because the purpose of the study is to find out the correlation between students' reading comprehension and their translation ability, the variable in this research are the reading comprehension and translation ability. The result of correlation coefficient indicates the degree of the relationship between two variables.

The data were collected through reading comprehension and translation test. The allocated time of each test was 60 minutes. First, the students were given reading comprehension test in the form of multiple choices (a, b, c, and d) that consisted of six texts and 25 questions. Then, they were given translation ability test where they have to translate a text into Indonesian. The text for this test was taken from the first text in the reading comprehension test that has been conducted before. After the students finished doing the test, the paper was collected and analyzed to get the score of each test. Then, the scores were used as data.

In order to see whether there was correlation between students' reading comprehension and their translation abilities, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Formula was used. The formula is presented below:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{\sum XY - \frac{\sum X \sum Y}{N}}{\sqrt{\left\{ \sum X^2 - \frac{(\sum X)^2}{N} \right\} \left\{ \sum Y^2 - \frac{(\sum Y)^2}{N} \right\}}}$$

- r_{xy} : the correlation coefficient between X and Y
- X : score of reading comprehension
- Y : score of translation ability
- $\sum X$: sum of the reading comprehension score
- $\sum Y$: sum of the translation ability score
- $\sum XY$: sum of the reading comprehension score times the translation ability score

N : the number of the sample

If r_{xy} is higher than r-table at the level of significance (0,05), it indicates that there is a significance correlation between the students reading comprehension and their translation ability.

In order to draw conclusion whether the null hypothesis (H_0) or research hypothesis (H_1) was accepted, t-test formula presented by Sugiyono (2010) was used to examine statistical significance of coefficient correlation. The formula is presented below:

$$t = r \sqrt{\frac{n-2}{1-r^2}}$$

t = the significant of coefficient correlation

r = coefficient correlation

n = number of sample

The decision was determined at the level of significance of (0,05). The research hypothesis (H_1) was accepted if t-calculated is greater than t-table. Meanwhile the research hypothesis (H_1) will be rejected and the null hypothesis (H_0) will be accepted if the t-table is greater than t-calculated.

C. Discussion

There were two points discussed here; students' Reading Comprehension (X), and students' Translation Ability (Y).

1. Students' Reading Comprehension

Students' reading comprehension was measured through Reading Comprehension Test. The test was given in a form of multiple choices (a, b, c, and d) that consisted of six texts and 25 questions. It was tested to 31 fourth year students who took Translation subject in 2012. The results of the students' answer were transferred to quantitative data. The data description can be accumulated as follow:

Table 1. Data Description of Students' Reading Comprehension

The Lowest Score	60
The Highest Score	92
Mean	84,4
Median	76
Mode	76
Std Deviation	8,226

From the data above, the frequency distribution can be written in the following table:

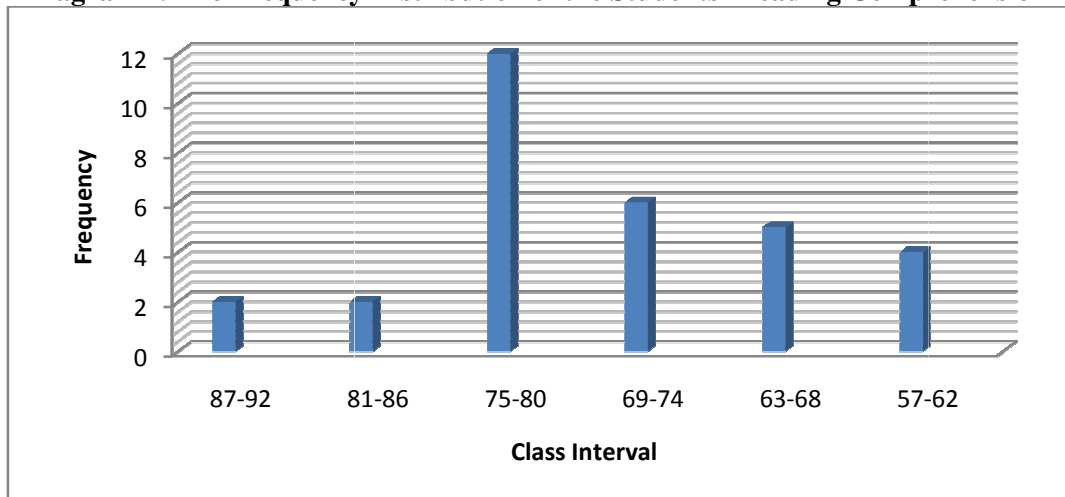
Table 2. The Frequency Distribution of Students' Reading Comprehension

No	Class Interval	F
1	87-92	2
2	81-86	2
3	75-80	12
4	69-74	6
5	63-68	5

6	57-62	4
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The description of the data can be seen on the diagram below:

Diagram 1. The Frequency Distribution of the Students' Reading Comprehension



The diagram above shows different scores of reading comprehension obtained by the students. There were four students who obtained the score within the range 57-62, five students who obtained the score within the range 63-68, and six students who obtained the score within the range 69-74. The most students, 12 students, obtained the score within the range 75-80. Finally, two students obtained the score within the range 81-86 and also within the range 87-92.

To test the normality of the data distribution, Liliefors formula was used. It compared $L_{observed}$ (L_o) in the research and L_{table} in Liliefors value in the level of significance 0,05. The distribution is considered to be normal if L_o is lower than L_{table} . The following table describes the result of the test of normality:

Table 3. Liliefors Data of Reading Comprehension

Variable	L_o	L_{table}	Explanation
X	-0,149	0,159	Normal

The table above shows that L_o is lower than L_{table} in the level of significance 0,05. It means that the data distribution was normal.

2. Students' Translation Ability

The students' translation ability was measured through English-Indonesia Translation Test. The text for this test was about false teeth taken from the first text in the reading comprehension test that has been conducted before. It was also tested to 31 students.

The students' scores were given by three raters. In order to make sure that each rater had the same criteria in giving scores, they were given a translation scoring rubric adopted from the criteria of good translation proposed by some experts, such as; Larson (1998), Mossoud (in Abdellah, 2002), and Machali (2000).

Firstly, each sample of the sentences was checked based on the criteria; a nearly perfect translation, a very good translation, a good translation, a fair translation, and a poor translation. The indicators of a nearly perfect translation are sounds like a native language, no grammatical error, no distortion of meaning or meaning ambiguity, no incorrect choice of terms. No grammatical error, no distortion of meaning, there is no rigid word for word translation but there is still a very few incorrect choice of terms are the indicators of a very good translation. For a good translation the indicators are no distortion of meaning, there is a few of incorrect choice of terms, there is also a rigid word for word translation but is not relatively more than 15% of the whole text so that does not sound a translation, grammatical errors are found but not more than 15% of the whole text.

Then, the indicators of a fair translation are sounds a translation, there are some rigid word for word translation but they are not more than 25% of the whole text, there are some grammatical errors but not more than 25% of the whole text, some incorrect choice of terms and unclear meaning are found. Finally, sounds a pure translation, there are many rigid word for word translation, distortions of meaning and incorrect choice of term are more than 25% of the whole text are the indicators for a poor translation.

The rater could score the sample in the range of scores which was started from 1 for the poor quality until 4 for the best one. After analyzing the students' translation product, the results of their score were transferred to quantitative data. The data description can be accumulated as follow:

Table 4. Data Description of Students' Translation Ability

The Lowest Score	56
The Highest Score	88
Mean	67,9
Median	65
Mode	65
Std Deviation	8,792

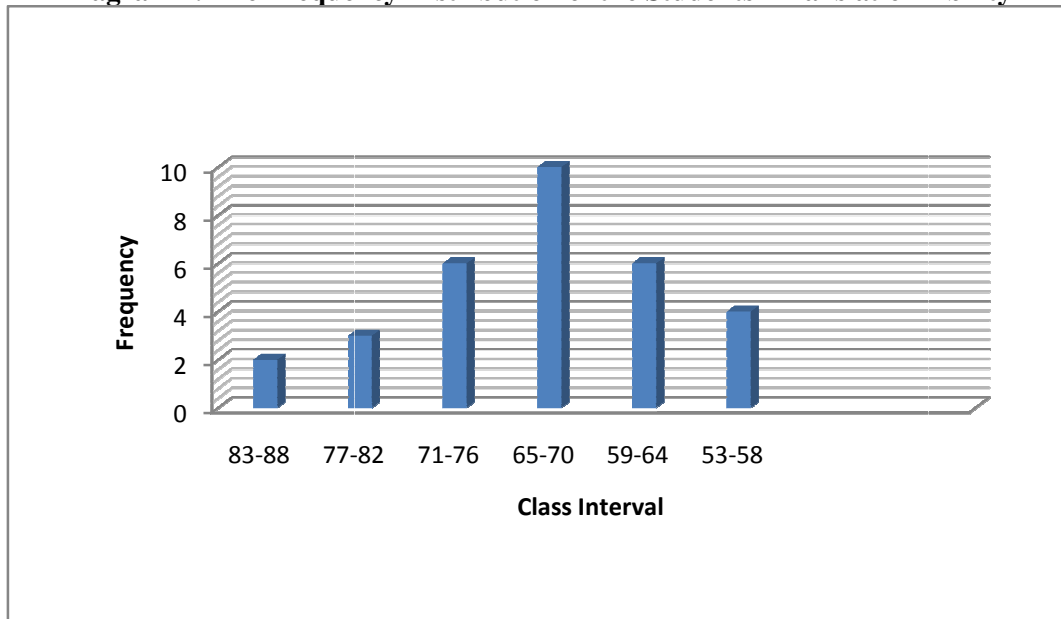
From the data above, the frequency distribution can be written in the following table:

Table 5. The Frequency Distribution of Students' Translation Ability

No	Class Interval	<i>f</i>
1	83-88	2
2	77-82	3
3	71-76	6
4	65-70	10
5	59-64	6
6	53-58	4

The description of the data can be seen on the diagram below:

Diagram 2. The Frequency Distribution of the Students' Translation Ability



The diagram above shows different scores of translation ability obtained by the students. There were four students who obtained the score within the range 53-58 and six students who obtained the score within the range 59-64. The most students, 10 students, obtained the score within the range 65-70. There were six students obtained the score within the range 71-76, three students obtained the score within the range 77-82 and finally there were two students obtained the score within the range 83-88.

To test the normality of the data distribution, Liliefors formula was used. It compared L observed (L_o) in the research and L table in Liliefors value in the level of significance 0,05. The distribution is considered to be normal if L_o is lower than L_{table} .

The following table describes the result of the test of normality:

Table 6. Liliefors Data of Reading Comprehension

Variable	L_o	L_{table}	Explanation
X	-0,340	0,159	Normal

The table above shows that L_o is lower than L_{table} in the level of significance 0,05. It means that the data distribution was normal.

To prove if there was correlation between students' reading comprehension and their translation ability method used was Pearson Product Moment formula. The result of the calculation showed that the value of coefficient correlation between students' reading comprehension and their translation ability was 0,677. Based on the research finding above, it can be concluded that the students' reading comprehension has positive correlation with their translation ability since the r -calculated (0,677) is higher than r -table (0,355).

The hypothesis was tested by using t-test formula. It was used for testing the statistical significance of the coefficient correlation obtained. The result of this

calculation shows that t-observed found was 4,952, it is higher than t-table 1,699 with $df = n - 2$ (29) in the level of significance 0.05. It means that the research hypothesis is accepted and H_0 is rejected.

From the result of the data analysis, it is found that there is a significant correlation between students' Reading Comprehension and their Translation Ability of the fourth year students in English Department of UNP. It means that the high scores of students' Reading Comprehension tend to be followed by the high scores of their Translation Ability. On the other hand, the low scores of their Reading Comprehension tend to be followed by the low scores of their Translation Ability.

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. Related to chapter II, Newmark (1988) states that, translation involves four processes: comprehension of the vocabulary of the original source-language text; comprehension of the meaning of the original source-language message; reformulation of the message in the target-language; and judgment of the adequacy of the target-language text. It means that, after reading and comprehending the text, the translator then both reformulate the meaning into the target language equivalently and insert that meaning into an appropriate target-language sentence structure to convey the meaning.

D. Conclusions and Suggestions

The finding shows that there is a positive correlation between students' Reading Comprehension and their Translation Ability. It is proven by the value of coefficient correlation between students' reading comprehension and their translation ability (0,677) is higher than r-table (0,355). Meanwhile, the result of hypothesis testing shows that t-observed found 4,952 is higher than t-table 1,699 with $df = n - 2$ (29) in the level of significance 0.05. Therefore, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted. The result then implies that there is a tendency that the higher the score of students' Reading Comprehension is, the higher their Translation Ability score will be.

Related to the result of this research, some suggestions are proposed; first, the students should be motivated to learn Reading because the lecture would contribute to the Translation ability of the students; second, the lecturers of both Reading and Translation should be cooperated in such a way especially in selecting learning materials, so that both subjects would support each other; finally, as the matter of fact, 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.

Catatan: This article is compiled based on the writer's thesis with her Advisor I Drs. Jufri, M.Pd. and Advisor II Havid Ardi, S.Pd., M.Hum.

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