

## **Analysis of EFL Students' Ability in Reading Vocabulary of Synonyms and Antonyms**

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### **Abstract**

Reading is an important thing for academic level. Every student must have many vocabularies to encourage her/his reading skill. The aim of this research is to analyze the students' understanding of reading vocabularies of synonyms and antonyms in the higher education level. Synonyms and antonyms are two important things should be mastered to get better reading comprehension. The method used in this research was quantitative with survey design. The population same as the sample of this research was from fifth semester students of STIBA Persada Bunda Pekanbaru. The procedures of the research were divided into 3 parts. First, students were asked to choose the best choice in the multiple choice for synonyms and anton, number and the wrong number, and grouped the wrong number into difficulties level. Last, the researcher analyzed the students' ability in reading vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms and concluded the result of students' ability in reading vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms in elementary, intermediate, and advanced level. The result of this research showed that the students' ability in reading vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms was categorized into "excellent" level with mean score 85. From the three difficulties level of question, the findings of this research were explained every level of question. In synonyms, the mean score of students' ability were 89, 85, and 84 for elementary, intermediate, and advanced level of question. Whereas, in antonyms, the mean score of students' ability were 97, 85, and 69 for elementary, intermediate, and advanced level of question.

**Keywords:** *students' ability, reading vocabulary, synonyms and antonyms*

## **Analisis Kemampuan Mahasiswa dalam Memahami Kosakata Sinonim dan Antonim**

### **Abstrak**

Membaca merupakan hal penting dalam dunia pendidikan. Hal ini disebabkan oleh pentingnya membaca yang dapat menambah kosakata yang dimiliki. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk melihat kemampuan memahami bacaan khususnya pada kosakata sinonim dan antonim pada level perguruan tinggi. Kedua hal sinonim dan antonim merupakan hal penting yang harus dikuasai untuk memperoleh pemahaman dalam membaca. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kuantitatif dengan desain survei. Populasi dari penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa semester lima pada Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Bahasa Asing (STIBA) Persada Bunda Pekanbaru sebanyak 15 orang yang juga sebagai sampel dalam penelitian ini. Prosedur penelitian mencakup

mahasiswa diminta untuk memilih pilihan jawaban berganda (*multiple choice*). Jumlah soal yang dipergunakan dalam penelitian ini berjumlah 30 soal. Kemudian, peneliti menghitung jumlah benar dan salah dan mengelompokkan jawaban soal yang salah pada setiap mahasiswa. Selanjutnya, peneliti menganalisis kemampuan siswa dalam memahami kosakata sinonim dan antonim, dan menyimpulkan hasil kemampuan mahasiswa dalam memahami kosakata sinonim dan antonim dengan tingkat kesulitan dasar, menengah, lanjutan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan mahasiswa dalam membaca kosakata sinonim dan antonim adalah pada kategori *excellent* dengan nilai 85. Dari ketiga tingkat kesulitan soal, mahasiswa memiliki kemampuan yang dikategorikan baik. Pada kosakata sinonim, kemampuan mahasiswa dalam memahami kosakata adalah 89, 85, dan 84 untuk tingkat kesulitan soal dasar (*elementary*), menengah (*intermediate*), dan lanjutan (*advanced*). Akan tetapi, pada kosakata antonim, kemampuan mahasiswa dalam memahami kosakata adalah 97, 85, dan 69 untuk tingkat kesulitan soal dasar (*elementary*), menengah (*intermediate*), dan lanjutan (*advanced*).

**Kata kunci:** Kemampuan mahasiswa, Memahami kosakata, Sinonim dan Antonim

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Research

Reading is the important thing, especially in higher education. Reading can take place for vocabulary demonstration rather than for comprehending text itself. By gaining the knowledge of the texts, the students comprehend the reading texts. In university level, the students are expected to gain a mount of information to explore their thinking, their creativity, and their vocabulary mastery in learning English. "Reading can take place for vocabulary demonstration rather than for comprehending text itself" (Al-Jamal, Al-Hawamleh and Al-Jamal, 2013:337). In short, it is to measure the students' competence in answering the vocabulary mastery in higher education or university level.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested to conduct a study entitled "Analysis of Students' Ability in Reading Vocabulary of Synonyms and Antonyms".

### 1.2 Review of Related Literature

#### 1.2.1 Related Findings

The researcher explained about several related findings about reading comprehension as can be seen in the following. Cao (2007) conducted a research entitled "The Effect of Learning Strategies on Reading Comprehension". The objective of the reserach was to know the relationship between learning strategies and reading comprehension. The instrument used in gathering the data for the research were reading comprehension test and one questionnaire in second year students of Xidian University, China. It was an experimental study. The students were asked to answer the question based on the passage and questionnaire given. The findings of this research showed that learning strategies have closely related to reading comprehension. However, the researcher conducted the topic about reading vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms, entitled "Analysis of Students' Ability in Reading Vocabulary of Synonyms and Antonyms".

Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) conducted a research entitled “The Relationship between L2 Reading Comprehension and Schema Theory: A Matter of Text Familiarity.” This study aimed about an important concept in EFL teaching and reading tasks are designed to activate the learners’ schemata.

Yildirim and Ateş (2012) conducted a research entitled “Silent and Oral Reading Fluency: Which One Is the Best Predictor of Reading Comprehension of Turkish Elementary Students?” The objective of this research was to learn whether silent reading fluency was the predictor of reading comprehension and which variable including silent or oral reading fluency was the best predictor of reading comprehension. The method of the study used correlational design, and the sample of the study consisted of total 100 fifth-grade Turkish elementary students studying in two elementary schools.

Al-Jamal, Al-Hawamleh, and Al-Jamal (2013) conducted a study entitled “An Assessment of Reading Comprehension Practice in Jordan”, This study aimed at assessing the level of reading comprehension proficiency of EFL Jordanian readers with regard to the relationship between identifying the main idea in a paragraph and language proficiency in expository texts. The focus of the current mixed-methods study was on the descriptive data from a reading comprehension test, as well as, the classroom observation data. The findings of this study recommends textbooks researchers to consider text structure when selecting reading comprehension texts, as well as, the study recommends EFL teachers to instruct comprehension strategies rather than assess and evaluate comprehension. However, the

researcher will also conduct in reading comprehension, but the researcher will not use expository text. The researcher will use the selected topics in sociolinguistics.

### 1.2.2 Reading Theories and Reading Comprehension Questions

Cao (2007:2) also stated the reading comprehension is the construction of meaning from printed and written message.

Philips (2000: 245-304) stated that the common types of reading comprehension questions are divided into 5 types, such as question about the ideas of the text, directly answered questions, indirectly answer questions, vocabulary questions, and overall review questions.

Furthermore, Philips (2000) also gives the explanation about each point of questions.

1. Questions about the ideas of the passage/text

The question of this type will be about overall ideas. The common questions are asking (1) about the main idea, topic, title, or subject and (2) about the organization of ideas in a passage/text.

2. Directly answered questions.

In this type, the questions require answer directly stated in the passage/text. The common questions of this type are (1) stated detail questions, (2) “unstated” detail questions, (3) pronoun referent questions.

3. Indirectly answer questions.

These indirectly answer questions are about (1) implied detail questions, and (2) transition questions.

4. Vocabulary questions.

In this type, the questions about (1) finding definition from structural clues, (2) determining

meanings from word parts, and (3) using context clues to determine meanings.

#### 5. Overall review questions.

This overall review questions are not same as ideas of the passage. The questions are about (1) determining where specific information is found, (2) (2) determining the tone, purpose or course.

In this research, the researcher chose the vocabulary as questions that consisted of synonyms and antonyms. The questions are from three difficulties level. They are elementary, intermediate, and advanced level.

### 1.3 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background of this study, the formulation of the study is formulated as: How is the students' ability in reading vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms in university level?

### 1.4 Limitation of the Study

This study is limited in the selection of vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms at elementary, intermediate and advanced level. The university students will be analyzed in understanding vocabulary and in three level of vocabulary difficulties.

### 1.5 The Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to analyze the students' ability in reading vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms in university level. It is also to analyze their understanding in vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms in three difficulties level.

### 1.6 The Needs of the Study

The needs to conduct the study in analyzing the students' ability in reading vocabulary mastery of

synonyms and antonyms in university level are:

1. as the information for the lecturer about the students' ability in reading vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms in university level.
2. as the information about the students the difficulties level in reading vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms.
3. as the information for the following researchers in conducting the research about solving the students problem in vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms.

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Research Design

The researcher employed descriptive qualitative research design in order to find the students ability in reading vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms in the university level. Gay (2011: 214) stated that the descriptive research involves collecting data to test or to answer question concerning the status of the subject. In this research, the researcher calculated data quantitative by using formula and described it descriptively.

### 2.2 Population and Sample

The population of this research was the fifth semester students of STIBA Persada Bunda Pekanbaru in academic year 2016/2017. The population of this research was the sample of this study since the number of the studetns below 100 persons. According to Arikunto (2010:112) stated, if the population less than 100 persons, the sample will be all population number.

### 2.3. Data Collection Technique

In this research, the researcher will collect data by using test of synonyms and antonyms. The test is

multiple choices test consisting of 30 questions from three difficulties level. The questions were taken from offline smart phone application from playstore, named Vocabulary Practice.

#### 2.4 Data Analysis Technique

The data collected by using test was analyzed by using these procedures. First, the researcher counted the number of error made by students individually. Second, the researcher classified the questions in the same difficulties level. Then, the result could be seen clearly by each component in reading vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms. Formula below was used to analyze the students' ability in reading vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms

$$M = \frac{X}{N}$$

M = mean score

X = correct answer

N = Number of all items

Supranto (2000: 85)

After calculating the students score, the researcher categorized the students ability in vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms by using the classification below.

**Table 2.1 Classification of the Students Score**

Test Score	Level of Ability
81-100	Excellent
61-80	Good
41-60	Average
21-40	Below Average
0-20	Poor

(Harris in Dewi, 2009: 33)

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Findings

After collecting the data, it is found that the ability of fifth semester

students of STIBA Persada Bunda Pekanbaru in reading vocabulary of synonyms were "excellent" level. It can be shown in the following Table.

**Table 3.1 The Calculation of Mean Score and Level of Ability**

	Total Correct All Items	Total Correct Got by the Students	Mean Score for All Items	Level of Ability
Total	383	450	85	Excellent

Since sum of total correct all items divided into total correct got by students was 85, so, it can be categorized into "excellent" level.

#### 3.2. Discussion

In analyzing the data, the researcher computed the number of error made by students individually, after that, grouped the questions divided into 3 difficulties level, elementary, intermediate, and advanced. Then the result could be seen clearly by each level of question.

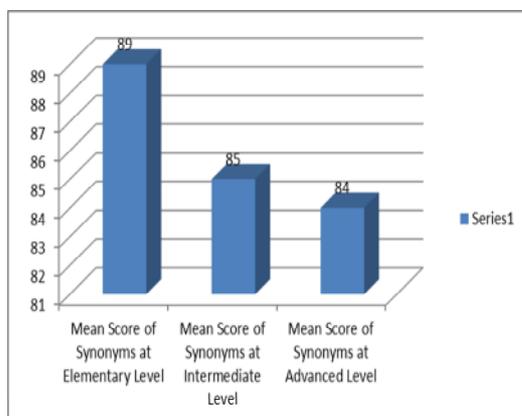
The number of all questions was 30 questions. The questions consisted synonyms and antonyms, consisted of 15 of each. The questions from number 1 to 5 were synonyms with elementary difficulties level. The questions from number 6 to 10 were synonyms with intermediate difficulties level. The questions from number 11 to 15 were synonyms with advanced difficulties level. The questions from number 16 to 20 were antonyms with elementary difficulties level. The questions from number 21 to 25 were antonyms with intermediate difficulties level. The questions from number 26 to 30 were antonyms with advanced difficulties level. The distribution of the questions and the level of question could be seen in the following Table.

**Table 3.2 The Distribution and The Level of Question**

Questions	Level of Difficulties	Kinds of Question
1 to 5	Elementary	Synonyms
6 to 10	Intermediate	
11 to 15	Advanced	
16 to 20	Elementary	Antonyms
21 to 25	Intermediate	
26 to 30	Advanced	

### 3.2.1 Vocabulary Synonyms

In this discussion, the researcher explained about students' ability of reading vocabulary of synonyms was categorized into "excellent" level of all difficulties level. The mean score of synonyms at elementary level was 89. The mean score of synonyms at intermediate level was 85. The mean score of synonyms at advanced level was 84. It can be seen clearly in the following Diagram.

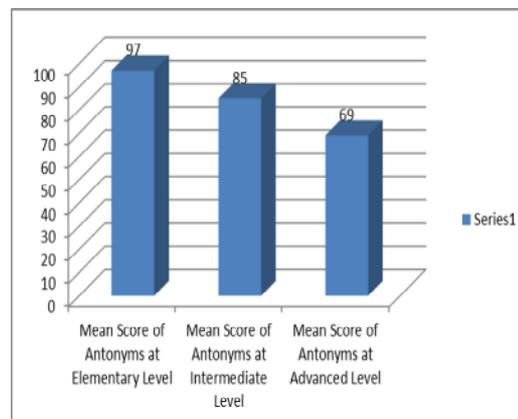


**Diagram 3.1 Mean Score at Three Difficulties Level of Synonyms**

### 3.2.2 Vocabulary Antonyms

In this discussion, the researcher explained about students' ability of reading vocabulary of antonyms were categorized into "excellent" and "good" level. The mean score of synonyms at elementary level was 97. The mean score of synonyms at intermediate level was 85. The mean score of synonyms at

advanced level was 69. It can be seen clearly in the following Diagram.



**Diagram 3.2 Mean Score at Three Difficulties Level of Antonyms**

## 4. CONCLUSION

In accordance with the objective of the research question is to answer the question "How good is the students' understanding of vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms?". It can be concluded that 15 fifth semester students of STIBA Pekanbaru could comprehend the vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms. It is categorized into "excellent" level. The students' ability in answering synonym questions is "excellent" for three difficulties level. Then, the students' ability in answering antonym questions is categorized into "excellent" for elementary and intermediate difficulties level and categorized into "good" level for advanced level.

After knowing the students' ability in reading vocabulary of synonyms and antonyms, it is important to suggest that the students should practice more in antonym vocabularies to get the highest ability in advanced difficulties level. The students need to be familiar with vocabularies of higher or advanced level. In this case, the students need to have some extensive reading such as article, journal, and

research jurnal to explore advanced vocabularies.

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