Students' Ability in Identifying Referential Relation in Reading Text

Tini Mogea
Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Negeri Manado
Korespondensi penulis: tinimogea@unima.ac.id

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe students' ability to identify referential relationships in reading text.This research is quantitative research in percentage form. This research is conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Ratahan. The sample for this research is the third grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Ratahan, which consists of 32 students. The information is gathered using a multiple-choice objective-type test. The findings of this study indicate that the students involved in this study are very good at identifying referential relationships of personal type. This is very good in terms of the students' ability to identify referential relations of the personal pronoun type. Students perform poorly when it comes to identifying referential relations of the substitutional type. Students perform poorly when it comes to identifying elliptic type relations.

Keywords: Referential relation, personal type, substitute type, elliptic type

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan kemampuan siswa dalam mengidentifikasi hubungan referensial dalam teks bacaan. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kuantitatif dalam bentuk persentase. Penelitian ini dilakukan di SMP Negeri 1 Ratahan. Sampel dalam penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas III SMP Negeri 1 Ratahan yang berjumlah 32 siswa. Informasi dikumpulkan menggunakan tes tipe objektif pilihan ganda. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa yang terlibat dalam penelitian ini sangat baik dalam mengidentifikasi hubungan referensial tipe personal. Hal ini sangat baik dalam hal kemampuan siswa untuk mengidentifikasi hubungan referensial dari jenis kata ganti orang. Siswa berkinerja buruk ketika mengidentifikasi hubungan referensial dari tipe substitusi. Siswa tampil buruk ketika datang untuk mengidentifikasi hubungan tipe eliptik.

Kata kunci: Relasi referensial, tipe pribadi, tipe pengganti, tipe eliptik

I.   INTRODUCTION

There are various types of reading problems, one of which is the identification of "referential relations" in reading texts.There are three kinds of referential relationships.They are personal, substitutional, and elliptic.

The referential relation of personal type refers to the relationship between a referent and a personal pronoun. A referential relation of substitution type refers to the relationship between a referent and a substitution word, as in: "The dealer has to pay insurance and finance charges for every car in the inventory." It is usually willing to sell one for less money to reduce the overhead expenses (Barrons, 1997:117).

Ideas in written texts are typically organized logically and coherently. Logical and coherent organization of ideas in written texts is usually realized through the use of personal pronouns, substitution words, and elliptic words. However, the referential relations of personal pronouns, substitution, and elliptic types are often difficult to identify.

II.   REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nature of written text

The definition of "text" is "a unit of meaning" (Haliday & Hasan, 1976:330). It is usually made up of at least two sentences. It can also be a passage consisting of only one paragraph or more than one paragraph. It can also be a chapter or even a textbook as a whole.

To make clear what a unit of meaning actually refers to, let us consider this text'

(A) Dictionary skills cannot be left entirely to chance (1). They are too numerous and complex (2). Their development needs to be carefully planned in terms of specific clusters of skills (3). One cluster consists of those skills necessary for locating a word in the dictionary (4). Another is concerned with working out the pronunciation of words (5). The third is concerned with getting meanings from words (6). (Smith & Robinson, 1980:174).

The above text is one paragraph. The text is considered to be six sentences. And if we pay careful attention to the arrows, we can directly say that the sentences are interrelated. "Dictionary skills cannot be left entirely to chance," says the ext.The rest are

the supporting sentences. All the sentences, together with the main idea sentence, are units of meaning.

A good text has these characteristics: coherence and unity. Coherence refers to meaning relationships (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:332). Meaningful relationships are usually realized through the use of cohesive devices. Cohesive devices are divided into two main groups: grammatical and lexical cohesive devices. Grammatical cohesion consists of reference, substitution, and ellipsis. Conjunctions are used to achieve lexical cohesion. The classification of cohesion in brief is depicted:
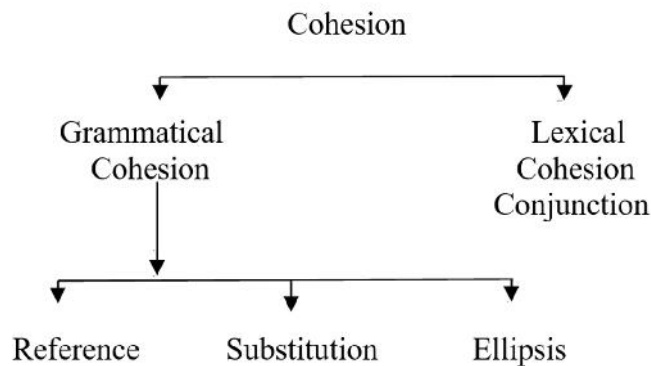

Figure 1. Classification of cohesion in brief is depicted

Referential Relation

Relations between units of meaning in a text can be classified into intra-sentential and inter-sentential relations. Intrasentential relation refers to the relationship between two units—usually words—within a sentence. Consider this example:

1. (B) Mary locked the door before she went out.

In (B), she is used to replace Mary.It refers back to Mary. Mary is the referent, and she is the reference item. The relation between the two is a referential relation of the intra-sentential type.

The relationship between two units that spans the sentence boundary is referred to as an inter-sentential relationship.Let's see this example:

(C) Mary locked the door (1). She then went out (2).As in (B), "she" in the second sentence is used to replace "Mary in the first sentence. It refers back to Mary. The relation between the two is a referential relation of the inter-sentential type.

Reference, substitution, and ellipsis are all used to represent referential relationships. The use of pronouns connects referential relations of the reference type.

Pronouns are of two types: personal and demonstrative pronouns. The detail concerning the personal pronouns is in this tabular form.

Table 1. Pronominal

Peonominal	Non-possessive Head	Possessive as head	Possessive as deictic
Singular masculine	He, him	His	His
Singular, feminine	She,her	Hers	Her
Singular, neutral	It	Its	Its
Plural	They,them	Theirs	Their

Detail concerning pronouns of demonstrative type is depicted in the following tabular form.

Table 2. Demonstrative Pronouns

Deminstratives	Functioning as	
	Head	Place adverbial
Demonstrative Near	This, there	here
Demonstrative, far	That, those	there

Substitution, like reference, can be used to connect relationships between units of meaning in a text. Substitution can be intra- and inter-sentential in nature. For example:

(D) I have heard some strange stories in my time, but this one was perhaps the strangest of all. The substitute word "one" is used in (D) to replace stories mentioned in the preceding part of the sentence. The relationship between the two is intra-sentential in nature.

Referential relations of the substitution type can also be inter-sentential in nature. For example:

(E) I want to read this document (1). You can sign it after I've done so. Reading this document in (1) is replaced or substituted by doing so in (2). The relationship between the two is inter-sentential in nature. The use of substitute words is associated with substitutional referential relations. The substitute words they refer to are depicted in Table 3.

Table 3. Types of Substitution and Substitutes

Types of Substitution	Substitute Words
Normal Substitution	One/ones, the same/so
Verbal Substitution	Do, be, have, do the same, do so, be so, do it/that, be it/that
Clausal Substitution	Social

As with reference, relationships between units of meaning in a text can also be realized by ellipsis. Elliptic curves can be intra- and inter-sentential in nature. An ellipsis of intra-sentential type can be seen in this example:

(F) John has a birthday next month, and Elizabeth has too. Ellipsis refers to "whatever is left unsaid" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976: 142) and "whatever is left unwritten" (Brown, 1983: 983).In (F), the sentence in full form should be "John has a birthday next month, and Elizabeth has a holiday next month." "A birthday next month" in the second part of the sentence is left unsaid. The elliptic in (F) is an intra-sentential ellipsis.

Elliptic can also be inter-sentential in nature. For example:

(F) Who was going to plant a row of poplars in the park? The duke's number was (2).Part of the sentence that is left is "going to plant a row of poplars in the park." The sentence in its full form should be "The Duke was going to plant a row of poplars in the park."

Function of Reference, Substitution, and Ellipsis in Written Texts

It has been stated before that a text is a unit of meaning. Written texts are often composed of more than one sentence. The sentences in the texts are usually interrelated. The subsequent sentence in the text usually intertwines with or takes on the meaning of the preceding sentence(s). Consider the example:

(G) I took off my jacket (1). There was a tear in *it* (2, 3). *It* occurred when I was walking past a fence (3). It had a nail in it (4).*It* was left there by workers when they were painting the fence (5).

Sentences in written emails are interrelated. The inter-relationships are usually realized by the use of, among other things, personal pronouns, substitutions, and ellipses.

Personal pronouns, substitutions, and elliptic words all serve different purposes. First, they create links across sentence boundaries and chain together items that are related (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981:75). Second, they are used to avoid using the same words again and again so that the texts do not sound monotonous. Third, they help make

written text shorter than the expressions they replace and thus save the processing effort (Weber, 1980:125).

Reference items also help avoid repeating the same words again and again, thus avoiding monotony.

As with reference items, substitution words also have the same functions. They help relate one sentence with another, avoid monotony, and make texts shorter. The substitution word "one" in the second sentence is used to replace or substitute "the toughest assignments."

Elliptical words also serve the same functions as reference items and substitution words; they create links (relations) across sentence boundaries to avoid repeating the same words again and again and help make written texts shorter.

Elliptical words, as previously stated, also help make a text shorter and avoid monotony.

Referential relationship and comprehension

Carrel et al. (1988:87) state that comprehension of a text is largely determined by background knowledge. Background knowledge consists of general background knowledge and knowledge of the language, including knowledge of textual features. General background knowledge refers to what one already knows about the content of a given text; linguistic knowledge refers to knowledge of the language used in the text. Knowledge of textual features includes knowledge of text structure (narrative, descriptive, and expository) and of text characteristics (coherence, cohesion, and unity).

It has just been pointed out that comprehension is determined, among other things, by linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of textual features.

The same thing is used in the above text to substitute "losing my way in the galleries." If one cannot identify the referent to which the same thing refers, he or she cannot fully comprehend that same text.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study is descriptive in nature.It is descriptive in nature because it is particularly intended to answer the research questions: (1) To what extent are the students of SMP Negeri 1 Ratahan able to identify referential relations of the personal type? (2) To what

extent are the students able to identify referential relations of the substitution type? and (3) To what extent are the students able to identify referential relations of the elliptic type?

Population and sample

This study's population consisted of students from SMP Negeri 1 Ratahan.The third-year students were taken as a sample, which consisted of 32 students.

Data Collection

The data were collected using an identification test known as the "short context technique" (Jaffarpur, 1980:95). Each item in the test consisted of two sentences. The pronouns, substitute words, and elliptic words in the second sentence were underlined, and the students were to identify their referents in the first.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected were quantitatively analyzed in percentage form. To determine the aptitude of each of the sampling students, this formula is used:

Ability = Correct Answer x 100%

Total no, test Items

Table 4. The Students' Ability Criteria

Range of Score	Ability Level
90%-100%	Very Good
80%-89%	Good
70%-79%	Fair
70%	Poor

Table 5. Data on Referential Relations of Personal, Substitution & Elliptic

No	Ideal Scores	Personal Score Obtained	Substitution Sores Obtained	Ellipsis Scores Obtained
1	10	9	5	6
2	10	9	4	7
3	10	7	3	6
4	10	8	4	8
5	10	8	4	8
6	10	9	2	7
7	10	3	4	2
8	10	8	2	5
9	10	7	5	7
10	10	9	2	8
11	10	9	1	7
12	10	9	2	7
13	10	8	5	5
14	10	8	2	6
15	10	6	7	4
16	10	8	3	3
17	10	9	3	4
18	10	8	5	5
19	10	4	1	3
20	10	9	3	9
21	10	8	4	6
22	10	9	2	7
23	10	9	2	7
24	10	9	3	5
25	10	8	3	4
26	10	9	3	4
27	10	9	4	9
28	10	9	4	4
29	10	8	1	6
30	10	7	3	4
31	10	5	3	3
32	10	8	1	6
Total	320	253	100	182

The extent to which the students are able to identify referential relations is determined on the basis of the criteria pointed out in Table 4. The data are analyzed using the formula pointed out in 3.4.

Table 6. Students' Ability in Identifying Referential Relations

No	Ideal Scores	Scores Obtained	Scores Obtained In%
1	30	20	66.7
2	30	20	66.7
3	30	16	53.3
4	30	20	66.7
5	30	20	66.7
6	30	18	60
7	30	9	30
8	30	15	50
9	30	19	63.3
10	30	19	63.3
11	30	17	65.7
12	30	18	60
13	30	18	60
14	30	16	53.3
15	30	17	56.7
16	30	14	46.7
17	30	16	53.3
18	30	18	60
19	30	8	46.7
20	30	21	70
21	30	19	63.3
22	30	18	60
23	30	18	60
24	30	17	56.7
25	30	15	50
26	30	16	53.3
27	30	22	73.3
28	30	17	56.7
29	30	15	50
30	30	14	46.7
31	30	11	36.7
32	30	15	50

When the above results are compared to the criteria in Table 4, it can be concluded that students in general have a poor ability to identify referential relations.

Table 7. Students' Ability in Identifying Referential Relations

Range of Score	Ability Level	No of Students	%
90 %-100%	Very good	-	0%
80%- 89 %	Good	-	0%
70%-79%	Fair	2	6.25%
70%	Poor	30	93.75%
Total		32	100%

The students' ability in identifying referential relations of personal type is presented below.

Table 8. Data on referential Relation of Personal Type

No	Ideal Score	Scores Obtained	Scores Obtained In %
1	10	9	90
2	10	9	90
3	10	7	70
4	10	8	80
5	10	8	80
6	10	9	90
7	10	3	30
8	10	8	80
9	10	7	70
10	10	9	90
11	10	9	90
12	10	9	90
13	10	8	80
14	10	8	80
15	10	6	60
16	10	8	80
17	10	9	90
18	10	8	80
19	10	4	40
20	10	9	90
21	10	8	80
22	10	9	90
23	10	9	90
24	10	9	90
25	10	8	80
26	10	9	90
27	10	9	90
28	10	9	90
29	10	8	80
30	10	7	70
31	10	5	50
32	10	8	80

If the result presented in Table 8 is matched with the criteria in Table 4, we can get the information as depicted in Table 9.

Table 9. Students' Ability in Referential Relationa Personal Type

Range of Score	Ability Level	No. of Students	%
90 %-100 %	Very good	14	44 %
80 %-89 %	Good	11	34 %
70 %-79 %	Fair	3	9 %
70 %	Poor	4	13 %
Total		32	100 %

It can be briefly said that the students have the ability to identify referential relations of personal type. It can be seen in Table 11, 44 %, 34%, and 9% of the sample respectively are considered to have very good, good and fair abilities in indentifying referential relations of that type. Only 13% are poor in that ability.

Table 10. Ability in Referential Relation of Substitution Type

No	Ideal Score	Scores Obtained	Scores Obtained in %
1	10	5	50
2	10	4	40
3	10	3	30
4	10	4	40
5	10	4	40
6	10	2	20
7	10	4	40
8	10	2	20
9	10	5	50
10	10	2	20
11	10	1	10
12	10	2	20
13	10	5	50
14	10	3	30
15	10	7	70
16	10	3	30
17	10	3	30
18	10	5	50
19	10	1	10
20	10	3	30
21	10	4	40
22	10	2	20
23	10	2	20
24	10	3	30
25	10	3	30
26	10	3	30
27	10	4	40
28	10	4	40
29	10	1	10
30	10	3	30
31	10	3	30
32	10	1	10

The result of the matching is depicted in the following table.

Table 11.The Students' Ability in Referential Relationof Substitution Type

Range of Score	Ability Level	No. of Students	%
90%-100%	Very good	-	-
80%-89%	Good	-	-
70%-79%	Fair	1	3%
70%	Poor	31	97%
Total		32	100%

Table 11 indicates that only one student or 3% reaches 'fair level'. The rest-97% are in poor level. In other words, the students are all weak in their ability to identify referential relations of substitution type.

Table 12. Data on Referential Relation of Elliptic Type

No	Ideal Score	Score Obtained	Score Obtained in %
1	10	6	60
2	10	7	70
3	10	6	60
4	10	8	80
5	10	8	80
6	10	7	70
7	10	2	20
8	10	5	50
9	10	7	70
10	10	8	80
11	10	7	70
12	10	7	70
13	10	5	50
14	10	6	60
15	10	4	40
16	10	3	30
17	10	4	40
18	10	5	50
19	10	3	30
20	10	9	90
21	10	6	60
22	10	7	70
23	10	7	70
24	10	5	50
25	10	4	40
26	10	4	40
27	10	9	90
28	10	4	40
29	10	6	60
30	10	4	40
31	10	3	30
32	10	6	60

Let us now match the result depicted in table 12 with the criteria in table 4.

Table 13. The Students' Ability in Identifying referential Relations of Ellipsis Type

Range of Score	Ability Level	No. of Students	%
90%-100%	Very good	2	6
80%-89%	Good	3	9
70%-79%	Fair	7	22
70%	Poor	20	63
Total		32	100

Table 13 indicates that only two or 2% and three reaches 'very good' level; three or 9% good level; and seven or 22% fair level. The rest -63% are poor level. It can be said that majority of the students are weak in their ability in referential relations of elliptic type.

Table 14. Summary of the Data Analysis

Ability Level	Personal		Substitution		Elliptic	
	No.Std	%	No. Std	%	No. Std	%
Very good	14	44	-	-	2	6
Good	11	34	-	-	3	9
Fair	3	9	1	3	7	22
Poor	4	13	31	97	20	63

V. CONCLUSION

The students are very good at identifying personal type referential relations.The students' ability to identify referential relations of substitution type is poor.The majority of the sampling students are also inept at identifying elliptic referential relations.

VI. SUGGESTION

It is important that English teachers give their students opportunities to identify referential relations of substitution and elliptic types.

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