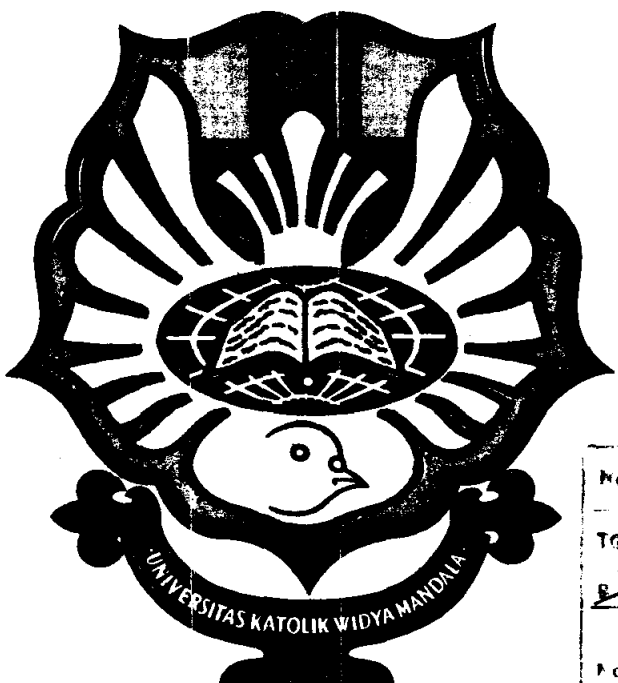
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ABILITY TO GUESS THE MEANING OF UNKNOWN WORD FROM CONTEXT AND THE ABILITY TO COMPREHEND A TEXT

A THESIS

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Sarjana Pendidikan Degree in
English Language Teaching



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Ratih Hutami Sanjaya, Chatarina: "The Relationship between the Ability to Guess the Meaning of Unknown Word from Context and the Ability to Comprehend a Text"

Reading as the most important language skill in the teaching of English as a foreign language is a complex process. It requires many skills and abilities to understand a reading text. Of the most crucial skill is the ability to guess the meaning of unknown word from context. This guessing ability, in fact, determines the reading comprehension by a reader.

Attempting to have a better understanding of this matter, the writer conducts a correlational research to investigate the relationship between the ability to guess the meaning of unknown word from context and the ability to comprehend a text. The population of this research is the third year students of St. Maria senior high school, Surabaya. There are altogether 28 participants in class B as the research sample. With the guessing ability test and the reading comprehension test as the instruments, the data here is the students' guessing ability test scores and the reading comprehension test scores. This data is then analyzed using statistical tool, including T-test for paired samples, correlation analysis and regression analysis. Since the writer wants to get a clear perspective of the relationship, the calculation is made for the result in overall and in pairs of test items. However, the overall calculation results in the correlation coefficient of 0.97880 and the prediction equations of RC = 0.14459 + 0.96109 GA and GA = 0.11956 + 0.99705 RC.

Based on the results of her research, the writer finds that the ability to guess the meaning of unknown word from context is closely related to the ability to comprehend a text. There are no significant differences between the students' performances in the guessing ability and the reading comprehension skill. The students' with good guessing abilities comprehend the text better than those whose abilities are lower. Whereas, the students who can comprehend a reading text well are also able to make more accurate guesses on the unknown word meaning than those who cannot.

The students' guessing ability is proven to determine their reading comprehension skills as well. This is due to the vital role of guessing ability in reading comprehension process as it involves generalizable skill of interpreting surrounding text, predicting and testing prediction while reading. Here, predicting or inference is needed to understand the implicit meaning of a text and to allow further thought and meaning reconstruction by its reader using the information provided in the text.

In addition, the students' reading comprehension overall skill is also proven to influence their guessing ability. This is because the reading comprehension skill including the excellence in problem solving strategy determines the attitudes and reaction brought by a reader toward his effort to understand a text. A good reader is active in selecting the cues that are important for a comprehension and is critical in understanding the passage. He also encourages himself to practice predicting while reading which leads to the improvement in the quality of his guessing ability.