

ABSTRACT

Tutyandari, Caecilia. 2003. *An Analysis on the Subskills of Reading Tests: a Content Analysis*. Thesis, the English Language Education, Graduate Program of Malang State University. Supervisors: (I) Prof. Dr. M. Soenardi Djiwandono, and (II) Dr. M.D.D. Oka, M.A.

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This research concerns with investigating one phenomenon in the world of reading. There have been several studies conducted in this particular skill of language. However, it is still worth-doing as the contribution for academic purposes. Basically, this study is interested in exploring any ability required in dealing with international standardized reading tests. The general problem of this study refers to what actually reading tests test. In order to have more detailed answers, that general problem is divided into three specific questions asking: (1) what reading subskills are tested in the preparation books of international standardized English language tests, and (2) to what extent, those reading tests measure the cognitive dimension based on Barrett Taxonomy.

The formulated research problems, then, become the basis for this study to determine the objectives of the study. In relation to the general question, the main objective of this study is to examine the existence of reading subskills in actual reading tests. Precisely, this study aims at (1) identifying the reading subskills in the reading tests, and (2) identifying to what extent those reading tests measure the cognitive dimension in terms of Barrett's Taxonomy.

Three types of reading tests were chosen as the subjects of the analysis, taken from three preparation books of the international English-language tests: TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), IELTS (International English Language Testing System), and TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication). From each book, one set of reading section was randomly taken for investigation.

In line with the objectives of this study, a qualitative research seemed suitable to be conducted. Furthermore, since what was studied was the substance of reading tests, a content analysis was also employed.

After the procedures of the analysis are done, the research questions can be answered. Based on the result of the data analysis the research produced a number of findings. The first finding shows that there are mainly seven reading subskills in the TOEFL-reading test: (1) the ability to interpret the meanings of particular words in context (42%); (2) the ability to identify implied details (24%); (3) the ability to identify stated details (16%); (4) the ability to identify the main ideas (8%); (5) the ability to identify the transitions (4%); (6) the ability to identify the unstated details (4%); and (7) the ability to identify the reference (2%).

In the IELTS-reading test, five-reading subskills occur: (1) the ability to identify the main ideas (27.5%); (2) the ability to identify stated details (22.5%); (3) the ability to

complete sentences (22.5%); (4) the ability to interpret the meanings of particular words in contexts (15%); and (5) the ability to identify implied details (12.5%).

The TOEIC-reading test employs five-reading subskills: (1) the ability to identify stated details (72.5%); (2) the ability to identify the main ideas (12.5%); (3) the ability to identify implied details (10%); (4) the ability to identify unstated details (2.5%); and (5) the ability to identify the transition (2.5%).

The second finding shows that in the TOEFL-reading test, two major levels of the cognitive domain are identified: the literal comprehension and the inferential comprehension. The literal comprehension which are divided into two, recognition and recall, occupies 62% of the test, whereas the rest (38%) is occupied by the inferential comprehension. This level is specified into supporting details, main ideas, sequence, and cause-effect.

The IELTS-reading section is also in the levels of literal comprehension and inferential comprehension. The literal comprehension has 45% portion of the whole questions and it is divided into recognition of details, recognition of cause and effect, recall of details. The 55% of the questions are asking about inferential comprehension which is specified into supporting ideas and main ideas.

Similar to the other two tests, the TOEIC-reading test also questions about the literal comprehension and the inferential comprehension. The bigger portion (75%) refers to literal comprehension divided into recognition of details and recognition of cause and effect, while the rest (25%) are about inferential comprehension concerning supporting ideas, main ideas, and sequence.

All the findings of this study become inputs for practitioners who are getting involved in the English education area. Those findings can contribute to anyone who is involved with the English language, especially the test of English. Practically, the results of this study can give new insights for teachers, students, test developers, or any one who needs inputs about international English tests.