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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Theoretical Framework

1. The Nature of Reading Comprehension

Reading is the process of getting information from a written symbol or written language. In the reading process, the readers not only read written form, but also they are required to understand of what they are being read. The process of understanding the text is often called reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is the ability to read text, process it and understand its meaning.

According to Klingner, reading comprehension is a multi-component, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text (previous knowledge, strategy use) as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in text, understanding of text types).¹ It means that reading comprehension is not a simple process. In reading comprehension the reader needs their prior knowledge about the text to build their comprehension.

The IRA Dictionary in Harrison defined that reading comprehension just as fully, and its multiple definitions include:²

¹ Janette K. Klingner, et al. *Teaching Reading Comprehension to Students with Learning Difficulties*. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2007), p.8

² Colin Harrison. *Understanding Reading Development*. (London: SAGE Publication, 2004), p. 51

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- a. Understanding what is read
- b. Understanding in relation to a presumed hierarchy of comprehension processes
- c. Interpreting
- d. Evaluating
- e. Reacting in a creative, intuitive way.

The IRA Dictionary also quoted two definitions from authoritative sources, both from researchers who have conducted classical studies in the field:

- a. Comprehension involves the recovery and interpretation of the abstract deep structural relations underlying sentences (Bransford and Johnson).
- b. Comprehension is a process of integrating new sentences with antecedent information in extra sentential structures (P. Thorndyke).

In addition, the RAND Reading Study Group in Bernhardt also defined reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. They use the words extracting and constructing to emphasize both the importance and the insufficiency of the text as a determinant of reading comprehension.³

³ Elizabeth B. Bernhardt. *Understanding Advanced Second-Language Reading*. (New York: Routledge), p. 7

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The above statement shows that reading comprehension is the most important part of the process of reading. It is because reading comprehension refers to reading with understanding. With the reading comprehension, readers can understand the content of the text, beside reading comprehension is in fact not an easy matter. There are many factors affecting to the reading comprehension such as vocabulary, reading rate and fluency, word recognition, prior knowledge and experiences.

Thomas Barrett in Brassell has suggested the following three types of action with his three-level taxonomy of reading comprehension:⁴

a. Literal Comprehension

Literal comprehension, the lowest of the three levels, requires a reader to be able to retell or recall the facts or information presented in a text. In this level readers are able to identify explicitly stated main ideas, details, sequence, cause-effect relationships, and patterns.

b. Inferential Comprehension

Inferential comprehension, the next level, refers to the ability of a reader to take in the information that is inferred or implied within a text. In other words, the readers are able to infer main ideas, details, comparisons, cause-effect relationships not explicitly stated, drawing conclusions or generalizations from a text; predicting outcomes.

⁴ Danny Brassell and Timothy Rainski. *Comprehension That Works: Taking Students Beyond Ordinary Understanding to Deep Comprehension*. (Huntington Beach: Shell Education, 2008), p. 17

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c. Critical Comprehension

Critical or evaluative comprehension, the third and highest level in the taxonomy, involves making critical judgments about the information presented in the text. In this level readers are able to recognize instances of bias and unsupported inferences in texts, detecting propaganda and faulty reasoning; distinguishing between facts and opinions; reacting to a text's content, characters, and use of language.

Furthermore, Day and Park also divided six types of reading comprehension as follows:⁵

a. Literal comprehension

Literal comprehension refers to an understanding of the straightforward meaning of the text, such as facts, vocabulary, dates, times, and locations.

b. Reorganization

Reorganization is based on a literal understanding of the text; students must use information from various parts of the text and combine them for additional understanding.

c. Inference

Making inferences involve more than a literal understanding. An inference involves students combining their literal understanding of the text with their own knowledge and

⁵ Richard R. Day and Jeong-Suk Park. *Developing Reading Comprehension Questions*. Online Academic Journal, Reading in a Foreign Language. Volume 17, No. 1, (April, 2005), p. 62

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intuitions. It means inference is concluding information from text and build new information which is not explicitly stated in the text.

d. Prediction

Prediction involves students using both their understanding of the passage and their own knowledge of the topic and related matters in a systematic fashion to determine what might happen next or after a story ends.

e. Evaluation

Evaluation is like inferring. The difference is that evaluation requires students' comprehensive judgment about some aspects of a text and ability to redevelop an understanding by using related issues.

f. Personal response

Personal response requires readers to respond with their feelings for the text and the subject.

In other side, Dorn and Soffos said the level of reader's reading comprehension are divided into two levels, those are:⁶

- a. *Surface level*. The surface level of comprehension is a literal level of understanding represented by the ability to recall factual information from the text.

⁶ Linda J. Dornand & Carla Soffos. *Teaching for Deep Comprehension: A Reading Workshop Approach*. (Portland: Stenhouse Publishers, 2005), p. 14

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- b. *Deep level*. The deep level of comprehension is a conceptual level of understanding that results from the reader's ability to think beyond the text. At this level, the author's message serves as a pivotal point in regulating the reader's deeper thinking.

All of the statements above show that reading comprehension is the ability to take information from writing text and do something with it in a way that demonstrates knowledge or understanding information. Comprehension occurs when a reader is able to act on, respond to, or transform the information that is presented in written text in ways that demonstrate understanding.

2. The Concept of Narrative Text

Narration is the telling or relating of occurrence or a series of events.⁷ In other words, narrative is a storytelling that presents a series of events in a sequence of time. Hasibuan and Anshari say that the kinds of narrative texts are fairy tales, legends, plays, science fiction, myths, cartoons, and adventure stories.⁸ The basic purpose of narrative is to entertain, to gain and hold a readers' interest. Narratives sequence people/characters in time and place, but differ from recounting in that through the sequencing, the stories set up one or more problems, which must eventually find a way to be resolved.

Narrative text has social purposes. The social purpose of narrative text is to entertain, create, stimulate emotions, motivate, guide, and teach

⁷ M. Syafi'i S, etal. *The Effective paragraph Developments: The Process of Writing for Classroom Settings*. (Pekanbaru: Lembaga Bimbingan Belajar Syaf Intensive (LBSI), 2011), p.18

⁸ Hasibuan, and Anshari. *Op. Cit*, p.130.

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the readers.⁹ It means that the narrative text wants to give entertainment to the reader in order to make them enjoy reading. Besides, it also gives motivation and message or moral value for the readers.

In relation to explain above, Simon and Schuster stated that narration is story telling whether it tells a true story or fiction, a narrative essay gives an account of one or more experiences. It tells a story to make a point or explain on an idea or event. As a result this type of essay can be fun to read an even to write. Usually personal and often autobiographical, a narrative typically contains action, dialog, elaborate details, and/ or humor.¹⁰

Narrative text is organized in some generic structures, those are:¹¹

- a. Orientation: introduce main which the characters and setting of time and place. Usually answers the questions who? When? Where?
- b. Complication or problem: at this stage the main characters get some problems and they find ways to solve the problems.
- c. Resolution: it is the resolution of the complication/problem. The complication may be resolved for better or worse/happily or unhappily. These add and sustain interest and suspense for the reader.

Narrative text is characterized by several grammatical features. The grammatical features of narrative text are:¹²

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Simon and Schuster. *Writing step By Step*. (New York: Kaplan, 2003), p. 139

¹¹ Hasibuan and Ansari, *Op. Cit*, p. 130

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- a. When sequencing people, events in time and space, narrative typically uses action verbs and temporal connectives.
- b. Recounts and stories are typically written in the past tense unless quoting direct speech.
- c. In action sequences, mainly action verbs (bold) are used, while in reflections/evaluations, mental verbs (italicized) predominate.
- d. Narratives often use action verbs metaphorically to create effective images.
- e. Narratives often use rhythm and repetition to create particular effects.
- f. Play with sentence structure is another common feature of narratives. Often sentences comprising one word or a short phrase are used to create poignant effects.

In short, the narrative is a text focusing specific participants. Its social function is to tell stories or past events and entertain the readers. Narrative uses conflicts among the participants, whether the natural conflict, social conflict or psychological conflict. In some ways the narrative text combines all these conflicts.

3. Students' Reading Comprehension on Narrative Text

Most of the students enter school with a basic understanding of narratives (beginning, middle, and end), but they are less likely to know that stories have a more elaborate structure (setting, characters, plot,

¹² Peter Knapp and Megan Watkins. *Genre, Text, Grammar: Technologies for Teaching and Assessing Writing*. (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press Ltd, 2005), p. 221

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theme). This more elaborate structure that students should be taught and learned in the school. Students who have a good understanding of narrative text structure are advantaged. Many researchers suggested that during the early grades, story comprehension is a significant component of academic performance.

Students' reading comprehension on narrative text means that the students know and understand all aspects of narrative text, such as features and organizations of narrative text. According to Dymock, students who understand the features and organization of narrative texts will know that narrative texts have a main idea/theme, and will comprise a beginning section introducing the main characters, a middle section where some sort of connection/ conflict arises between characters, developing to a crisis point, and an ending section where the connection/ conflict comes to some kind of resolution.¹³ They will also know that the story will be set in a particular place/s, cover a period of time, and will probably contain dialogue.

The quotations above explain that students' reading comprehension on narrative text can be seen from their ability to analyze all aspects contained in narrative text. It means, if the students students have good ability in recognize organization and features of narrative text, automatically they also have good reding comprehension on narrative text.

¹³ Susan Dymock. *Comprehension Strategy Instruction: Teaching Narrative Text Structure Awareness*. The Reading Teacher, Vol. 61, No. 2, (October 2007) p. 162

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Thus, Students' comprehension on narrative text can be measured from several aspects, they are:¹⁴

- a. Students are able to recognize that plot includes sequence of events and conflict/ resolution.
- b. Students are able to identify and analyze elements of narrative text (character development, setting, plot development, conflict, point of view, inferred and recurring themes).
- c. Students are able to Summarize narrative text using understanding of characters, setting, sequence of events, plot, and theme.
- d. Students are able to analyze author's use of literary devices
- e. Students know the defining characteristics of different genres for narrative text (myths, fantasies, science fictions, legends, etc).

In conclusion, the students that have knowledge about the features and organizations of narrative texts, will be able to organize and process the text in ways that facilitate comprehension. Thus, by understanding all aspects of narrative text, students will be easy to comprehend the content of narrative text. In short, syllabus that is used by English teacher in the school is media that can be used as indicators to measure students' reading comprehension on narrative text.

¹⁴ Nebraska Language Arts Standards. 2009. *Language Concepts and Curricular Indicators*. (Retrieved on March 6, 2014).

<http://www.homeofbob.com/literature/la/laStandards.html>

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4. The Factors of Students' Reading Comprehension on Narrative Text

Narrative text has some important elements in its structure such as plot, style, theme, point of the crew, exposition, resolution, climax, conflict, characters, and setting. All those elements cannot be separated from narrative text. In understanding narrative text, students should be aware of those elements. Dymock explained that there are some factors that should be taught and learned by the students in order to help them in understanding narrative text, they are:¹⁵

- a. Students should be knowing about setting that establishes where and when the story takes place.
- b. Students should be knowing about characters that can be classified as major and minor.
- c. Students should be knowing how to analyze individual characters, focusing on their appearance and personality, and how to compare and contrast characters.
- d. Students should be knowing how to analyze the overall plot and that it consists of four parts: Problem. What is the problem in the story? Response. How do the characters respond to the problem? Action. What do the characters do about the problem? Outcome. What is the outcome?
- e. Students should be knowing how to analyze individual episodes (subplot).

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 163.

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f. Students should be knowing that the theme is the message that underlies the story. The theme often explains the motives of the characters or comments on social relationships or society in general. The theme is often left to the reader to interpret. Ask your pupils, “Why did the author write the story?”

All factors above explain that there are many things that should be done by the students in order to understand about narrative text. It is better for students to know more structures and features of narrative text. Besides, students are also required to be able to understand the relationship between words, sentences or paragraphs in the narrative text and the thing that can help them is transitional words.

Transitions are words and phrases that serve as bridges from on idea to the next, one sentence to the next, or one paragraph to the next.¹⁶ They keep the reader from having to find his or her own way and possibly getting lost in the reading. Transitions can also be looked at as the glue that hold ideas of the story stay together. Thus, they are very important in leading students to understand the text.

5. The Concept of Transitional Word Mastery

In making a story, especially in English, many things are done by the authors to make their writings become interesting and pleasant to be read, such as the selection of the correct words, the correct placement of punctuations, selecting the grammars, good sentence structures, and

¹⁶ Kimberly Steele. 2007. *Types And Examples Of Transitions*. (Retrieved on March 6, 2014). <http://www.kimskorner4teachertalk.com/writing/sixtrait/organization/transitions.html>

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appropriate use of conjunctions. Besides, a thing equally important that done by the author is using transitional words in their writing. According to Donoghue, Wakefield and Collins, writers should begin a new paragraph with transition words to help the reader move through the story.¹⁷ It is because transition words help stories move on smoothly and show a connection between paragraphs.

Rambo stated that transitional words are words that show logical relationships between sentences and ideas; they are often organized according to the kinds of relationships that they convey.¹⁸ It means transitional words make all of the ideas in the texts be sequence from beginning until the end. Gust also argued transition words provide detailed expressions that link one paragraph to another in a clear line of thought¹⁹. By the presence of transition words in a text, the readers will easily grasp and understand the contents of the text. Thus, they are greatly helped in comprehending the text.

Mastering transitional words becomes one of the crucial things for English learners. It is very useful for them in improving their ability in reading comprehension. Mastery means that a condition of having

¹⁷ Donna M. Donoghue, Sally Wakefield and Esther Collins. *A Guide for Beginning Elementary Teachers: Getting Hired and Staying Inspired*. (Portsmouth: Teacher Ideas Press, 2005), p. 126

¹⁸ Randi Rambo. 2013. *Transitional Words and Phrases*. (Retrieved on March 7, 2014). <http://www2.ivcc.edu/rambo/eng1001/transitions.htm>.

¹⁹ John Gust. *Adventures in Fantasy: Lessons and Activities on narrative and Descriptive Writing, Grades 5 –9*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), p. 60



complete control or great skills of knowledge.²⁰ It can be concluded that mastering transitional words is the students know all about transition words; like their kinds, shapes, functions and placement within a sentence or paragraph and also they are able to use their knowledge of transitional words in comprehending texts.

Hoggat also stressed that understanding different types of transitional words is the key to increasing students' reading comprehension and related task associated with increased reading comprehension²¹. It is clear that mastering transitional words are very important in order to increase reading comprehension.

In writing, there are many transitional words used by the authors in their writing. Generally, transitional words can be classified as follows:²²

a. To signal sequence or Addition

Again, also, besides, first . . . second . . . third, furthermore, in addition, moreover, one . . . another, too

b. To signal time

After, afterward, as soon as, at first, at the same time, before, earlier, finally, in the meantime, later, meanwhile, next, now, since, soon, subsequently, then, until

²⁰ A.S. Hornby. *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1974), p. 624.

²¹ Hoggat, *Loc. Cit*

²² Laurie G. kirszner and Stephen R. Mandell. *The pocket Wadsworth Handbook*. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2012), p. 23

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c. To signal comparison

Also, in comparison, likewise, similarly

d. To signal contrast

Although, but, despite, even though, however, in contrast, instead, meanwhile, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the contrary, on the one hand.... on the other hand, still, whereas, yet

e. To introduce examples

For example, for instance, namely, to illustrate

f. To signal narrowing of focus

After all, indeed, in fact, in other words, in particular, specifically

g. To introduce conclusions or summaries

As a result, consequently, in conclusion, in other words, in summary, therefore, thus, to conclude

h. To signal Concession

Admittedly, certainly, granted, naturally, of course

i. To introduce Causes or effects

Accordingly, because, consequently, hence, since, so, then.

All of the transitional words above are very crucial to be mastered for the readers, especially the students of English. Hoggat said, "Understanding an author's use of signal/transition words will help guide your reading".²³ It can be concluded that if students have mastered

²³ Hoggat, *Loc. Cit*

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transitional words, they will have guidance when they are reading text. In relation, Heaton in Ariyapinyo also said that students must understand the connection between each section of a reading text by recognizing connecting words or transitional words, which introduce relationship of time, sequences of ideas, contrast, comparison, etc.²⁴ Thus, the students will not have difficulties in understanding the text.

6. The Correlation between Transitional Word Mastery and Students' Reading Comprehension on narrative Text

The existence of transitional words in the texts, especially on narrative text is very crucial. Narrative text has three major parts inside; they are beginning, middle and the end with appropriate transitional words that are tying the sentences and paragraphs together. It means that transitional words cannot be separated from narrative text because transitional words make one sentence and other sentences in the paragraphs of narrative texts stay in a sequence.

English has specific transitional words that are used on narrative text and those words are giving signals to the readers what will come next such as first, afterward, meanwhile, etc.²⁵ By mastering transitional words, it can enlarge the students' main set of thinking about the text and it makes student will be easier to understand the narrative text.

²⁴ Chirdkanya Ariyapinyo. *A Study Of The Transitional Words In the reading Comprehension Section Of The University Entrance Examination During 1999-2004*.

(Unpublished Master's research paper, Thamsat University, language institute, 2007). P. 47

²⁵ Susan Lenski and Frances Verbruggen. *Writing Instruction And Assesment For English Language Learner K-8*. (New York: The Guildford Press, 2007), p. 75.

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In the same way, Kirszner and Mandell state that the narrative text tells a story by presenting events in chronological (time) order and it uses clear transitional words and time markers to establish the chronological sequence²⁶. Chronological order has a vital role in the narrative writing. Chronological order connects all parts of the story into a sequence, from beginning, middle to the end of the stories. It makes chronological order is the central of narrative text.

Aebersold and Field in Hoggat stated that one reading strategy for improving reading skills is to ask readers to look at the relationship between sentences in a paragraph.²⁷ This statement shows that knowing much about transitional words that are occurring in the text is a very important thing to improve students reading skill and their comprehension, especially in reading narrative. It is because narrative has many transitional words that are used in narrative writing. Moreover, Kirszner and Mandell argued that transitional words can help the reader to identify the key points a writer.²⁸

Based on all of the quotations, it is very clear that knowing and mastering transitional words will improve students reading comprehension, especially in reading narrative text. Students should study about transitional words in order to make them easy to understanding narrative text. Thus, all of the explanations above show that there is a

²⁶ Laurie G. Kirszner and Stephen R. Mandel. *The Brief Wadsworth Handbook, Seventh Edition* (Wadsworth: Cengage Learning, 2013), p. 64.

²⁷ Hoggat. *Loc. Cit.*

²⁸ Laurie G. Kirszner and Stephen R. Mandel. *Op. Cit.*, p. 309

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correlation between students' transitional word mastery and their reading comprehension of narrative text.

B. The Relevant Research

According to Syafi'i, relevant research is required to observe some previous researches conducted by other research in which they are relevant to our research.²⁹ It means there are some previous researchers who had conducted the research before the writer conduct this research. In conducting the research, the researcher took some relevant researches that had been investigated by previous research.

In 2013, Pratin Pimsarn conducted a research entitled "The Relationship between Transitional Word Knowledge and Reading Comprehension Achievement of First-Year University Students in a Public University in Thailand"³⁰. In this research, he stated that there was a significant relationship between transitional word knowledge and students' reading achievement. In this research, Pimsarn analyzed about the correlations between the Transitional Word Recognition (TWR), the Transitional Word Usage (TWU) and the Reading Comprehension Test (RCT) scores of the whole participants.

There was a significant positive correlation found between the Reading Comprehension Test and the Transitional Word Recognition Test ($r = 0.38$, $n = 69$, $p = 0.001$). Similarly, there is a significant positive

²⁹ M. Syafi'i S. *From Paragraphs to a Research Report: A writing of English for Academic Purposes*. (Pekanbaru: LBSI, 2007), p. 122

³⁰ Pratin Pimsarn. *The relationship Between Transitional Knowledge and Reading Comprehension Achievement of First Year University Students in A Public University in Thailand*. (Bangkok: Language Institute, Thammasat University, 2013).

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correlation found between the Reading Comprehension Test and the Transitional Word Usage Test ($r = 0.32$, $n = 69$, $p = 0.006$). This can be concluded that better reading comprehension relies on better knowledge and the ability to use transitional words. The participants who received high scores in the Transitional Word Recognition Test and the Transitional Word Usage Test, they received high scores on the Reading Comprehension Test. By contrast, the participants who received low scores in the transitional word, they received low scores on the reading comprehension test.

A journal written by Selma Kara in 2013 entitled “The Role Explicit Teaching of Signals Play on Reading Comprehension”.³¹ The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of explicit teaching on reading comprehension when EFL learners read signaled text or non-signaled text. The main concern was whether the explicit teaching of signal words or transitional word facilitates reading comprehension. The results of the t-test show that there is a statistically significant difference between the explicit teaching group and no-teaching group when they read non-signaled texts ($t = 1.98$, $p < 0.5$).

This result indicated that the subjects who have been taught signal words or transitional words explicitly get better reading comprehension scores, although they read non-signaled texts. The results of this study indicate that both explicit teaching of signal words and reading signaled texts contribute to the reading comprehension. It is recommended that the students

³¹ Selma Kara. *The Role Explicit Teaching of Signals Play on Reading Comprehension*. (TEM Journal – Volume 2 / Number 1/ 2013). www.temjournal.com

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should be provided with texts that have logical connectors so that they can understand the relations between the sentences and ideas in a text. It is also suggested that explicit teaching of signals may aid reading comprehension.

The previous studies above explained that there was a significant correlation between transitional word mastery and reading comprehension. Also, taught transitional words to the students contributed to their reading comprehension. In this research, the researcher also examined the relationship between transitional word mastery and reading comprehension. The difference between this research and the previous research was in the variable y. In the previous research, the researcher focus in examining the relationship between transitional words and reading comprehension only on general reading. But in this research, the researcher specified variable y into reading comprehension on narrative text.

C. The Operational Concept

In carrying out this research, it is very necessary to clarify the variables used in the research. This research consists of two variables; those are independent variable (X) and dependent variable (Y). Variable X refers to the transitional word mastery, and variable Y refers to students' reading comprehension.

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1. The Indicators of Variable X (Students' Transitional Word Mastery)

- a. The students are able to recognize transitional word in the form of: *To signal sequences or addition, To signal time, To signal comparison, To signal contrast, To introduce examples, To signal narrowing of focus, To introduce conclusion or summaries, To signal concession, To introduce causes or effects.*
- b. The students are able to use transitional word correctly based on its' functions in the form of: *To signal sequences or addition, To signal time, To signal comparison, To signal contrast, To introduce examples, To signal narrowing of focus, To introduce conclusion or summaries, To signal concession, To introduce causes or effects.*

2. The Indicators of Variable Y (Students' Reading Comprehension on Narrative Text)

- a. The students are able to recognize generic structures of narrative text.
- b. The students are able to identify language features of narrative text.
- c. The students are able to determine the order of events on narrative text.

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- d. The students are able to recall the details of setting on narrative text.
- e. The students are able to make inference regarding events, outcome and moral lessons in narrative text.

D. The Assumptions and The Hypotheses

1. The Assumptions

- a. The students' transitional word mastery and their reading comprehension are various.
- b. Many factors that can influence students' transitional word mastery and their reading comprehension on narrative text.
- c. The better students' transitional words mastery is the better students' reading comprehension on narrative texts will be

2. The Hypotheses

H_0 : There is no significant correlation between students' transitional word mastery and their reading comprehension on narrative text of the eleventh grade at Islamic Boarding Senior High School Bahrul 'Ulum.

H_a : There is a significant correlation between students' transitional word mastery and their reading comprehension on narrative text of the eleventh grade at Islamic Boarding Senior High School Bahrul 'Ulum.