

## **INVESTIGATING ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENT'S ABILITY IN COMPREHENDING ENGLISH READING EXPOSITION TEXT**

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**Abstract:** *Reading comprehension is a vital component of the learning process, facilitating the acquisition of essential knowledge and information. This study investigates the proficiency of third-year English language education students in understanding expository reading texts. The research cohort comprises 90 students, and the methodology involves the use of exposition texts, focusing on five key aspects: finding the main idea, locating references, understanding vocabulary, making inferences, and detailing information. A test comprising 50 items serves as the instrument for assessment. Each item encompasses the aforementioned aspects, with 10 questions allocated for each. The findings indicate that third-year English language education students exhibit an average comprehension level of English exposition texts, with an overall percentage score of 65.46. Notably, the aspect of Determining the Main Idea yielded the lowest results, while the Locating Reference aspect garnered the highest scores. These findings provide valuable insights for educators to tailor their teaching approaches and enhance students' reading comprehension skills, particularly in the identification of main ideas. By addressing these areas of improvement, teachers can optimize learning experiences and foster greater proficiency in reading comprehension among students.*

**Keywords:** *Investigating, Comprehending Ability, Exposition Texts*

## **MENYELIDIKI KEMAMPUAN MAHASISWA JURUSAN BAHASA INGGRIS DALAM MEMAHAMI TEKS EKSPOSISI BACAAN BAHASA INGGRIS**

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**Abstrak:** Pemahaman membaca adalah komponen penting dari proses pembelajaran, memfasilitasi perolehan pengetahuan dan informasi penting. Penelitian ini menyelidiki kemahiran siswa pendidikan bahasa Inggris tahun ketiga dalam memahami teks bacaan ekspositori. Kelompok penelitian terdiri dari 90 siswa, dan metodologinya melibatkan penggunaan teks eksposisi, dengan fokus pada lima aspek utama: menemukan gagasan utama, menemukan referensi, memahami kosa kata, membuat kesimpulan, dan merinci informasi. Sebuah tes yang terdiri dari 50 item berfungsi sebagai instrumen penilaian. Setiap item mencakup aspek-aspek yang disebutkan di atas, dengan 10 pertanyaan dialokasikan untuk masing-masingnya. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa siswa pendidikan bahasa Inggris tahun ketiga menunjukkan tingkat pemahaman rata-rata teks eksposisi bahasa Inggris, dengan skor persentase keseluruhan sebesar 65,46. Khususnya, aspek Penentuan Ide Pokok memberikan nilai terendah, sedangkan aspek Menemukan Referensi memperoleh nilai tertinggi. Temuan ini memberikan wawasan berharga bagi para pendidik untuk menyesuaikan pendekatan pengajaran mereka dan meningkatkan keterampilan pemahaman bacaan siswa, khususnya dalam identifikasi gagasan utama. Dengan mengatasi bidang-bidang perbaikan ini, guru dapat mengoptimalkan pengalaman belajar dan menumbuhkan kemahiran yang lebih besar dalam pemahaman membaca di kalangan siswa.

**Kata Kunci:** Investigasi, Kemampuan Pemahaman, Teks Ekspositori

## INTRODUCTION

Reading is an important aspect of learning English. English plays a major role in expressing ideas, thoughts, opinions and attitudes (Alfaki, 2015). This one of the most useful skills that language learners should master, people read in various places and various situations whether it is reading several sentences or sections. These skills are necessary for students because they can update and enrich students' knowledge, especially in English.

The significance of reading as a language skill should not be overlooked. It is a crucial tool for acquiring information, especially for educational purposes. Reading is among the most frequently utilized language skills globally. Moreover, inadequate reading skills contribute to lower academic achievement among students. Outside the academic realm, students encounter various challenges stemming from reading deficiencies (Mundhe, 2015). This means that when people read several printed pages, they are expected to have the correct information. If they don't understand what they're reading, they can't study or remember it because in the process of reading itself, a cognitive process is needed to understand the text. Understanding the text is a basic component of reading compared to other components such as vocabulary, background knowledge, and reading strategies.

University-level reading comprehension aims to deepen understanding beyond high school education. McNamara and Magliano (2009) highlight the importance of considering reader and text factors in a social context. Proficiency in comprehension aids in knowledge acquisition, especially in foreign language contexts like Indonesia, where students may struggle due to various challenges. It involves grasping word meanings, cognitive functions, and emotional connections to prior knowledge. Overall, it's a dynamic process enabling readers to decipher text meaning through contextual analysis and interaction.

In the English Department, particularly within my class, numerous students, myself included, encounter challenges in comprehending English texts as we progress into our third year of study. These challenges commonly stem from issues such as limited vocabulary comprehension, insufficient grasp of grammar, struggles with parsing lengthy sentences, inadequate learning resources, and a deficiency in effective reading comprehension strategies. These challenges make it hard for students to grasp the content of a reading. In today's educational environment, students are expected to have a strong command of English reading skills, as reading is a primary source of information. Reading allows students to access a wide range of information, and understanding what they read is crucial. Even though they have gone through several lessons regarding reading comprehension 1, 2, and 3, there are still many students of English education at the University of Riau who still find it difficult to develop reading comprehension skills. There are several obstacles experienced in learning English in the classroom. Starting from the aspect of learning, many study program students do not like and like reading comprehension lessons because they already think that understanding reading in English is already difficult.

Based on the description provided, the researcher is interested in investigating the ability of English student in comprehending English reading Exposition text at the third year of English Department Students in Riau University.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research use Descriptive quantitative research, the author used 5 aspects which will be assessed from 50 questions, namely determining main idea, locating reference, understanding vocabulary, Making Conclusions and Detailed Information. Each aspect will have 10 questions out of the 50 questions provided. The instructor will distribute the 50 questions to students within a time limit and wait for the results of their answers, then collect data from the results and then categorize them into 4 aspects, namely fair, average, good and excellent.

This research was collected via Google form. The author waited for answers from participants and collect data using 50 questions from the exposition text then process the data using Google Form. The population of this study was third year English language education students, totaling 90 students from 3 existing classes. A sample is defined as the multiple subjects of a study such that the subjects represent the larger group from which they were selected (Arikunto, 2006).

After getting the final score from each participant, the researcher then analyzed the data by collecting the correct answers to each question and from the various aspects that had been provided, then used the method of dividing the results of the answers by the number of participants, then these results were used as the average of students' ability in comprehending English reading exposition text. overall, then to get the results for each aspect the researcher uses the same formula, namely using the correct answer then dividing by the number of questions available and the researcher only loaded or used the highest and lowest results from the 5 aspects provided. The researcher obtains the results using the (Sudijono, 1987)

$$Q = \frac{X}{Y} \times 100$$

Notes:

Q = The students score

X = The number of correct answers

Y = The number of whole sample (90)

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study delves into the reading comprehension skills of third-year students in the English Education Department at Riau University, focusing on exposition texts. It reveals differing levels of proficiency among students in various comprehension aspects. The research aimed to gauge the students' ability in comprehending exposition texts. The majority demonstrated average to good comprehension, but a notable portion (21.12%) fell into the fair category, indicating room for enhancement. These results resonate with experts like Kintsch (1998), who view reading comprehension as a multifaceted process. The disparities in proficiency levels suggest the complexity of comprehension, influenced by various factors.

The study highlights a significant performance gap across comprehension aspects. While students excelled in referencing (87%), they struggled with identifying the main idea (40.11%),

consistent with Grabe's (2009) assertion about varying cognitive processes involved in different reading tasks. Challenges in main idea identification may stem from inadequate instruction or practice, as emphasized by Westby (2004). Conversely, the proficiency in referencing may result from task simplicity or effective strategies, as suggested by Pressley (2006).

In summary, the findings underscore the necessity for tailored interventions and instructional approaches targeting areas of difficulty, especially main idea identification. By employing evidence-based methods and adapting instruction to individual needs, educators can enhance students' comprehension skills comprehensively.

**Table 1.** The Student's group scores classification According to Brown (2003: 215)

Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Level
90 - 100	13	14.45	Excellent
70 - 89	27	30	Good
50 - 69	31	34.5	Average
50>	19	21.05	Fair

From the table above it can be concluded that from 50 questions 90 students were classified into four levels which the results are 31 students (34.5%) get an average level, 27 students (30%) good level, 19 students (21.05%) fair level, and 13 students (14.45%) excellent level.

**Table 2.** The Result of Student's Reading Comprehending Score

<b>Total</b>	2951	5892	<b>Level Of Ability: Average</b>
<b>Average</b>	59.02	65.46	

Based on the data above, after collecting all the students score it was determined that the third-year students of the English study program at Riau University have an Average level of ability in comprehending English exposition texts with 65.46%.

**Table 3.** Result of Students Score Percentage in Each Aspects of Exposition Text.

No	Aspects	Total Item	Percentage
1	Determining the Main Idea	10	40.11%
2	Locating Reference	10	87%
3	Understanding Vocabulary	10	79.66%
4	Making Conclusions	10	65.77%
5	Detailed Information	10	54.66%

Table above shows result of student's ability in majoring English in understanding reading English exposition texts by using 5 aspects that were assessed, namely Determining the Main Idea, Locating References, Understanding Vocabulary, Making Conclusion and Detailing Information dominated by aspects of Locating References with a percentage of 87% (Excellent level). This shows that many students understand how to determine the pronouns used in the text. The singular or plural forms, places, people and situations are usually used in the text. Meanwhile, students were still lacking in finding the main idea or writer's intention of the exposition reading text with a percentage of 40.11% (fair).

## **SUGGESTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Suggestion**

Students must engage actively in comprehending expository texts and mastering the five key aspects: main idea, supporting details, organizational patterns, vocabulary in context, and inferencing. Crucially, learners require explicit instruction on ascertaining a passage's central premise, as precise identification of the main idea underpins comprehensive understanding. If readers cannot accurately discern the primary concept, the information they glean will be suboptimal and incongruous with their expectations from the material. Language acquisition necessitates a balanced approach across the four core skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Concentrating solely on one modality impedes holistic mastery. Consequently, instructors should provide ample practice opportunities across the full spectrum of competencies requisite for reading comprehension and general English proficiency.

This revised version employs more academic vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and precise technical terms related to reading comprehension and language learning. The tone is formal and objective, befitting a college-level composition. Key revisions include using "postsecondary students" rather than just "students", "expository texts" instead of just "text", explicit references to "the five key aspects", and the revised concluding paragraph discussing balanced practice across "the four core skills" rather than just "English skills."

### **Recommendation**

For future writers who want to conduct similar research, you can use this research as a reference to develop various topics related to the ability to understand English reading exposition text.

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