

**A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF SECOND SEMESTER  
STUDENTS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF FKIP  
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF MALANG TO IMPROVE  
COMPREHENDING ENGLISH TEXTS**

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**ABSTRACT:** Reading is one of language skill, which must be developed with practice. The students learn how to read well in order to comprehend texts, either in a short text or long one. The researcher got research at English Department of FKIP of Muhammadiyah University of Malang especially Second Semesters that had a problem to comprehend English Text. The data collected from the reading test were analyzed to find the answer of problem. The steps in process were as follows: firstly, the writer corrected the student's answer sheets; secondly, give score for each answer sheet, thirdly, identified the student's score. This study uses *descriptive method* by collecting data in order to answer the question concerning status of subject of study. The subject is second semesters that consist of 200 of students. The instrument uses to collect the data is reading test that are to know their ability in English text. The result of the analyzing of available can be interpreted that the students of English Department have mastered the English texts, and many students get problem namely 32 the students getting high score, 8 students getting lower score and the mean of value reliability items are 12,425. It means that the student's ability in comprehending texts is good. It is hoped that teacher will make to use of this findings by giving more attention to comprehend English text in teaching and learning of English so that the student's ability in comprehending texts can be improve.

**Keywords:** Comprehending, Reading Texts

## **INTRODUCTION**

English is very important to learn because many subjects at University are written in English,

DarjoWijoyo (1987) states that English is used in nearly 85 % of reference books of science. Students must be active at the school because their activities will

help them to achieve the goals. Reading many books, students will get some information and increase their knowledge. The process of reading involves both the acquisition of the meaning intended by the writer and the readers' own contribution in the form of interpretation, evaluation, and reflection about the meaning. But the students have to select and organize those meaning, which are in line with the purpose to carry out effectively the reading and thinking activities that must process the necessary concept, vocabulary knowledge, and ability to handle language relationship involved.

The research is designed to improve the students' ability; it is effective to improve their reading ability in English to be developed because the Second Semesters of English Department of Muhammadiyah University of Malang had a problem in comprehending English Texts. Based on introduction above the researcher find out the statement of problem "How is the student's ability to improve comprehending English Texts?" The study aimed at describing the student's ability

to improve comprehending English Texts.

### **Reading Strategy**

A reading is an active learner who absorbs information from the texts. In order to catch the information needed from the texts, they have to use the following strategies: 1) Effective readers have to utilize personal knowledge, while reading, such as readers construct a tentative model of meaning based on inference about the author's intended meaning. 2) Effective readers elaborate what they read (GMC NEIL, 19987). They think about how the texts relate to what they know. Thus, they make connections that help them to remember and what they read, 3) Effective readers check their understanding to see if it makes a sense (Baker and Brown, 1984) if it does not make a sense, effective readers check their purpose for reading to see if they were on the right track. According to Ann Logsdon (2011) Said that although you probably already read critically in some respects, here are some things you can do when you read a text to improve your critical reading skills, as follows:

### Previewing

Is a text means gathering as much information about the text as you can before you actually read it. You can ask yourself the following questions: a) what is my Purpose for Reading? b) What can the Title Tell Me about the Text? C) How is the Text Structured? d) Who is the Author?

### Annotating

An important skill employs if you want to read critically. Successful critical readers read with a pencil in their hand, making notes in the text as they read. Instead of reading passively, they create an active relationship with what they are reading by "talking back" to the text in its margins. You may want to make the following annotations as you read, as follows: a) Mark the Thesis and Main Points of the Piece, b) Mark Key Terms and Unfamiliar Words, c) Underline Important Ideas and Memorable Images, d) Write Your Questions and/or Comments in the Margins of the Piece, e) Write any Personal Experience Related to the Piece, f) Mark

Confusing Parts of the Piece, or Sections that Warrant a Reread, g) Underline the Sources, if any, the Author has Used

### Summarizing

The text you've read is a valuable way to check your understanding of the text. When you summarize, you should be able to find and write down the information and main idea from the text, likes: The Thesis and Main Points of the Piece

### Re-reading

Re-reading is a crucial part of the critical reading process. Good readers will reread a piece several time, until they are satisfied they know it inside and out. It is recommended that you read a text three times to make as much meaning as you can, likes: a) The First Reading, b) The Second Reading

### Responding

Responding to what you read is an important step in understanding what you read. You can respond in writing, or by talking about what you've

read to others. Here are several ways you can respond critically to a piece of writing, as follows:  
a) Writing a Response in Your Writer's Notebook, b)

Discussing the Text with Others

Critically Reading Assignment Sheets

It is important to have read your assignment sheet critically before you begin to write. Consider the following things: a) Analyze your Assignment Sheet Carefully, b) Pay Attention to the Length of the Essay, and other Requirements, c) Plan your Time Well

### **Reading Comprehension**

In comprehending English texts, the students are emphasized to conduct information on the text and their knowledge. If they don't know about both, however they face a problem to get information on the texts and develop their knowledge.

Rand Spiro (1979) says that conduction of study that indicates the readers varies the relative degrees to which they emphasize two processes of comprehension.

The texts based process those in which the reader is primarily to extract information from the texts, and knowledge based process are those in which the reader primarily brings prior knowledge and experience to bear on the interpretation of materials

Comprehending and interpreting what is read, it depends on concepts acquired through past experience that may be director various. Early sensor experiences like tasting, touching, smelling, hearing, seeing, are basic and fundamental, later listening to the radio, watching television, and hearing conversation of older people to increase the tempo of concept development.

Experiences are the foundation for building concepts; concepts are foundation for building vocabulary. Later the students will understand more of what they read it because they can relate their experience to the symbol on the printed page. According to Lado (1961) definition of reading in language. Reading is grasping or the full linguistic meaning of what is read in reading subject with in the

command experience of mature of which a central past is.

The comprehension skill is very important to develop or expand during the intermediate grades include: a) Reading to follow to complex direction, b) Reading to remember, c) Reading to anticipate, d) Learning the outline, e) Learning to summary, f) Reading critical

Good reading comprehension depends on understanding the words you are reading. The more words you recognize and understand in a text, the better your comprehension will be. David L Shepherd (1978:86) says that a reader need to know the four levels of comprehension skills, as follows:

Literal level is simple level.

It means that what the reader needs to do is to produce the facts as they are related by the author. So the skills needed for this level or understanding one notice factual data, sequence, chronology, and enumeration.

The interpretive level.

It requires the reader to go beyond the information given by authors. The reader is now required to see the significance of data: to note various relationships such as cause and effect and relation of the part to whole, to make comparison, to draw conclusions and inferences, and make generalization.

The critical level.

The students learn to evaluate and judge the information and author's presentation of it. Skills at this level are aimed toward evaluating the author's use language for guiding the reader's interpretation, nothing evidence of author's bias, his qualifications, his point of view, intent, and truthfulness.

The creative level.

It requires the student's involvement with the information presented as he use it to formula or to rethink ideas his own. Obviously, the reader is able to think creatively about the information he has read when he knows what the author has written, has made interpretation

basic to his purpose and evaluated the pertinence of the information.

the comprehension that will be limited

### **Factor influencing Reading Comprehension**

Factors influencing Reading Comprehension can be classified into two parts, as follows:

There are many characteristic of material (Otto ET. Al, 1979):

- a. Unfamiliar concepts, if the words used are familiar to readers, they will be able to read easily and opposed to be to barrier to comprehend
- b. Technical vocabulary, if the concept being expressed is not complex in written texts and also if the technical vocabulary that is used is unfamiliar to readers, the concept itself will remain elusive term in that written texts
- c. Special meaning from words, the readers know that certain words have several meanings, however, if one of these meaning does not fit within a particular passage,

Concerning the readers (Otto, 1979: 149- 155) the readers:

- a. The reader's purpose, if the readers are attempting to get only on general idea of what the passage about, the comprehension of small detail incidental to the main idea or topic will most likely be low. On the other hand, if the readers are interested primarily in detail, they may lose the overall theme of election

The reader's attitude toward reading will also affect comprehension. If reading is perceived as an enjoyable experience and as a way of gathering information, comprehension will most likely be at high level for the readers that is interested in what is read and want to read the material

### **Information on the texts**

In reading texts, the student will get much information and increase knowledge so they do not feel to leave the development world out and in side. According to Rupley

and Blair (1983), successful reading in the content areas requires ability to adjust one's rate of reading to type of material being read. Three types of reading are required: *skimming, scanning and studying*

### **Specific information on the texts**

In specific information the writer can use Scanning. Scanning refers to reading a selection to find a specific piece of information when scanning the students should:

1. use heading to locate the pages of the scan for the specific information
2. run his eyes rapidly the down of pages in zigzag or winding subject pattern
3. note capital letters if looking name, number of data, and italicized word for vocabulary items
4. read only what is needed to verify the purpose

Scanning activities may include having the students scan a history chapter to find the data of particular events of giving him a telephone direction to locate a specific person's number

### **General Information on the texts.**

Skimming refers to covering to get some of main idea and general overview of the material without attending to detail. The students should: 1) read the first paragraph, 2) read bold print heading as they appear, 3) read the first sentence, 4) examine the picture, 5) read the last paragraph.

Skimming activity may involve giving the students a short amount of skim a content chapter and write down the main idea or asking him to skim newspaper, articles and match them to headline. Skimming is technique used to look for "The gift" of what the author is saying without a lot of details (Reading Skill For College Students, p, 1470).

Christine Nuttal (1982: 340) says that we mean glancing rapidly through the text to determine its gist, for example in order to decide whether the research paper is relevant to our own work, or in order to keep our selves superficially informed about matters that are not of read importance for us.

Some situation in which skimming is useful are as follows:

- a. Looking over a chapter in the text book prior to serious study in order to get an idea of general scope of chapter
- b. Sampling a few pages of a level or the type of work to from an opinion as to whether it is word reading
- c. Going quickly through an article on an article on a controversial issue to find out the author's point of view without boring to note to his specific argument
- d. Looking through reading to decide if it is comprehensible or too difficult

### **Studying.**

In studying type reading, the goal is total comprehension and reading is deliberate and purposeful. Studying type begin have important during the intermediate grades, many teacher introduce the SQR3 method of study. According to Francis Robenson (1961) SQ3R as follows:

**Survey:** teacher explain how to skim the entire passage to construction overall frame work for information

**Question:** after surveying the texts the teacher direct student to develop question that think and will be answered in the passage

**Read:** the students read the texts section by section to answer the question pose at beginning of each paragraph

**Recite:** the teacher explain that students now are to answer question that pose the section just read

**Review:** after the last section is read, students review the question and answer for the entire texts.

As students must have this type of reading explained to them practice under teacher supervision and giving opportunity for independent practice by using English texts.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

#### **Research Design**

This study uses *descriptive* research design because there is no control group or treatment. This



research tries to describe the student's ability in comprehending English texts at English Department of Muhammadiyah University of Malang. Descriptive research is a method of research to describe the object and it is designed to obtain the answer concerning the current status of problems.

### **Subject of study**

The subject of study is the second semester students of English Department at Muhammadiyah University of Malang that consists of 200 students. The number of students is 200; they are divided into five classes.

### **Validity**

Validity is degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure (Gay, 1981). A test is said to be valid if the result of the test suitable with the criteria or in other words it has parallelism between the result of the test and the criterion. It used to compare with the result if the test in the student's reading scores and this case the multiple choice type was implemented by the reason that this type of test was appropriate to

be used by considering its beneficial characteristic.

### **Reliability**

Is the extent to which the tool can measure something it measure consistently (Ary, 1979). In order word tests reliability means the test consistent (Tucman, 1979).

### **The Instrument of The Study**

The instrument in this research was "Test" but there was not the treatment in the test self. The type of test required the students to comprehend the content of the reading text and they could improve their reading comprehension. It used to compare with the result if the test in the students reading score

### **Data Collection**

Data collection is collected based on the result of the test, because the items are selected from published one. It used objective test like multiple choice from in measuring the object comprehension that has consisted of 20 items, 4 options during 40 minutes. The Researcher determined to use the instrument

that is reading test. And it is used to get information in the Percentage of student's ability in comprehending English texts.

### Data Analysis

Firstly, the Researcher evaluated the student's answer from the test, secondly the Researcher gives the score, thirdly, and the writer identifies student's answer by using quantitative. The Procedure data analysis namely:

1. Scoring the student' answer
2. Finding the value of the reliability item

$$X = \sum \frac{Fx}{N}$$

$\sum F x$  = Frequency of x

N = the number of students

3. Determining the percentage of the student's ability

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100 \%$$

Where:

P: percentage the student's ability in comprehending English Texts

F: frequency of the scores

N: the number of the students

4. Classifying the scores as follows:

Rahmad classifies the score as follows

90 % - 100 % = very good

80 % - 89 % = good

70 % - 79 % = fair

60 % - low % = poor

### RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

In this finding of the study, the data is analyzed to answer the statement of problem, the purpose of study, and significant of study in chapter one. To answer this problem, this study uses Test formula by using multiple choices that consists of 20 questions and each comprises 4 options in 40 minutes. To collected data, the writer uses test as an instrument of research.

### Result

After analyzing the data, the Researcher can describe the result as follows:

The result of the Test in Comprehending English Texts

Score	F	Percentage
16	4	10
15	7	17,5
14	5	12,5
13	6	15
12	8	15
11	2	20
10	2	5
9	2	5
7	2	5
6	1	2,5
4	1	2,5
Total	40	100

Based on the table I, there are 32 students who get high and 8 students get lower score. Based on the criteria those 32 students are able to comprehend English Texts and 8 students are not able to comprehend it.

From the table I, it can be stated that there 4 or 10% of the students who get 16, and those classified as the highest score. There are 7 or 17, 5% of the students who get 15. There are 5 or 12, 5% of the students who get 14. There are 6 or 15% of the students who get 13. There are 8 or 15% of students who get 12. There are 2 or 20% of students who get 11. There

are 2 or 5% of students who get 10, 9 and 7. There are 1 or 2, 5%

of students who get 6 and 4, and those classified as poor scores.

Score	students who pass		students who fail	
	F	%	F	%
16	4	10	-	-
15	7	17,5	-	-
14	5	12,5	-	-
13	6	15	-	-
12	8	20	-	-
11	2	5	-	-
10	-	-	2	5
9	-	-	2	5
7	-	-	2	5
6	-	-	1	2,5
4	-	-	1	2,5
Total	32	80 %	8	20 %

Based on the result of study presented on the table II, the writer finds that 80 % of the students are able to comprehend English Texts,

and 20 % of the students are not able to comprehend English texts.

## Discussion

The result of study indicates that 80 % students have mastered the subject of reading, and 20 % students have not yet. However, the students who get low scores should improve their ability. According to Rupley and Blair (1983), successful reading in the content areas requires ability to adjust one's rate of reading to type of material being read. Three types of reading are required: skimming, scanning and studying

### Scanning

In specific information the writer can use Scanning. Scanning refers to reading a selection to find a specific piece of information when scanning the students should: 1) use heading to locate the pages of the scan for the specific information, 2) run his eyes rapidly the down of pages in zigzag or winding subject pattern, 3) note capital letters if looking name, number of data, and utilized word for vocabulary items, 4) read only what is needed to verify the purpose

### Skimming

Refer to covering to get some of main idea and general overview of

the material without attending to detail. The students should: 1) read the first paragraph, 2) read bolt print heading as they appear, 3) read the first sentence, 4) examine the picture, 5) read the last paragraph

### Studying

In studying type reading, the goal is total comprehension and reading is deliberate and purposeful. Studying type begin have important during the intermediate grades, many teacher introduce the SQR3 method of study

From explanation above, the writer concluded that Rupley and Blair is the experts which theory could be implicated for 20% of the students who fail in order to understand in getting information and good score.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusion

After conducting the investigation the Researcher concludes that the student's ability to improve in comprehending English Texts at the Second Semesters of Muhammadiyah

University of Malang is a good, because based on the result of research toward 40 students, 80 % of students are categorized into good.

### **Suggestion**

Dealing from conclusion above, the Researcher would like to give suggestion in accordance with the study of reading comprehension in English Texts, as follows:

1. The students who still have low ability in reading comprehension, should

increase their motivation to read more and practice to comprehend English Text.

2. The teacher should give more drill to find the meaning of words from the context to students by using context method.
3. Finally, the Researcher ends this writing and hopes that it can be used to contribute something for the improvement of the student's ability in comprehending English Texts.

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