

**THE CAPABILITY OF THE THIRD YEAR STUDENTS OF  
*SMP N 2 PANEKAN MAGETAN* IN UNDERSTANDING  
WRITTEN TEXTS**



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by

**RINA WAHYU ASMARA  
A320080017**

**SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION  
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA**

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Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta

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Team of Examiner:

1. Aryati Prasetyarini, S.Pd, M.Pd. (  )  
NIK. 725
2. Nur Hidayat, S.Pd. (  )  
NIK. 473



# THE CAPABILITY OF THE THIRD YEAR STUDENTS OF SMP N 2 PANEKAN MAGETAN IN UNDERSTANDING WRITTEN TEXTS

Rina Wahyu Asmara  
Aryati Prasetyarini  
Nur Hidayat

## ABSTRACT

*The objectives of this study are (1) to describe the capability of the third year students of SMP N 2 Panekan Magetan in understanding written texts, (2) to describe the problems faced by the third year students in understanding written texts, and (3) to describe the causes of problems faced by the third year students in understanding written texts. The study was done in SMP N 2 Panekan Magetan. As the sample, the writer took the students in class IX A with 27 students in that class. The writer conducted treatment to the students in the form of the test. The type of test is multiple choice with four options and consists of 50 items.*

*After collecting the data and analyzing using the formula, the writer described the result of the study. The writer found that the capability of the students in understanding written texts can be divided into four levels of mastery, namely (1) poor level is 14.81 % (4 students), (2) fair level is 29.63 % (8 students), (3) good level is 48.15 % (13 students), and (4) excellent level is 7.41 % (2 students). The problems faced by the students in understanding written texts are (1) understanding the statement of exception, and (2) understanding moral value.*

*The causes of the problems faced by the students are (1) they seldom read English texts, (2) lack of vocabulary, (3) they seldom read the dictionary, (4) they rarely pronounce English words in daily life, while the difficulties caused by the teacher are (1) the teacher does not use various books in teaching reading, (2) the teacher has not used multimedia facilities, and (3) the methods implemented by the teacher. Conclusion, the capability of the third year students of SMP N 2 Panekan Magetan in understanding written texts is good.*

**Key words** : *capability, understanding, written texts*

## **A. Introduction**

Reading is one of the language skills which is very important to be mastered by everyone to get knowledge. Hodgson (1960:43-44) in Tarigan (1986:7) defines reading is a process that is carried and used by readers to get the message, which was about to be submitted by the author through the medium of words or written language. A process which requires that a group of words which is a unity will be seen in a glimpse and that the meaning of individual words will be known. If this is not met, then the message is explicit and implied to be caught or understood, and the reading process is not performing well.

It is very essential for everyone to gain new knowledge and information. It will increase someone's knowledge. However, there are still many people who do not have much interest and motivation to read books, so they cannot broaden their knowledge.

English and Indonesian are two different languages. No one can guarantee that students who understand Indonesian texts will also understand English texts. It is easier for students to read Indonesian texts because they have mastered the Indonesian vocabulary and grammatical structures, but when they read English texts, they should have enough vocabulary and understand the grammatical structures of the target language.

Reading is not just reading the texts without understanding the content. The readers have to know the message or idea included in the text. Every text has its own purpose, message or idea. To understand the texts well, the readers have to master the strategies.

In reading, the students should have capability to understand the content of the text. Capability is ability necessary to do something. The teacher should lead his or her students to develop reading texts. The reading skills and

strategies that should be mastered are, skimming, scanning, reading for detailed information, reading between the lines, predicting, and deducing meaning from the context.

Generally, there are two kinds of school, namely state schools and the private ones. A state school is a school in which the fund is from the government, while a private school is a school in which the fund only comes from that school. *SMP N 2 Panekan Magetan* is a state school which is in the process of being a national standardized school now.

There are some reasons why the writer chooses this school. First, *SMP N 2 Panekan Magetan* is a state school which is in the process of being a national standardized school. Second, the quality of this school is good enough as it is supported by sufficient buildings and capable teachers; moreover no longer there will be multimedia facilities. Third, in this study the writer takes the third year students that will face the national examination, so it is important to know their capability in understanding written text before facing the national exams.

Based on the background above, the writer wants to know the capability of the third year students of *SMP N 2 Panekan Magetan* in understanding written texts, the problems faced by the third year students in understanding written texts, and the causes of the problems faced by the third year students of *SMP N 2 Panekan Magetan* in understanding written texts. Therefore the writer is interested to conduct a research entitled **THE CAPABILITY OF THE THIRD YEAR STUDENTS OF SMP N 2 PANEKAN MAGETAN IN UNDERSTANDING WRITTEN TEXTS.**

## **B. Underlying Theory**

### **1. Capability**

#### a. Notion of Capability

Capability is an integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities and understanding used appropriately and effectively - not just in familiar and highly focused specialist contexts but in response to new and changing circumstances.

b. Notion of Capability in Understanding Written Texts

The capability in understanding written texts is the ability to understand the content of the texts

**2. Understanding Written Texts**

According to Grellet (1981:3) understanding a written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible.

**3. Reading Comprehension**

a. Notion of Reading

Smith (1978) in Fauziati (2002:134) defines reading as more pragmatically as an understanding a message conveyed by the writer through visual and non-visual information.

b. Notion of Reading Comprehension

According to Kennedy (1981:192) reading comprehension can be defined as a thought process through which readers become aware of an idea, understand it in terms of their experiential background, and interpret it in relation to their own needs and purposes.

**4. Teaching Reading**

a. Background of Teaching Reading

Comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text (Fauziati, 2002:133).

b. Principles of Teaching Reading

According to Fauziati (2002:134) this principle results in two basic modes of information processing called bottom-up and top-down.

## **5. Reading Skills and Strategies**

### **a. Reading Skills**

According to Fauziati (2010:38) there are some reading skills that can be developed in Junior High School, they are as follows:

- 1) Advance Organizers
- 2) Previewing
- 3) Skimming and scanning
- 4) Prediction

### **b. Reading Strategies**

According to Readinga-z.com ([http://www.readinga-z.com/more/reading\\_strat.html](http://www.readinga-z.com/more/reading_strat.html)), the following strategies can help students understand any text in any subject.

- 1) Make predictions
- 2) Visualize
- 3) Ask and Answer Questions
- 4) Retell and Summarize
- 5) Connect the Text to Life Experiences, Other Texts, or Prior Knowledge

## **6. The Difficulties Faced by Students in Reading**

According to LearningRx.com (<http://students-with-reading-problems-faq.htm>) those problems include:

- a. Decoding
- b. Comprehension
- c. Retention

## **7. Teaching Reading**

### **a. Concept of Teaching Reading**

The key concept in teaching reading is a self-knowledge.

b. Principles of Teaching Reading

According to Nada Salem Abisamra

(<http://www.nadaisland.com/reading/>), the principles of teaching reading are as follows:

- 1) The Top Down (Concept-Driven) Approach
- 2) The Bottom Up (Serial) Approach

c. Strategies in Teaching Reading

- 1) Using everyday texts in a literacy program
- 2) Rhymes, phonemic activities
- 3) Strategies to help students read
- 4) Teaching students about phonemes
- 5) Building students' vocabularies and story sense
- 6) Literacy teaching and learning-From research to practice
- 7) Read aloud - a print awareness strategy
- 8) Dialogic reading
- 9) Print awareness - setting up the environment

d. Assessment of Reading Comprehension

- 1) Assessment Examples for Specific Areas of Reading
- 2) Letter Knowledge – The Ability to Associate Sounds with Letters
- 3) Phonemic Awareness - The Ability to Hear and Manipulate Sounds in Words
  - a) Decoding - The Process of Using Letter-sound Correspondences to Recognize Words
  - b) Fluency - The Automatic Ability to Read Words in Connected Text
  - c) Reading Comprehension – The Process of Understanding the Meaning of Text



## **C. Research Method**

### **1. Type of the Study**

This study is a descriptive quantitative research. The writer uses Product Moment Pearson Correlation (SPSS Version 16), Alpha Cronbach's, Arikunto's, and Sudijono's formulas.

### **2. Object and Subject of the Study**

The object of this research is written texts. The subject of this research is the third year students of *SMP N 2 Panekan Magetan* especially class IX A. There are 27 students in it.

### **3. Data and Data Sources**

The data of this research are the students' test results. The data sources of this research are test items and the informants (the students in class IX A and the English teacher).

### **4. Method of Collecting Data**

1. Test
2. Interview

Generally, there are two characteristics of test namely validity and reliability. They are as follows:

#### **a. Validity**

The validity is measured using Product Moment Pearson Correlation.

#### **b. Reliability**

The writer uses the Alpha Cronbach's formula to look for the reliability.

### **5. Technique for Analyzing Data**

1. Describing the students' test results and classifying the students' mastery based on the formula:

The level of mastery =  $\frac{\text{the right answers}}{\text{the number of items}} \times 100\%$

Note :

80% - 100% = good to excellent

60% - 79% = fair to good

50% - 59% = poor to fair

0% - 49% = poor

(Arikunto, 1992:221)

2. Describing the percentage of each indicator item of comprehension by using the following formula:

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

Where,

P : the percentage of the correct answers

f : the frequency of the correct answers

N : the number of the whole answers

(Sudijono, 1984:40)

3. Describing the students' difficulties in understanding written texts based on the test results. The writer also interviews the students and the teacher to know the causes of difficulties faced by the students in understanding written texts.
4. Drawing conclusion

## **D. Finding and Discussion**

### **1. Research Finding**

#### **a. The Capability of the Third Year Students of *SMP N 2 Panekan Magetan* in Understanding Written Texts**

The capability of the students in understanding written texts can be divided into four categories level of mastery, they are (a) poor level is 14.81% (4 students), (b) fair level is 29.63% (8 students), (c) good level is 48.15% (13 students), and (d) excellent level is 7.41% (2 students). The capability of the third year students of *SMP N 2 Panekan Magetan* in understanding written texts is good because most of the students get good level (48.15%).

#### **b. The Difficulties Faced by the Third Year Students of *SMP N 2 Panekan Magetan* in Understanding Written Texts**

Most of the students do not master (a) understanding the statement of exception and (b) understanding moral value.

#### **c. The Causes of Problems Faced by the Third Year Students of *SMP N 2 Panekan Magetan* in Understanding Written Texts**

Most of the students state that the causes of their difficulties are as follows:

- a. They seldom read English texts
- b. Lack of vocabulary
- c. They seldom read the dictionary
- d. They rarely pronounce English words in daily life

Then the students' difficulties caused by the teacher are:

- a. Teacher does not use various books in teaching reading
- b. Teacher has not used multimedia facilities
- c. The methods implemented by the teacher

## 2. Discussion

The capability of the students in understanding written texts can be divided into four categories of mastery level, they are (a) poor level is 14.81% (4 students), (b) fair level is 29.63% (8 students), (c) good level is 48.15% (13 students), and (d) excellent level is 7.41% (2 students). The capability of the students in understanding written texts is good because most of the students have good level. The writer finds that most of the students do not master some indicators of comprehension, those indicators are (a) understanding the statement of exception and (b) understanding moral value.

The students will try to make their understanding about written texts better, so they will do several things as follows:

- a. Reading English texts and the dictionary more often
- b. Learning how to pronounce English words and sentences
- c. Memorizing more vocabulary
- d. Asking the meaning of the difficult words to friends and teacher
- e. Reading English texts guided by the English teacher

The teacher will also try to improve the capability of the students in understanding written texts through these ways:

- a. Changing the students' mindsets that actually English is interesting
- b. Playing slow music in the class
- c. Teacher should really understand the genre of texts before teaching
- d. Teacher as a model in reading texts
- e. Group discussion
- f. Individual task
- g. Correcting the students' inappropriate pronunciation
- h. Giving additional scores to the active students

## **E. Conclusion and Suggestion**

### **1. Conclusion**

After collecting the data and analyzing them, the writer draws the following conclusions:

- a. The capability of the students in understanding written texts can be divided into four categories of mastery level, they are (a) poor level is 14.81% (4 students), (b) fair level is 29.63% (8 students), (c) good level is 48.15% (13 students), and (d) excellent level is 7.41% (2 students). Conclusion, the capability of the students in understanding written texts is good because most of the students have good level in their scores of the test.
- b. The problems faced by the students in understanding written texts are (a) understanding the statement of exception and (b) understanding moral value.
- c. The students' difficulties in understanding written texts are (a) they seldom read English texts, (b) lack of vocabulary, (c) they seldom read the dictionary, and (d) they rarely pronounce English words or sentences. Those are caused by the students themselves, while from the teacher the students' difficulties are because (a) teacher does not use various English books in teaching reading, (b) teacher has not used multimedia facilities, and (c) the methods implemented by the teacher.

### **2. Suggestion**

After the writer draws the conclusion of the capability of the students in understanding written texts, the writer proposes some suggestions for the teacher and the students.

- a. To the teacher
  - 1) After knowing the capability of the students in understanding written texts, the teacher can maintain and improve the methods in

teaching reading for increasing the capability of the students so that the students who belong to poor or fair level can be improved into good or excellent level.

- 2) The teacher should give various additional sources of English texts and use multimedia facilities to improve the students' understanding of written texts because reading will be more enjoyable if the materials are interesting and fun.
- b. To the students or readers
- 1) The students or readers should read various English texts and find the meaning of difficult words in the dictionary so that they will not lack of vocabulary and understand English texts better.
  - 2) Practicing English pronunciation will make the students and the readers more fluent in reading English texts.

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