

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE THIRD YEAR STUDENT'S ABILITY TO ANSWER  
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS IN TOEFL AT THE ENGLISH**

**DEPARTMENT OF BUNG HATTA UNIVERSITY**

**Harniken Farensya<sup>1)</sup>, Khairul<sup>1)</sup>**

**<sup>1,2</sup>English Department**

**The Faculty of Teacher Training and Education**

**Bung Hatta University**

Email: [harnikenfa@gmail.com](mailto:harnikenfa@gmail.com), [khairul.harha@bunghatta.ac.id](mailto:khairul.harha@bunghatta.ac.id)

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research is to describe the third year student's ability to answer comprehension questions in TOEFL text at the English Department of Bung Hatta University. The research design was descriptive research. The population of this research was the third year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University who registered in the academic year 2022/2023. She used total sampling technique to select the sample, and the number of sample was 29 students. To collect the data, TOEFL reading test was used.

Based of the result of data analysis, it was found that the students had low ability to answer comprehension questions in TOEFL text. It was supported by the fact that 22 students (75,9%) had low ability to answer comprehension questions. In detail, 17 students (58,6%) had low ability to answer comprehension questions requiring them to classify comprehension text, 20 students (69%) had low ability to answer comprehension questions requiring them to compare comprehension text, and 24 students (82,8) had low ability to answer comprehension questions requiring them to explain comprehension text.

In accordance with the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the students had low ability to answer comprehension questions in TOEFL text. Relating to such conclusion, the researcher gives some suggestions to lecturers, students, and future researchers. The lecturers are suggested to explain reading comprehension and other types of questions and give more exercises. The students should do more exercises of comprehension questions in TOEFL reading comprehension text. The future researchers are suggested to do research that studies other types of reading questions.

**Key Words: Reading, Comprehension Question, TOEFL**

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## INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of language skills that need to be considered by students. Students can learn all the material taught more effectively when they can read proficiently. Reading plays a significant role in language teaching. It is supposedly significant for teaching speaking, writing, and listening. Moreover, it is one very effective tool for obtaining a wide range of specific information, including science and technology, is reading comprehension. Reading is the most important skill among the four language skills as it can improve overall language proficiency.[1]

Reading comprehension is the application of a skill that evolved for other purposes (listening or oral comprehension) to a new form of input (text). Unlike listening comprehension, reading comprehension is not something for which our brains have evolved. Whereas oral comprehension seems to develop “naturally” with minimal deliberate intervention, reading comprehension is more challenging and requires deliberate instruction.[2]

Test of English as a Foreign Language, or TOEFL, is one of the English language proficiency testing that is used to measure students' English proficiency capabilities. This test evaluates the academic ability of an individual to use and understand the standard of American English at a university level.[3]

According to Mahmud TOEFL-like is a language testing type to knowing the students' English ability. The process to knowing the students' ability, students have to do the TOEFL-like test first. The time to do the TOEFL-like test is around two hours. There are four skills in TOEFL-like test; speaking, writing, reading, and listening. The TOEFL-like test is the most English measurement test used.[4]

Several studies related to reading on TOEFL had been conducted before. The first one was “An Analysis of Students' Ability in Comprehending TOEFL Reading Test at English Department Universitas Negeri Padang” conducted by Kurniawan (2020). The result of the study found that students' ability in comprehending TOEFL reading test at the English Department Universitas Negeri Padang was poor. It was also found that the students faced most problems in Indirectly Answered questions and Vocabulary question types. The second previous related study was “An Analysis of Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement at Second Semester Students of Bhinneka PGRI University in the Academic Year 2020/2021” was conducted by Agustin (2020). The result of this research shows that learning reading skills in the second semester TOEFL test in English Department at the University of Bhinneka PGRI in the 2020/2021 academic year got poor achievements. Because they experience several problems in learning, namely difficulty in accessing the internet, lack of vocabulary that students have, and the material obtained are difficult to capture. The third related previous research was “The Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension at Vocational High School in Padang” was conducted by Lisiana (2021). Based on the test results, most of the students had difficulty understanding vocabulary.[5,6,7]

Based on the discussion above, the researcher is motivated to investigate the ability of the third year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University to answer comprehension questions in reading section of TOEFL test. Generally, the purpose of this research is to describe the third-year students' ability to answer comprehension questions in reading

section of TOEFL test. This research focused on the third-year students' ability to answer comprehension questions in TOEFL test that require them to classify, compare, and explain comprehension questions in TOEFL text at the English Department of Bung Hatta University.

### METHODOLOGY

Descriptive method was used as the design of this research. According to Arikunto (2015) descriptive studies are designed to obtain the current status of phenomena and are direct toward determining the nature of situation as it exists at the time of the study. The population of this research was the third year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University. The population was 29 students. In this research, the researcher used total sampling due to the limited number of population members. Total population sampling is a type of purposive sampling where the whole population of interest (i.e., a group whose members all share a given characteristic) is studied. TOEFL-like Test was used to collect the data for this research, and the test was taken from *Practice Exercises for the TOEFL* by Sharpe (2015). The researcher took 30 questions of reading test, they consisted of 10 classify comprehension questions, 10 compare comprehension questions, and 10 explain comprehension questions. The test was constructed in the form of multiple choice. [8,9]

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data on students' ability to answer comprehension questions in TOEFL text were collected by using TOEFL reading comprehension test in the form of multiple choices test. The result of data analysis revealed that the highest score obtained by the students was 80, and the lowest one was 20. It also shows the mean was 41,28.

Student's ability are categorized into three, 75 – 100 was high, 60 – 74,99 was moderate and 0 – 59,99 was low. Based on this classification, the distribution of students by level of ability were shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Comprehension Questions

No	Ability	Number	percentage
1	High	3	10,3%
2	Moderate	4	13,8%
3	Low	22	75,9%

Table 1 above, indicates that the student's ability to answer comprehension questions was low.

For comprehension questions requiring to classify was found that the highest score got by students was 70, and the lowest one got by the students was 0. It also shows the mean was 44,82. The researcher classified the student's ability into high, moderate, and low as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Comprehension Questions Requiring to Classify

No.	Ability	Number	percentage
1	High	0	0%
2	Moderate	12	41,4%
3	Low	17	58,6%

Based on Table 2 above, it could be stated that the student's ability to answer comprehension questions requiring to classify was low.

In comprehension questions requiring to compare, it was found that the highest score was 90 and the lowest score was 10. It also shows the mean was 44,48. The researcher classified the student's ability into high, moderate, and low as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Comprehension Questions Requiring to Compare

No.	Ability	Number	percentage
1	High	7	24,1%

2	Moderate	2	6,9%
3	Low	20	69%

Table 3 above, indicates that the student's ability to answer comprehension questions requiring to compare was low.

For comprehension questions requiring to explain was found that the highest score got by students was 80, and the lowest one got by the students was 0. It also shows the mean was 34,48. The researcher classified the student's ability into high, moderate, and low as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Comprehension Questions Requiring to Explain

No.	Ability	Number	percentage
1	High	3	10,3%
2	Moderate	2	6,9%
3	Low	24	82,8%

Based on the table above, it can be stated that the student's ability to answer comprehension questions requiring to compare was low.

As already discussed previously, this research found that many students (75,9%) had low ability to answer comprehension questions in TOEFL text. It means that many students had difficulties to comprehend TOEFL text. This research finding was in line with the finding of studies conducted by Kurniawan (2020), Lisiana (2021), and Agustin (2022). They found that students' reading comprehension were poor.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and discussions, it can be concluded that the students had low ability to answer comprehension questions in TOEFL. The researcher proposes that the lecturers explain the types of comprehension questions and give more exercises on answering comprehension questions. The students are suggested to do more exercises on answering comprehension questions in

TOEFL reading comprehension test. The researcher suggests to further researchers to find out the factors that cause student's difficulty in answering questions in TOEFL and do research studying other types of questions.

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