

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Mastering reading comprehension is a pivotal skill for secondary school students, particularly within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings where instructional texts progressively demand higher conceptual and academic literacy. At the senior high school level, learners are required to move past literal word recognition toward synthesizing meaning, formulating logical inferences, and expressing key ideas in their own words. However, empirical findings reveal that Indonesian learners consistently face hurdles when processing English prose, especially within informational and expository genres. As noted by (Collins et al., 2021) international benchmarks such as PISA demonstrate that Indonesian students' reading literacy remains below the OECD average, underscoring an urgent demand for more impactful instructional approaches.

In Indonesian EFL classrooms, teachers frequently depend on conventional reading methods, such as silent reading followed by immediate question-and-answer sessions. Unfortunately, according to Kadek & Sudarmawan (2021), such conventional practices rarely foster higher-order mental engagement, including self-directed questioning, progress tracking, or rephrasing ideas. Empirical observations reveal that learners frequently skim passages solely to extract immediate answers, bypassing critical cognitive processing and strategic reading habits. This indicates a disconnect between the complexity of expository texts and the instructional support currently provided.

Expository texts are a staple in senior high school curricula, designed to present facts, explain concepts, or argue specific points. In order to comprehend these texts, students must

integrate their prior knowledge while identifying the text's primary concepts, supporting elements, and structure. García et al. (2023) note that although grasping text structure is essential, many learners still lack the active cognitive processing required to deeply understand and internalize intricate expository texts beyond their basic framework.

The challenges above are also evident at SMA Negeri 5 Tanjungpinang, particularly among eleventh-grade students. Many students find it difficult to understand the expository writings that are assigned in the curriculum, according to preliminary observations and casual conversations with English teachers. Common issues include difficulty identifying the main idea, limited vocabulary, a tendency to rely on literal reading, and challenges in paraphrasing information using their own words. Students often depend heavily on teacher guidance, and when asked to read independently, they focus on finding answers rather than understanding the entire passage. Teachers at SMA Negeri 5 Tanjungpinang also report that students' reading scores on expository-text assessments remain below the school's minimum competency standard (KKM), indicating that conventional instructional methods have not been fully effective in supporting deeper comprehension. This highlights an urgent need for strategies that actively promote meaning-making processes and metacognitive engagement.

To address these challenges, the RAP (Read, Ask, Paraphrase) strategy offers a method for active engagement. Students read a section, ask themselves key questions, and then paraphrase the content. According to Novasyari (2025), in a systematic literature review, notes that RAP originally known as "Read, Ask, Put" has been effective in improving reading comprehension from elementary to high school levels by fostering self-regulation. Similarly, Surayatika (2018) indicated that EFL learners using the RAP strategy showed statistically notable progress in their reading comprehension assessments.

Specific to the Indonesian context, Pertiwi et al. (2019) conducted research at SMK Zainul Hasan Balung, showing that pupils in the tenth grade who received instruction using

RAP demonstrated superior performance on the final assessment compared to the control cohort. Furthermore, Purba et al. (2024) reported the effectiveness of RAP in reading “news item” texts, where students' average scores increased significantly from 47.3 to 78 following the treatment. While these studies confirm the potential of RAP, they also suggest limitations related to text types and local school contexts.

Despite existing research, several gaps persist. First, previous studies often utilized narrative or descriptive texts rather than the expository texts common in senior high schools. For example, (Pashya et al., 2022) demonstrated the efficacy of RAP on descriptive genres with eighth graders; however, those outcomes cannot be directly extrapolated to expository materials. Second, empirical literature remains sparse regarding how learners navigate individual RAP steps when interacting with highly dense, informative texts. Third, contextual issues at the school level such as the reading habits, instructional routines, and performance of students at SMA Negeri 5 Tanjungpinang remain underexplored, even though these factors strongly influence reading outcomes.

Addressing these gaps, the present research introduces novelty by applying the RAP strategy specifically to expository texts at SMA Negeri 5 Tanjungpinang using a quasi-experimental design. The study’s novelty is threefold: (1) it focuses on expository texts within the senior high school curriculum; (2) it is tailored to the distinct student population of Grade XI at SMA Negeri 5 Tanjungpinang, in which reading comprehension difficulties have been documented; and (3) it examines the actual process of RAP usage in this setting, contributing to the body of knowledge on Indonesian EFL reading instruction.

Based on this background, this study posits that the RAP strategy will significantly enhance students’ comprehension of expository texts at SMA Negeri 5 Tanjungpinang. It fills a critical research gap by targeting a specific genre and local context. The expectation is that

the experimental group will outperform the control group, offering valuable insights for English teachers seeking to integrate RAP into expository reading instruction in Indonesian senior high schools.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Preliminary observations and discussions with English teachers at SMA Negeri 5 Tanjungpinang revealed a number of issues with students' comprehension of expository texts:

- a. Students are encountering persistent difficulties in comprehending expository texts. Learners often struggle to derive coherent meaning from factual and concept-based texts, leading to incomplete understanding. As a result, navigating the logical structure of expository prose remains challenging, making it hard to grasp the underlying message. This challenge is reflected in their consistently low performance on reading comprehension tasks that require deeper processing.
- b. Students are experiencing weaknesses in identifying key reading components: determining the main idea, locating supporting facts, inferring implicit meanings, interpreting context-bound vocabulary, and identifying referents. The central idea of a text is frequently misinterpreted or overlooked, while essential supporting details are not distinguished from minor information. Inferential thinking remains limited, and determining word meaning from context or recognizing reference cues (such as pronouns and lexical ties) often becomes problematic. These shortcomings demonstrate gaps in both literal and interpretive comprehension skills.
- c. Students are not familiar with the RAP (Read, Ask, Paraphrase) strategy, which limits their ability to engage in effective reading processes. Reading activities tend to rely on passive processing instead of strategic engagement. Without a structured approach

such as RAP, learners lack mechanisms to monitor comprehension, formulate guiding questions, and paraphrase key information. As a result, reading becomes mechanical rather than analytical, which reduces the effectiveness of their engagement with expository texts.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

The study focuses is on how the RAP strategy affects students' comprehension of expository texts in the eleventh grade at SMAN 5 Tanjungpinang in the academic year 2025/2026.

1.4 Research Question

Is there any significant effect of using the RAP (Read, Ask, Paraphrase) strategy on the reading comprehension of eleventh-grade students in expository texts at SMAN 5 Tanjungpinang?

1.5 Research Objective

The objective of this research is to determine whether the use of the RAP (Read, Ask, Paraphrase) strategy has a significant effect on students' reading comprehension of expository texts at SMA Negeri 5 Tanjungpinang.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

Ultimately, this research offers meaningful theoretical and empirical insights for the field of ELT, specifically regarding the effectiveness of the RAP strategy in advancing students' reading comprehension:

a. Theoretical

This research aims to expand the current literature on targeted strategies for improving reading comprehension performance, specifically those emphasizing active engagement and

cognitive processing. The RAP strategy facilitates understanding of expository texts by encouraging students to read deliberately, generate inquiries, and paraphrase key information. This process aligns with theories of metacognitive awareness and schema activation in reading. Additionally, the study's findings might support the hypothesis that teaching students specific strategies greatly improves their comprehension of complicated literature.

b. Practical

1) For Students:

By actively using the RAP strategy, this study strives to elevate students' capacity for understanding written texts effectively. It fosters the habit of being active and independent readers capable of processing, questioning, and restating ideas effectively. Consequently, this builds students' confidence and contributes to better academic performance in English subjects.

2) For Teachers:

This study offers an evidence-based alternative strategy to enhance the effectiveness of reading instruction. The RAP strategy provides a structured framework that teachers can utilize to help students dismantle and comprehend expository texts more effectively. The study's insights offer a valuable pedagogical guide for English 9 teachers looking to implement active learning methodologies in their day-to-day instruction.

3) For Future Researchers:

For comparable studies in various situations, skill levels, or text genres, this study can be used as a reference or comparative source. To further increase student involvement, future research may examine how the RAP strategy might be integrated with other teaching techniques or digital resources. Ultimately, the

findings are expected to inspire continued innovation in language education and strategybased learning.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

The following operational definitions of the major terminology are provided to ensure clarity and prevent misunderstandings regarding the concepts used in this study:

1. RAP Strategy

Operationalized in this study, the RAP strategy refers to an instructional intervention structured into three sequential steps: To increase comprehension, they should read a section of the material, ask questions about the primary topic, and paraphrase by restating the information in their own words.

2. Reading Comprehension

It speaks to pupils' quantifiable capacity to derive meaning from explanatory materials. The ability to recognize key concepts, facts that support them, as well as inferring meaning, are quantitatively evaluated using pre- and post-intervention assessment scores.

3. Expository Text

Expository text refers to the type of non-fiction text used in this study which aims to explain or present factual information. This material is aligned with the *Kurikulum Merdeka* and serves as a medium for implementing the RAP strategy.