

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARD THEIR ABILITY  
IN COMPREHENDING NARRATIVE AND RECOUNT TEXT: A STUDY  
AT ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING STUDY PROGRAM OF  
THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF PADANG**

**THESIS**

*Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements to Obtain  
Strata One (S1) degree*



**By:**

**Khairunnisa Lukman  
83574 / 07**

**Advisors:**

**Dra. Yenni Rozimela, M.Ed., Ph.D.  
Rima Andriani Sari, S.Pd., M.Hum.**

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS  
THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF PADANG  
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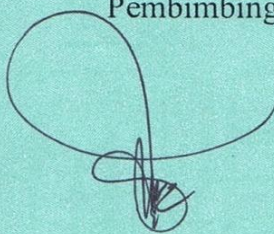
## HALAMAN PERSETUJUAN SKRIPSI

Judul : Students' Perceptions toward Their Ability in  
Comprehending Narrative and Recount Text: A Study at  
English Language Teaching Study Program of the State  
University of Padang  
Nama : Khairunnisa Lukman  
NIM/BP : 83574/2007  
Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris  
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris  
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

Padang, 10 Januari 2012

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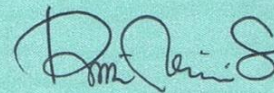
Pembimbing I



**Dra. Yenni Rozimela, M.Ed., Ph.D.**

NIP. 19620919 198703 2 002

Pembimbing II



**Rima Andriani Sari, S.Pd., M.Hum.**

NIP. 19760529 200501 2 003

Diketahui,

Ketua Jurusan



**Dr. Kurnia Ningsih, M.A.**

NIP. 19540626 198203 2 001



**HALAMAN PENGESAHAN LULUS UJIAN SKRIPSI**

*Dinyatakan Lulus Setelah Dipertahankan Didepan Tim Penguji Skripsi*

*Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni*

*Universitas Negeri Padang*

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Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris  
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris  
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

Padang, 10 Januari 2012

Tim Penguji,

Nama	Tanda Tangan
1. Ketua : Dra. Yenni Rozimela, M.Ed., Ph.D.	1. ....
2. Sekretaris : Rima Andriani Sari, S.Pd., M.Hum.	2. ....
3. Anggota : Dr. Desmawati Radjab, M.Pd.	3. ....
4. Anggota : Drs. Jufri, M.Pd.	4. ....
5. Anggota : Dr. Kusni, M.Pd.	5. ....



## ABSTRAK

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Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui persepsi mahasiswa jurusan *Bahasa Inggris* Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP) terhadap kemampuan mereka dalam memahami teks *Narrative* dan *Recount*. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif dengan populasi seluruh mahasiswa Pendidikan *Bahasa Inggris* tahun ajaran 2008. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah angket dan interview.

Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa mahasiswa beranggapan kemampuan mereka dalam memahami teks *Narrative* dan *Recount* bagus. Akan tetapi, persepsi siswa tidak mencerminkan kemampuan pemahaman mereka dilihat dari hasil penelitian lain menyangkut kemampuan pemahaman bacaan dan nilai ujian mereka yang bisa dikatakan tidak bagus atau rendah. Dari keenam keahlian yang membangun kemampuan pemahaman, yaitu *Automatic recognition skills*, *Vocabulary and structural knowledge*, *Formal discourse structure knowledge*, *Content/world background knowledge*, *Synthesis and evaluation skills/strategies*, dan *Metacognitive knowledge and skills monitoring*, mahasiswa paling yakin dengan pengetahuan struktural mereka tentang text *formal and discourse structural knowledge*. Disisi lain, mereka kurang yakin dengan kemampuan berpikir kritis mereka *synthesis and evaluation skills/strategies knowledge*. Faktor yang mempengaruhi siswa dalam membuat persepsi bahwa kemampuan pemahaman mereka bagus yaitu nilai, materi dikelas, percaya diri yang tinggi dan kebutuhan yang berbeda-beda.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **A. Background of the problem**

Reading is a process of interaction between a reader and a printed text. Readers do not need much effort on reading if the purpose is to get pleasure. However, if the purpose is to get comprehension, a complex process of reading will take place. For college students, reading for understanding is mostly done since they are advance learner and they face higher level reading materials.

As students who are in the field of language, English students in the State University of Padang are encouraged to read a lot. This becomes a must since they are in the field of language itself. Both students majoring education and literature in this department are given four reading courses. Those are *Reading 1*, *Reading 2*, *Reading 3*, and *Extensive Reading*. These courses are prerequisite, which means the students cannot take Reading 2, Reading 3, Extensive Reading if they have not passed Reading 1 yet.

According to the syllabuses, in *Reading 1* simple reading skills such as punctuation, context clues, key ideas, references words, topic sentences, supporting details are taught. Then, in *Reading 2* those students need to learn more complex skills in the form of spoof, anecdote, recount, narrative, and news item. After that, in *Reading 3* the students are provided with the other reading skills (skimming and scanning), finding unstated main ideas, paragraph pattern of

passages, articles, and textbook in different kind of text types. The last course is *Extensive Reading* which consists of theories and practices. See Appendix 1.

Based on the description above, it can be said that the third year students in academic year 2008 who have taken those four courses should be able to comprehend materials that they will face in their other courses later on. It is argued this way because the courses after that will be more complex and difficult. Although the department has tried to offer courses and material that they think can develop and increase students reading comprehension, problems still exist. As stated before, the needs to have good ability in reading comprehension cannot be fulfilled by the students yet.

However, based on the research done by a team of lecturers in English Department toward reading ability of fourth year students, it can be concluded that the English students' reading comprehension is low. In their research those students are asked to answer questions of six types of texts (both fiction and non-fiction text) given to them. There are two texts for each text type and eight questions for each of the text. As a result, there are sixteen questions for each text type. In average, those students can only answer 4 questions for each text type. If we convert it into percentage, the students' ability in comprehending those 12 texts is 25% which is very low.

It can also be seen from the final score of Reading 3 in three classes. The mean scores are 58.17, 57.14, and 63.04 which can be considered low. Moreover, it can be strengthen by the interview done to several Reading lecturers. Those lecturers thought that English Department students reading comprehension ability is low.



Some of them argued that it maybe because lack of practice, because they do not have independency in learning, or because of low reading ability when they passed junior and senior high school.

It is stated before that the English students' reading comprehension is low, so there maybe problems in the teaching and learning process. In the relation to these, Roestiyah (1996) argues that there are two factors which influence learning process; external and internal factors. She explains that external factors are factors from outside the person, like educator and material.

At the English Department of the State University of Padang, there are several lecturers for teaching the four reading courses. Each course is taught by two lecturers, except for *Extensive Reading*. For example, there are two lecturers who teach Reading 1 in a class. It can be assumed that by having two lecturers for each class, it will be easier to achieve the purposes or goals of teaching reading courses. However, there are possibilities that a lecturer teaches different class in the next courses. As stated before, those reading courses are prerequisite. As a result, the lecturers need to be sure that their students can continue to the next reading course. Nevertheless, there will be problem if the lecturers do not teach the same class in the next course.

Besides, the material itself can also be problems. After reading and analyzing the syllabus of the four courses, the researcher found that there is repetition in some reading skills. In addition, some important reading strategies are not taught, such as identifying difficulties and knowing the text structure. Since the English education students are taught to be teachers in the future,

knowledge about text structure is needed. Moreover, narrative and recount text is learned in *Reading 2* only.

Moreover, Roestiyah (1996) explains the other factors that can influence the success of a course. It is internal factors which come from the students themselves, like motivation and perception. When we talk about psychological aspects, it means we talk about several things which are different among students. Motivation can be from inside and outside the students. If the motivation comes from the students themselves, it means that they have internal motivation. On the other hand, if the motivation comes from the environment, it is called external motivation.

The other internal factor is perception. Perception is the process of making inferences so that we can construct our own version of reality differently. The perception that is mentioned here is the way those students value/view themselves/their ability. Some students might think that they are good at something, but some might be not. Furthermore, it can be said that how they perceive their comprehension ability can affect their real comprehension ability.

To overcome the problems above, knowing students perception toward their reading comprehension ability is one of the possible ways. Williams and Colomb in Clark (2003) say that “what you do not know will not help you”. In other word, it will be easier to solve a problem if we know what the problem exactly is than if we do not even know the problems. Although based on the research done by some lecturers show that students’ reading comprehension ability is low, it does not mean that the students themselves know it. Therefore,



asking the students' perceptions toward their reading comprehension ability may figure out the problem.

## **B. Identification of the problem**

From the previous background, it can be seen that there are some factors which make students unable to master reading comprehension ability. First are the external factors which come from outside the person, like educator and material. Sometimes, there are cases where students do not feel enjoyable while learning with certain type of people. In addition, the lecturers cannot make sure which student can continue to the next course, because there are possibilities that the lecturers teach different classes in the next courses. The material can be a problem too if it does not fulfill the curriculum demand.

The other factors that can affect students in learning are the internal factors, like motivation and perception toward their ability. Someone's ability can be developed if they have high motivation in it. In addition, students' perception toward their reading comprehension ability can also be one of the factors. Not all of those students know their ability, especially in reading comprehension. It is possible that the students think that their comprehension ability is good although based on the research explained before their reading comprehension ability is low. Their various perceptions will later show the influencing factors why their comprehension ability is low.

### **C. Limitation of the problem**

There is an assumption made by the researcher that the students' perception toward their comprehension ability plays important part in reading, as Ludwig (2007) argues that someone's perception toward reading will influence their reading ability. The students' various perceptions will figure out how they perceive their reading comprehension ability. In the State University of Padang, students majoring English education learn several types of texts. However, the writer will only talk about students' perception toward their ability in comprehending narrative and recount text.

The researcher chose narrative and recount only since both of them are mostly learned in Junior and Senior high school, especially Narrative text. It is almost learned in every semester based on the Syllabus. Moreover, these texts are difficult to comprehend. As Oktaviandi (2007) says that the genre which tells story is more difficult than other genre. Similarly, Knapp in Knapp and Watkins (2005:220) argues that narratives are one the commonly read but least understood by the readers.

In addition, those texts are similar and confusing for the students. The similarity that is meant by the researcher here is on the generic structure and lexicogrammatical features of both texts. Due to explanation above, it can be said that English education students should know and comprehend these text well. Unfortunately, these two texts are rarely discussed in Reading classes. That is why the problem in this research is limited to the analysis of students' perception toward their ability in comprehending narrative and recount text.



#### **D. Formulation of the problem**

The problem of this research is formulated as follows “What are the perceptions of English department students’ toward their ability in comprehending Narrative and Recount text?”

#### **E. Research questions**

- a. What are the students’ perceptions toward their ability in comprehending narrative text?
- b. What are the students’ perceptions toward their ability in comprehending recount text?

#### **F. Purpose of the research**

Generally, this research is aimed to describe the perceptions of English students toward their ability in comprehending narrative and recount text.

#### **G. Significance of the research**

It is expected that this research will contribute to the development of teaching and learning process of reading subject in English Language Teaching as a Second language Program in State University of Padang. The researcher also hopes that this research can prepare the English students in having good mastery in reading since they will be teachers in the future. In addition, it will be very useful if this research can suggest English Department to do some improvement in

teaching reading to the students. Last but not least, it is hoped that this research can be a reference for further research.

#### **H. Definition of key term**

1. Perception : The process by which English Department students in apprehending something; it is personal.
2. Reading comprehension : The process by which English Department students draw meaning and interpret Narrative and Recount text.
3. Narrative text : The short stories which is aimed at entertaining the readers and changing social opinions and attitudes
4. Recount text : The text which is aimed at retelling events for the purpose of informing or entertaining.