



Teacher's Difficulties in Teaching Reading Skills in Exposition Text at SMAN 1 Percut Sei Tuan

¹Yohana Putri S. Simanjuntak^{ID}, ²Ameera Fadhillah^{ID}, ³Annisa Salsabilah^{ID}

^{1,2,3}English Education, State University of Medan,
INDONESIA

¹yohanaputri14@gmail.com

²meerafdhllh20@gmail.com

³annisasalsabila121@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history:</p> <p>Receive: 26/05/2026 Revised: 30/05/2026 Accept ed: 14/06/2026</p>	<p>This study explores the teacher's difficulties in teaching reading skills in exposition texts at SMAN 1 Percut Sei Tuan. The research focuses on identifying the challenges faced by the teacher in teaching students' reading skills. Through a qualitative analysis, the study identifies that the teacher encountered several difficulties is related to the student's limited vocabulary, lack of students' reading comprehension, pronunciation, students' reading interest, and provide the variety of reading materials. The student's ability to read aloud the text clearly is still low. Mispronunciation words and their interest in reading exposition text were reflected in their unenthusiastic participation during classroom reading activities and their lack of initiative in answering the teacher's questions while reading the text. Furthermore, the findings highlight that these difficulties affected the teaching and learning process into a stiff and less enjoyable classroom atmosphere. It make the teacher often had repeatedly explain the text and guide the students just to read it properly. Despite of that difficulties, the overall results emphasize that the importance ability of the teacher to manage on how the exposition text is understandable and suitable for the students' english level is important to adapt for the effective teaching reading skills. The study concludes that the difficulties are interconnected and influenced by students' ability, motivation and classroom engagement.</p>
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Correspondence:

Yohana Putri S. Simanjuntak

yohanaputri14@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

English is widely recognized as an international language that plays an essential role in global communication, education, and technology. In Indonesia, the importance of English is reflected in national educational policies, particularly through the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes the development of communicative, competence and language skills, including reading skills (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, 2022). As one of the fundamental language skills, reading enables students to acquire information, develop critical thinking and enhance language proficiency.

Reading is not merely the activity of decoding written symbols but also a complex cognitive process that involves comprehension, interpretation and fluency. According to Richards (2015), reading is an integrated process that combines vocabulary knowledge, grammatical understanding, discourse processing, and background knowledge to construct meaning from texts. In addition, reading fluency is an essential component of reading skills because it reflects students' ability to read accurately, smoothly, and meaningfully without excessive hesitation. Harmer (2007) states that reading aloud activities can improve students' pronunciation awareness, fluency, and confidence in language use. Similarly, Richards (2015) emphasizes that oral reading activities contribute to students' accuracy and overall language performance. Thus, reading skills involve not only comprehension but also pronunciation, fluency, word recognition, and the ability to understand the organization of ideas in a text.

Several components contribute to successful reading skills. Richards (2015) identifies word recognition and vocabulary knowledge as fundamental aspects of reading because students must be able to recognize written words accurately and understand their meanings efficiently. In addition, grammatical

and syntactic processing are necessary to help students understand sentence structures and interpret meaning appropriately. Another important component is discourse processing, which enables students to identify main ideas, supporting details, and logical relationships within a text. Furthermore, background knowledge or schema also influences students' understanding because readers interpret texts based on their previous experiences and knowledge. These interconnected components ultimately support reading fluency and comprehension. At the senior high school level, students are required to learn various genres of texts, including exposition texts. According to Hyland (2004), exposition texts are designed to present arguments systematically in order to persuade readers about a particular viewpoint. Similarly, Knapp and Watkins (2005) explain that exposition texts focus on presenting arguments supported by evidence and logical reasoning. Exposition texts generally consist of thesis, arguments, and reiteration or recommendation. Due to their argumentative structure, formal language, and complex vocabulary, exposition texts are often considered challenging for students. Students are not only expected to understand the content of the text but also to read it fluently and accurately during classroom reading activities.

In the teaching and learning process, teachers play a significant role in teaching students' reading skills. Teachers are expected to select appropriate learning materials, implement effective teaching strategies, and guide students in understanding and reading texts successfully. However, teaching reading skills is not always easy because teachers frequently encounter various classroom difficulties. Streitz (1925) identifies five major difficulties in teaching reading skills, namely developing students' interest in reading, training fluency in word and phrase recognition, providing appropriate supplementary reading materials, developing reading comprehension, and training students to recognize difficult words or letters. These difficulties indicate that teaching reading requires not only instructional competence but also the ability to adapt teaching methods and materials to students' needs and proficiency levels. Several previous studies have also reported similar challenges in teaching reading skills. Zhofiroh, Nuraeningsih, and Romadhan (2025) found that English teachers experienced difficulties in selecting appropriate teaching strategies, adapting materials to students' varying proficiency levels, and

managing mixed-ability classrooms. Although teachers applied strategies such as scaffolding, think-aloud, and SQ3R, students still faced comprehension problems during reading activities. Similarly, Putri (2024) revealed that both teachers and students encountered difficulties in teaching and learning analytical exposition texts, particularly in vocabulary understanding, identifying main ideas, and comprehending the structure of exposition texts. Teachers also experienced challenges in guiding students to analyze argumentative texts effectively. Furthermore, Kalzan, Jismulatif, and Prawati (2021) found that students had difficulties understanding analytical exposition texts because of limited vocabulary mastery, inability to identify generic structures, and problems interpreting language features. In addition, Qader et al. (2024) highlighted that classroom reading practices often fail to support students' reading development effectively due to methodological limitations and insufficient learning resources. Almusharraf (2024) also identified a gap between curriculum expectations and classroom implementation, indicating that teachers may struggle to conduct reading instruction effectively in real classroom situations.

Preliminary observations conducted at SMAN 1 Percut Sei Tuan revealed that many students experienced difficulties in reading exposition texts fluently and accurately. Several students hesitated while reading aloud, mispronounced words, demonstrated low confidence, and showed limited participation during classroom reading activities. In addition, students often struggled to understand unfamiliar vocabulary and complex sentence structures found in exposition texts. The teacher also reported difficulties in managing reading activities, maintaining students' interest, and implementing appropriate strategies to improve students' reading performance. These classroom conditions indicate that the teaching of reading skills in exposition texts remains a significant challenge. Although previous studies have discussed students' reading difficulties and general challenges in teaching reading comprehension, limited studies specifically investigate teachers' difficulties in teaching reading skills in exposition texts at the senior high school level. Most previous studies focus more on students' comprehension problems rather than on the specific challenges faced by teachers during teaching process in the

classroom. Therefore, this study aims to explore the teachers' difficulties in teaching reading skills in exposition texts at SMAN 1 Percut Sei Tuan. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to English language teaching by providing insights into classroom challenges and supporting teachers more adaptive and effective strategies in teaching students' reading skills, comprehension, and classroom engagement.

METHOD

The This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design. According to John W. Creswell (2012), qualitative research is used to explore and understand phenomena in depth. The qualitative descriptive approach was chosen because it enabled the researcher to obtain detailed and natural data regarding the teacher's difficulties in teaching reading skills in exposition texts. This study was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan. The subject of this study was one English teacher at SMAN 1 Percut Sei Tuan.

The data collection technique used in this study was a semi-structured interview. According to Miller, Strang, and Miller (2010), interviews are data collection techniques characterized by interaction between the interviewer and the participant, aiming to obtain in-depth information regarding participants' experiences and perspectives. In this study, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with the English teacher to explore the difficulties encountered in teaching reading skills in exposition texts as well as the strategies used to overcome those difficulties. The interview consisted of open-ended questions that allowed the participant to freely describe experiences, opinions, and classroom practices. The interview was conducted directly with the teacher and recorded to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data. In addition, documentation of classroom activities was also collected to support and strengthen the interview data.

The data in this study consisted of interview recordings, interview transcripts, and documentation related to teaching activities. The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman (1984), which includes three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. First, in the data reduction

stage, the researcher selected, simplified, and focused the data obtained from interviews and documentation. Irrelevant information was reduced while important information related to the research objectives was identified and categorized. Second, in the data display stage, the reduced data were organized and presented in descriptive form to help the researcher identify patterns, relationships, and categories related to the teacher's difficulties and strategies in teaching reading skills. In the conclusion drawing and verification stage, the researcher drew conclusions based on the analyzed data and continuously verified the findings by comparing interview data with documentation to ensure the credibility and consistency of the results

FINDINGS

Data

The data interview obtained after the following the teaching English specifically the exposition text "The benefits of getting Covid-19 Vaccine Disease" with one of the English teacher in SMA Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan who taught English in INGLANBIO 2 classroom. The observation focused on the teaching of exposition texts entitled "*The Benefits of Getting Covid-19 Vaccine Disease.*" In addition to the interview data, supporting data were collected through classroom documentation and direct observation of the teaching and learning activities. During the observation, the researcher carefully examined the teacher's instructional practices, particularly the way the teacher guided students in reading exposition texts, provided reading instructions, corrected pronunciation, and managed classroom participation during reading activities. The collected data were analyzed to identify the teacher's difficulties in teaching reading skills in exposition texts. The analysis was based on the theory proposed by Streit (1925), who identifies five major difficulties in teaching reading skills, namely: (1) developing students' interest in reading, (2) training fluency in word and phrase recognition, (3) providing appropriate supplementary reading materials, (4) developing reading comprehension, and (5) training students to recognize difficult words or letters

Data Analysis

The data obtained from interviews, classroom observations, and documentation were analyzed qualitatively to identify the teacher's difficulties in teaching reading skills in exposition texts. In analyzing the data, this study employed the theoretical framework proposed by Streitz (1925), who identifies five major difficulties in teaching reading skills. These difficulties include: (1) developing students' interest in reading, (2) training fluency in word and phrase recognition, (3) providing appropriate supplementary reading materials, (4) developing reading comprehension, and (5) training students to recognize difficult words or letters. These aspects were used as the main analytical indicators in interpreting the findings of the study. The researcher systematically categorized and interpreted the collected data based on those five aspects in order to determine the specific difficulties experienced by the teacher in classroom practice. The findings are presented and discussed in detail in the following sections according to each category of difficulty identified in Streitz's theory.

Teacher's Difficulties in Teaching Reading Skills In Exposition Text

1. Developing interest in Reading

The first difficulty is developing students' interest in reading. Streitz (1925) explains that teachers often face challenges in motivating students to engage in reading activities. This lack of interest may be caused by unsuitable reading materials, such as texts that are too difficult or already familiar to students.

Based on the interview data, the teacher stated that:

“ada adik-adik yang... takut atau suaranya pelan”

“kita buat ... diskusi dengan teman”

“tutor teman sebaya meningkatkan kepercayaan diri”

These statements indicate that some students feel afraid, lack confidence, and participate with low voice levels during reading activities. This behavior reflects hesitation and low engagement, which are strong indicators of limited interest in reading. According to the theory, lack of interest may stem from inappropriate teaching methods or unengaging materials. In this case, although the teacher does not explicitly state “students lack interest,” the students' fear and hesitation

clearly imply low motivation and engagement.

2. Training Fluency in Word and Phrase Recognition

The second difficulty is training students to achieve fluency in recognizing words and phrases. According to Streitz (1925), fluent reading requires the ability to recognize written words quickly and associate them with their meanings

The teacher explained:

“dalam membaca perlu konsistensi”

“harus jelas, tegas”

“kesalahan harus diperbaiki dan diulang berkali-kali”

The need for repeated correction indicates that students do not yet achieve automatic recognition of words and phrases, which is essential for reading fluency. The teacher’s emphasis on repetition and consistency reflects the ongoing struggle students face in achieving fluency. If students were already fluent, repeated correction would not be necessary. Therefore, the presence of these teaching strategies indicates that fluency remains a significant challenge.

3. Providing Appropriate Supplementary Materials

The third difficulty is securing appropriate supplementary reading materials. Streitz (1925) notes that school reading materials are often insufficient or not suitable for students’ needs. In many cases, the difficulty level of available texts does not match students’ abilities.

The teacher stated:

“ada perpustakaan, multimedia”

“cari teks yang sama dengan judul berbeda”

“pemanfaatan fasilitas yang ada secara mandiri”

These responses show that the teacher actively uses available resources such as the library and multimedia tools and attempts to find alternative texts with similar content. According to Streitz (1925), one common difficulty is the mismatch between reading materials and students’ ability levels. Materials may be too difficult, too easy, or not engaging enough, which can hinder reading

development. The challenge lies more in optimizing available resources rather than lacking them.

4. Developing Reading Comprehension

The fourth difficulty is helping students achieve reading comprehension. Streitz (1925) explains that students often read faster than their ability to understand the text. This gap between reading speed and comprehension may be caused by limited vocabulary knowledge.

The teacher explained:

“murid harus mengerti isi teks”

“belum tahu teks ini mau diapain”

“masih meraba-raba”

“kosa kata mempengaruhi kecepatan membaca”

These statements clearly show that students struggle to understand the content and purpose of exposition texts. The phrase “masih meraba-raba” indicates that students are still guessing or unsure about how to interpret the text. Additionally, limited vocabulary is identified as a key factor affecting comprehension and reading speed. This finding strongly supports Streitz’s (1925) theory, which states that students often read as it is than their level of understanding. According to the theory, this gap between reading speed and comprehension is caused by limited vocabulary, insufficient practice, and low motivation. Students are able to read the text, but they fail to fully understand its meaning and purpose. This indicates a clear gap between decoding words and comprehending the text.

5. Training Recognition of Difficult Words

The fifth difficulty is training students to recognize difficult words or letters. Streitz (1925) highlights that some students experience confusion in distinguishing similar word forms or letters. The teacher stated:

“dari kata mudah ke sulit”

“belajar pengucapan dengan bantuan media”

“pengucapan harus tepat”

“Harus diulang berkali – kali pengucapan kata yang tidak familiar. Namun sulit diikuti oleh anak – anak bahkan ada yang masih kurang lancar membaca dalam Bahasa indoneisa apalagi teks berbahasa inggris”.

These responses indicate that the teacher focuses on gradual vocabulary development and correct pronunciation. This approach helps students improve their reading accuracy step by step.

The difficulty in training students’ fluency in word and phrase recognition is clearly evident. The teacher highlights the importance of continuous practice, repetition, and clear pronunciation, indicating that students have not yet achieved automatic word recognition. This finding is in line with Streitz’s explanation that reading fluency develops gradually and requires consistent reinforcement over time.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that the English teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan experienced several difficulties in teaching reading skills in exposition texts. These difficulties were related to students’ low interest in reading, lack of reading fluency, limited vocabulary mastery, difficulties in reading comprehension, and problems in recognizing and pronouncing unfamiliar words. The findings indicate that the challenges in teaching reading skills are interconnected because students’ vocabulary limitations, low confidence, and lack of engagement influenced their ability to read exposition texts fluently and comprehend the content effectively. In addition, these conditions also affected the classroom atmosphere and required the teacher to provide repeated guidance and correction during reading activities.

The first finding showed that developing students’ interest in reading became one of the major difficulties faced by the teacher. Based on the interview data, several students felt afraid and lacked confidence when participating in reading activities. Students tended to read with low voice levels and hesitated while reading aloud. To overcome this condition, the teacher attempted to apply peer discussion and peer tutoring activities to increase students’ confidence. This finding indicates that students’ low participation and hesitation reflected limited

motivation and engagement during reading activities. This condition is consistent with Streitz's (1925) theory, which explains that teachers often experience difficulties in motivating students to become actively involved in reading activities. Streitz further states that unsuitable materials and less engaging instructional approaches may influence students' attitudes toward reading. The finding of this study also supports the study conducted by Zhofiroh, Nuraeningsih, and Romadhan (2025), which found that teachers experienced challenges in managing students with different reading abilities and maintaining students' engagement during reading instruction. The low interest in reading may occur because exposition texts contain formal language, argumentative structures, and unfamiliar vocabulary that make students feel less confident and less motivated to participate actively.

The second finding revealed that training students' fluency in word and phrase recognition remained a significant challenge in the classroom. The teacher emphasized that reading requires consistency, clear pronunciation, and repeated correction. The teacher frequently asked students to repeat words several times to improve pronunciation accuracy and reading fluency. This finding indicates that students had not yet achieved automatic word recognition, which is an important aspect of fluent reading. According to Streitz (1925), fluency develops gradually through continuous practice and repeated exposure to words and phrases. The need for repetition and correction suggests that students still struggled to recognize words quickly and accurately while connecting them with meaning. This finding is also supported by Richards (2015), who states that reading fluency involves smooth, accurate, and efficient reading without excessive hesitation. Furthermore, the present finding is relevant to the study conducted by Putri (2024), which revealed that students experienced difficulties in vocabulary understanding and reading fluency when reading analytical exposition texts. The difficulty may occur because students are not sufficiently exposed to English reading practices, causing them to rely heavily on teacher guidance during oral reading activities.

The third finding showed that providing appropriate supplementary reading materials also became a challenge in teaching reading skills. The teacher explained that available facilities such as the library and multimedia resources

were utilized to support reading instruction. In addition, the teacher attempted to find alternative texts with similar topics but different titles to help students understand the material more easily. Although learning resources were available, the challenge was related to selecting materials that matched students' English proficiency levels and interests. This finding is consistent with Streitz's (1925) theory, which explains that one of the major difficulties in teaching reading is selecting suitable supplementary materials because texts may be too difficult, too easy, or not interesting for students. The finding also supports the study conducted by Qader et al. (2024), which reported that methodological limitations and insufficient learning resources often hinder effective reading instruction in classrooms. Similarly, Almusharraf (2024) identified that teachers frequently experience difficulties in implementing curriculum expectations because classroom materials and practices do not always support students' actual learning needs. This condition may occur because exposition texts generally contain complex sentence structures and academic vocabulary that are difficult for students with limited English proficiency.

The fourth finding indicated that developing students' reading comprehension remained a major difficulty in teaching exposition texts. The teacher explained that students often did not fully understand the purpose and content of the texts and were still "guessing" while interpreting the information. Limited vocabulary mastery also affected students' reading speed and understanding. This finding demonstrates that students were able to read the text aloud but still struggled to comprehend its meaning completely. According to Streitz (1925), students frequently read beyond their level of comprehension because their vocabulary knowledge and reading experience are still limited. This gap between decoding words and understanding meaning causes students to experience comprehension difficulties during reading activities. The finding is also supported by Kalzan, Jismulatif, and Prawati (2021), who found that students experienced difficulties in identifying main ideas, understanding vocabulary, and analyzing the structure of exposition texts. In addition, Putri (2024) reported that students struggled to understand argumentative texts because of limited vocabulary mastery and weak comprehension skills. These difficulties may occur because exposition texts require higher-level thinking skills, logical reasoning, and understanding of complex language patterns, which are still challenging for

many students.

The fifth finding revealed that training students to recognize difficult words and pronounce unfamiliar vocabulary accurately also became a challenge in classroom instruction. The teacher explained that teaching pronunciation should begin from easy words before moving to more difficult vocabulary. Media assistance and repeated pronunciation practice were used to help students improve their reading accuracy. However, the teacher stated that many students still struggled to follow pronunciation practice, and some students were not yet fluent even in reading Indonesian texts, especially when reading English exposition texts. This finding indicates that students experienced difficulties in distinguishing unfamiliar word forms and producing correct pronunciation. This condition strongly supports Streit's (1925) theory, which states that students often experience confusion in recognizing difficult words or similar letter forms, affecting their reading accuracy and fluency. The finding also aligns with Richards' (2015) explanation that vocabulary recognition and pronunciation accuracy are essential components of reading fluency. The difficulty may occur because English pronunciation differs significantly from Indonesian pronunciation patterns, causing students to struggle when reading unfamiliar English vocabulary aloud.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that the difficulties experienced by the teacher in teaching reading skills in exposition texts were interconnected and influenced by students' motivation, vocabulary mastery, reading fluency, comprehension ability, and classroom participation. These findings confirm Streit's (1925) theory regarding the major difficulties in teaching reading skills and strengthen previous studies discussing challenges in teaching reading comprehension and exposition texts. Therefore, teachers are required to apply adaptive teaching strategies, provide suitable reading materials, and create engaging classroom activities to support students' reading development more effectively. These findings suggest that successful reading instruction requires not only linguistic competence but also supportive classroom interaction, appropriate teaching strategies, and engaging learning materials that match students' proficiency levels.

From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the importance of adaptive

teaching approaches in teaching exposition texts at the senior high school level. Teachers need to create more interactive and supportive reading activities to increase students' confidence, motivation, and participation during reading instruction. In addition, selecting reading materials that are suitable for students' language abilities and learning needs is essential to reduce reading anxiety and improve comprehension. From a theoretical perspective, this study strengthens Streitz's (1925) theory by showing that the identified reading difficulties remain relevant in contemporary English language classrooms, particularly in teaching complex academic texts such as exposition texts.

CONCLUSION

The findings confirm Streitz's (1925) theory that teaching reading skills involves multiple interconnected challenges in classroom practice. Therefore, teachers are required to apply adaptive teaching strategies and provide appropriate learning materials to support students' reading development more effectively in teaching exposition texts. This study concluded that the English teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan experienced several difficulties in teaching reading skills in exposition texts. The difficulties were related to developing students' interest in reading, improving reading fluency, providing appropriate reading materials, developing reading comprehension, and training students to recognize and pronounce difficult words accurately. These difficulties were influenced by students' limited vocabulary mastery, low confidence, and low classroom engagement during reading activities.

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