

The Reading Competency Test for Indonesian History-Major Students

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Submit: 2026-01-30

Accepted: 2026-02-25

Published: 2026-04-01



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Abstract:

The development of English language skills among students in the History Education program predominantly focuses on reading. To assess their reading ability, a reading competency test is administered, requiring students to respond to and construct answers. The objective of this study is to describe the various types of reading competency tests for Indonesian students majoring in history. Research is descriptive and qualitative. The study was conducted at a teacher-training and educational sciences institute that offers a History Education program. Data were collected through analysis of documents related to English-language learning assessments administered to first-semester students. The data analysis employed an interactive model comprising data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verifying them. The results of the study indicate that reading competency tests requiring a response can be administered through multiple-choice questions. Based on the provided text, students are asked to determine which statements align with the text and which do not by selecting one of the provided answer choices. In tests that require constructing answers, students are given open-ended questions to stimulate critical thinking.

Additionally, students are asked to paraphrase a text and summarize chapters from books. All test materials are sourced from world and Indonesian history textbooks, research articles, brochures of historical sites, and annual agendas from the Department of Culture and Tourism, all written in English. The assessment criteria for the reading competency test requiring constructed responses include content completeness (information), vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, coherence in paragraph construction, and, if the test is conducted orally, pronunciation and fluency. Selecting English test materials that align with students' academic disciplines is one implementation of the ESP (English for Specific Purposes) concept. Although the tests primarily assess students' reading comprehension, this does not mean other skills are neglected.

Key Words: English Language; History Education; Reading Competence Test

Introduction

Since most recent primary and secondary sources for historical studies especially scholarly books, research reports, digital archives, and international journal articles are written and published in English, the language

is essential for history students (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006). History students who are proficient in English can evaluate historical accounts from different nations, access global viewpoints, and avoid depending on possibly skewed or undervalued translated sources (Harmer, 2007; Richards & Renandya, 2002). Additionally, reading academic literature in English fosters the growth of critical and historical thinking abilities, including the ability to identify sources, evaluate context, and assess historiographical arguments (Brown, 2010; Wineburg, 2001). English also acts as a lingua franca in academic and professional settings, allowing history students to participate in prestigious publications, conferences, and worldwide scholarly forums, increasing their competitiveness in both fields (Hyland, 2006; Nation, 2013). English language competence is much more than just a language ability; it is a strategic academic competency that aids history students' scientific and professional development.

Even though history students need to be able to read in English, the language is still seen as hard to learn and poses many academic obstacles. Limited academic vocabulary, the intricacy of historical text sentence structures, and a lack of critical reading strategies for English-language academic texts are the main challenges for non-language learners, including history students, according to numerous studies (Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Nation, 2013). Historical writings typically require high degrees of inference, discourse analysis, and contextual knowledge due to their abundance of technical vocabulary, abstract concepts, and intricate argumentation and narrative writing styles (Hyland, 2006; Wineburg, 2001).

Since history students are more used to reading sources in Indonesian and have had less consistent exposure to international academic texts, low motivation and anxiety when reading English texts also contribute to barriers, in addition to linguistic ones (Graddol, 2006; Horwitz, 2001). According to other studies conducted in the context of EAP, students typically struggle to comprehend the primary concepts, arguments, and historical viewpoints in English texts if they do not receive focused and subject-appropriate reading instruction (Anderson, 2008; Alderson, 2000). This circumstance suggests that there is a disconnect between the urgency of history students' English reading skills and their actual proficiency, necessitating a more targeted, strategic, and pertinent approach to reading instruction.

In addition to offering readings that are pertinent to the study of history, English lecturers in history departments play a strategic role in creating assessments and exams that motivate students to use English to comprehend, interpret, and create historical knowledge in a wider sense. In order for learning and evaluation to reflect real academic literacy practices in the field of history, lecturers must incorporate scientific content with language skills within the framework of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hyland, 2006). Reading assessments that ask students to evaluate claims, make deductions, and connect historical texts to sociocultural contexts have been shown to enhance both language proficiency and conceptual understanding. (Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Alderson, 2000). Additionally, it has been demonstrated that task-based and constructive evaluations—like open-ended questions and the interpretation of historical sources in English—are more successful than strictly objective tests at promoting the use of language as a tool for thought (Bachman & Palmer, 2010; Brown, 2004). Thus, teaching English and fostering the formation of a critical, global, and interdisciplinary view of history are two pedagogical and epistemological roles of English lecturers in history departments.

Prior studies have looked at students in various disciplines' literacy and reading proficiency in general. Because history is a historical field with distinct textual features, the study's subjects are not limited to students enrolled in the History Study Program. The first pertinent study was carried out by Fajri,

Nelliraharti, and Alimin (Fajri et al., 2022), and it examined how well students majoring in psychology and nutrition read academic English materials. The findings indicated that students' reading habits and vocabulary were lacking, which contributed to their early intermediate skill level. Second, Sepniwati used EPT questions that resembled those on the TOEFL to measure students' English reading comprehension skills (Sepniwati, 2022). The average student score on the reading test was still quite low ($\leq 27\%$), according to the results, particularly when it came to questions concerning where to acquire information and the author's goal. This suggests that academic reading competency is a major challenge for ordinary students, especially non-language specialists. In order to compare the outcomes of an English reading skills exam utilizing two scientific article medium (online vs. print), Widawati & Razak carried out another study (Widawati & Razak, 2022). Students who took online and printed article-based assessments had different reading skill ratings, according to the study. This discrepancy suggests that test presentation materials may have an impact on students' comprehension of English reading.

According to earlier research, English reading proficiency assessments typically target students majoring in non-history courses and place a strong emphasis on evaluating general or academic text comprehension without taking particulars into account. These studies, which have focused more on the effectiveness of objective and subjective test formats in the context of EAP or ESP in general, have not given enough attention to the context of historical scholarship because of its distinct discourse, narrative-argumentative style, and demands for historical reasoning (Wineburg, 2010). There is still very limited research, and even no research has been found specifically describing the types of English reading tests used by lecturers in history departments, especially in the context of higher education in Indonesia. The purpose of this study is to describe the kinds of English reading tests that history department lecturers have used as a basis for creating assessments that are more contextual and pertinent to the requirements of historical science, as this research gap highlights the need for studies that concentrate on reading assessment practices in history departments.

Literature Review

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for History Students

Learning English is taught in a variety of academic fields and at all educational levels. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is the result of this. The goal of teaching English should be to help students develop their language abilities in accordance with their individual needs and the fundamental question underlying ESP: "Why does the learner need to learn a foreign language?" This question implies that the learner's needs are the central focus of ESP (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Absolute and variable qualities are the two primary features of ESP. The defining features of ESP are known as absolute characteristics. These include the development of ESP as distinct from General English (general English language learning), the alignment of themes and topics with the learner's field of study, the alignment of linguistic aspects being taught with the learning topics, and the alignment of English learning objectives with learner needs. Variable characteristics refer to the features of ESP that allow for the limitation of the skills being developed (e.g., focusing solely on reading skills), while not restricting the methods used for teaching (Strevens, 1988, in Popescu, 2010).

The foundation of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is the idea that language instruction in English needs to be customized to meet the professional and academic requirements of students in particular fields. Consequently, a contextual requirements analysis serves as the foundation for the creation of objectives, materials, techniques, and assessments. (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The

characteristics of historical discourse, such as the predominance of expository-argumentative texts, the use of chronology, cause and effect, and the interpretation of primary and secondary sources, are integrated into ESP, which is not simply a simplification of general English for history students. (Hyland, 2014; Wineburg, 2010). In order to help students read English-language historical texts critically, comprehend the author's point of view, and create meaning based on the underlying social, political, and cultural context, ESP for history students thus requires an emphasis on academic literacy development.

Furthermore, language serves as an epistemic instrument—that is, a tool for creating and producing knowledge within a discipline—according to recent ESP studies (Flowerdew, 2012; Hyland, 2014). The construction of arguments through linguistic choices, rhetorical structures, and evaluative tactics inside the text is just as important to history as factual information. In order for students to comprehend how historical information is negotiated and portrayed in academic texts written in English, ESP training for history students must foster genre awareness and disciplinary discourse (Bhatia, 2014; Swales, 2014). Without this method, learning English runs the risk of becoming only a language exercise separate from historical scholarship.

ESP for history students necessitates alignment between reading assignments, learning objectives, and genuine evaluation methods from a pedagogical and assessment standpoint (Biggs & Tang, 2003; Brown, 2010). According to research, reading assessments in the context of ESP should not only measure literal comprehension but also encourage students to interpret, evaluate, and synthesize texts in keeping with the academic procedures of the topic being studied (Alderson, 2000; Grabe & Stoller, 2011). English is therefore positioned as a medium for comprehending and expanding global historical knowledge, rather than as a stand-alone learning target, and the theoretical underpinnings of ESP for history students stress the significance of an integrated and critical approach.

Reading Assessment

English reading assessments for history students should be viewed as a tool for evaluating academic and disciplinary skills in deriving meaning from historical texts, not just a way to gauge linguistic comprehension. Literal, inferential, evaluative, and critical comprehension are among the lower- and higher-level cognitive processes that are involved in reading comprehension, according to reading assessment theory (Alderson, 2000; Grabe & Stoller, 2019). Because historical writings include cause-and-effect links, ideological viewpoints, and narrative-argumentative frameworks that call for historical reasoning and contextual interpretation, these features become even more complex in a historical setting (Reviews, 2008; Coffin, 2006). Thus, it is preferable for history reading assessments to assess students' comprehension of historiographical arguments rather than just their ability to identify specific material in English texts.

Additionally, reading assessments should be in line with academic literacy practices in particular fields, according to the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) approaches (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hyland, 2006). Because discipline-specific reading assessments reflect students' true academic demands, research indicates that they are more valid and relevant than general reading assessments (Alderson, 2000; Bachman & Palmer, 2022). It has been demonstrated that test formats that require students to formulate meaning, draw conclusions from arguments, and relate texts to historical contexts—such as open-ended questions, written source analysis, and constructive assignments—promote the use of language as a tool for critical thinking among history majors (Brown, 2004; Grabe, 2009). This suggests that reading assessments reflect how historical knowledge is perceived and evaluated.

Language assessment theory highlights the significance of a fit between the construct being evaluated, the context in which the language is used, and the sort of task being tested from the standpoints of validity and authenticity (Bachman & Palmer, 2010; Messick, 1996). History reading assessments that only include multiple-choice questions run the danger of simplifying historical comprehension and ignoring the interpretive abilities necessary for historical research (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Wineburg, 2001). On the other hand, it is thought that real tests that demand thoughtful and constructive answers are better able to reflect academic reading proficiency in the field of history (Alderson, 2000; Coffin, 2006). Therefore, the theoretical underpinnings of English reading assessments for history students highlight the necessity of a critical, contextual, and goal-oriented assessment strategy that views history as a scientific discipline.

Method

This research is descriptive and qualitative in nature. The study was conducted at a Teacher Training and Educational Institute offering a History Education program. Data were collected through an analysis of documents related to English language learning assessments administered to first-semester students. The research data was selected based on the following criteria 1) academic relevance (the test is an official test used in English language learning in history majors (mid-term exams, final exams, or other summative tests); 2) focus on reading skills (the test items explicitly measure reading comprehension, not other language skills such as writing or speaking; 3) representativeness of material (the texts and questions reflect reading material relevant to the field of history or general academic texts commonly used by history majors); and 4) completeness of documents (the test is equipped with complete question papers that can be thoroughly analyzed).

To ensure data validity, this study employed two validity techniques, as follows: 1) Technical Triangulation (data were obtained through several techniques, namely document analysis (reading test items), analysis of student work, and interviews/confirmation with English lecturers. This triangulation aimed to ensure consistency of findings regarding the various reading competency tests used; and 2) Adequate References (data interpretation was supported by theories of reading tests and language learning evaluation, ensuring a strong theoretical basis for the analysis).

Data analysis was conducted in stages using the following qualitative analysis model: 1) data collection (collecting documents on English reading competency tests used by history students, including exam questions, student answer sheets, and syllabi/lessons learned); 2) data reduction (selecting and focusing data on items that measure reading competency, and grouping questions based on their characteristics and cognitive demands); 3) data classification (classifying test items into various reading competency tests, such as: reading competence test with responding to answers and reading competence test with constructing answers); 4) data presentation (presenting the analysis results in tables and narrative descriptions containing test types, question characteristics, and sample items); and 5) conclusion drawing (concluding the types of reading competency tests predominantly used and their suitability to the characteristics of history students).

Results

The reading competence test was administered through two types of questions, namely responding to answers and constructing answers. The implementation of both question types in the English course for students in the History Education program is described as follows.

Reading Competence Test with Responding to Answers

This type of test requires students to answer by selecting one of the available options (Nurgiyantoro, 2010). The following are examples of questions in multiple-choice format. The following text is for question 1

The greatest achievement of Paleolithic people was the sheer spread of the human species over much of the earth's surface. The species originated in eastern Africa; most of the earliest types of human remains come from this region, in the present-day countries of Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda. But gradual migration, doubtless caused by the need to find scarce food, steadily pushed the human reach to other areas. Key discoveries, notably fire and the use of animal skins for clothing—both of which enabled people to live in colder climates—facilitated the spread of Paleolithic groups.

(Adapted from World History In Brief)

1. What does the passage mainly discuss?
 - a. Animal skins for clothing made by Paleolithic people
 - b. People of Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda
 - c. The spread of Paleolithic people
 - d. A need to find scarce food

The question above requires students to determine the topic of the text they have read. All of the vocabulary listed in the answer choices is also found in the text. Therefore, students must read carefully in order to gain an understanding of the overall content of the text. The following text is for questions no 2 and 3

Hayam Wuruk's reign was the golden age of Majapahit, and it was during his time that the Desawarnana or Nagarakertagama was written. The Nagarakertagama and the transcriptions make it possible to reconstruct something of the style and influence of Majapahit in the fourteenth century. It claimed a form of authority over far-flung vassal states throughout Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, Kalimantan and eastern Indonesia. Although this may have constituted something of an 'empire' in Indonesian terms, it is clear from the general physical constraints that there was unlikely to have been any regular centralised exercise of authority by Majapahit over such areas.

(Adapted from A History of Modern Indonesia Since C.1200)

2. What is the synonym of the word "influence" (line 4)?
 - a. effect
 - b. weight
 - c. power
 - d. impact

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3. What is conclusion taken from the text?
- Hayam Wuruk's reign was the golden age of Majapahit
 - Nagarakertagama is written in 14th century
 - There was not any regular centralised exercise of authority
 - Nagarakertagama contains descriptions of *Majapahit*

The text above presents a review of the *Nagarakertagama*. In question no. 2, students are asked to understand the meaning of one of the words mentioned in the text. All the answer options provided have the same literal meaning. To select the correct answer, students must comprehend the context of the sentence in which the word is used. In question no. 3, students are required to infer the content of the text. Three of the answer choices, which are not conclusions, are clearly contained in the text. To select the correct answer, students need to be able to interpret implied information.

In addition to identifying the topic, synonyms, and conclusions, this type of test may also include questions that require students to choose answers that convey a meaning similar to that of the text. The following text is for questions 4 and 5

Rebo Pungkasan

People of Wonokromo, Plered Bantul conduct Rebo Pungkasan on last Tuesday night of Sapar, to reject the illness or dangers and to be grateful for the grace. People parade the giant lempur and Jodhang from a mosque to the village hall of Wonokromo. The events continued by cutting a giant lempur and seizing the lempur and Jodhang of agricultural products.

Labuhan Hajad Dalem Pura Pakualaman

This ceremony is held by the royal family of Pura Pakualaman. This procession is done by floating the offerings in Glagah beach. It is *an expression of gratitude to Almighty God* for His mercy, kindness and goodness. This ritual is also aimed to preserve the culture from ancestor.

(Adapted from Calendar of Events 2014)

4. Which of the following is true of the Rebo Pungkasan mentioned in the text?
- It is done to commemorate a figure who gave a good lesson
 - It is conducted to pray for safety, health and abundance in life
 - It is done by floating the offerings in a beach
 - It is aimed to commemorate the founder of the village
5. Which of the following is NOT true of the Labuhan Hajad Dalem Pura Pakualaman mentioned in the text?

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- a. This ceremony is a thanksgiving ceremony.
 - b. It is done by saving the offerings in the palace.
 - c. Labuhan Hajad Dalem Pura Pakualaman is a traditional ceremony.
 - d. It is one of ways to protect cultural heritage.

The answer choices in questions no. 4 and 5 represent statements that reflect the content of the text. Question no. 4 provides three incorrect answers, but all are similar to the text's content. Question no. 5 presents three answers that are paraphrases of the text. In this case, students are asked to select the answer that does not correspond to the content of the text.

Critically, these findings indicate that reading assessments remain strongly oriented toward basic-level literal and inferential comprehension, such as answering multiple-choice or short answer-to-answer questions based on text. This test format is indeed effective for measuring explicit understanding of facts, main ideas, and detailed information in English-language historical texts, which are relatively lexically and conceptually complex. However, the dominance of tests with a response-to-answer format has the potential to limit the measurement of higher-level reading competencies, such as the ability to evaluate an author's point of view, interpret historical bias, and relate the text to a broader historiographical context.

Furthermore, the use of the reading competence test with responding to answers reflects a practical tendency among lecturers to choose objective, easily scored, and efficient assessment instruments for large classes. Pedagogically, this is understandable, but its suitability for the needs of history students, who are expected to develop critical and analytical reading skills in written sources, needs to be critically questioned. Reliance on response-to-answer tests risks positioning students as passive readers focused on finding the right answer, rather than on interpreting meaning and constructing historical understanding. Therefore, the results of this study indicate the need for balancing with other forms of testing that encourage analytical and reflective responses so that reading competency assessment is more aligned with the characteristics of historical science.

Reading Competence Test with Constructing Answers

Nurgiyantoro in (Nurgiyantoro, 2014) identifies three types of questions that can be given in a reading competence test with constructed answers, including open-ended questions, retelling, and summarizing, synopsizing, abstracting, and translating. The following is an example of a question that requires students to use their own language in responding.

Open-ended Question

The text excerpt to be tested below is taken from a research article written by (Boadu, 2015).

The effective teaching of History is a prime area of concern for most History teacher-educators. Most students describe History as a boring and dull subject. This is because most teachers of History do not portray the subject as an exciting and interesting field of learning during lessons periods (National Academy of Sciences, 2000). Studies have shown that most History teachers are tied to using the traditional mode of delivery, with little or no innovation (Adeyinka, 1989, 1990; Oppong, 2009; Boadu et al., 2014). This could possibly be as a result of the fact that most History teachers are not exposed to, or trained on the tenets of handling the subject effectively, or that, teachers lack the commitment towards teaching the subject as it should be taught.

Effective teaching of History connotes, among other things, bringing the subject to life and making it appealing to the intellectual and emotional faculties of students. It goes over and beyond oral presentation or narration of events, or the use of lectures, but embraces a complex mix of overarching understanding of content and the art of teaching. This understanding is paramount in creating an environment in which students can gain mastery over historical concepts as well as improve their skill of thinking historically. Thus, the uniqueness of the subject is that which should feed and inform teachers to adopt innovative approaches towards making their teaching effective.

(Adapted from journal “Effective Teaching in History: The Perspectives of History Student-Teachers”)

The text above contains the author's opinion on history teaching as well as some insights from the research findings. The author suggests that students consider history as a less engaging subject because teachers have not been able to present it in a more enjoyable and challenging manner. The research findings presented in the text reveal that most history teachers still apply traditional methods and fail to innovate in their teaching practices. Furthermore, Boadu argues that this may be due to a lack of training received by teachers in developing innovative teaching methods, or it could be caused by internal factors, such as a lack of commitment to enhancing the material being taught.

In the text, the author recommends that history teaching should not rely solely on lectures but should integrate the entire content with the art of teaching. Students should be drawn into the subject matter by engaging their intellectual and emotional aspects to create more effective learning experiences.

After reading the text, students are provided with several questions that incorporate Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), such as analyzing (C4), evaluating (C5), and creating (C6). This is expected to encourage students to think critically. The responses can be given either orally or in writing. The task can be completed individually, in pairs, or in groups within a discussion setting. Thus, the learning process not only develops students' reading skills but also their writing, listening, and speaking abilities.

In the text, it is mentioned that students show a lack of interest in history learning due to the conventional teaching methods applied by teachers. Students are then presented with questions, such as the potential impact on students, teachers, and the learning process itself if teachers incorporate videos or films into their lessons.

The text also highlights that history teachers have been less innovative in their teaching methods, leading to a lack of commitment to their work. Students can be asked to reflect on ways to build commitment as a professional history teacher.

In the second paragraph, the text asserts that teachers must develop effective teaching methods. However, the description provided by the author is still very general. Therefore, students can be asked to explain the efforts that teachers should undertake to make history an engaging and challenging subject for students. Additionally, students could be asked to provide examples of the application of modern teaching methods and supporting learning media to create innovative history lessons.

Retelling

In a retelling test, the assessed aspects include message accuracy and language (Nurgiyantoro, 2014). The message accuracy aspect requires students to fully comprehend the content of the text and recount it in their own words without altering or omitting its meaning. The language assessment aspect in a retelling test not only covers grammar but also the appropriate choice of vocabulary in accordance with the intended context, as well as pronunciation and fluency (if conducted orally).

The text excerpt that students must retell concerns the history of the Prambanan Temple. This text is adapted from a brochure available at the Prambanan Temple site.

The Mataram Kingdom, which first appeared in 732 A.D. was the largest kingdom in ancient Java. At that time, the Mataram Kingdom was ruled by Sanjaya, a Hindu nobleman who had authority over the fertile area between the Opak and Progo rivers. In 750 A.D., the Buddhist Syailendra Dynasty expelled Sanjaya, along with his family. They self-exiled in the high land area outside the Mataram Kingdom's border.

One century later, Rakai Pikatan, a descendant of King Sanjaya, married into the Syailendra family clan, and thus held the Kingdom's reins of power. During his reign, Hindu influence was reborn and many temples were built, including the construction of Prambanan Temple complex.

Rakai Pikatan began to build the temple complex in 856 A.D. in commemoration of the Sanjaya Dynasty's return power. A century later, however, the Mataram Kingdom along with its people moved to East Java, and Prambanan was left ignored. Later, the temple collapsed during a terrifying earthquake in the sixteenth century. In 1930, restoration of the temple began and is still being conducted today.

(Adapted from the tourism brochure of Prambanan Temple)

1. What is text about?
2. When did Rakai Pikatan begin to build Prambanan temple complex?
3. Where did Mataram Kingdom along with its people move?
4. Why did Rakai Pikatan build Prambanan temple?
5. Who was expelled by the Buddhist Syailendra Dynasty?
6. How did the Sanjaya Dynasty's power return?

The creation of guiding questions above can involve multiple items per aspect. If the text discusses more than one character, students can create two or more "Who" questions. This approach can also be applied to other aspects, such as "What," "Where," "When," "Why," and "How."

Summarizing, Synopsis, Abstract, and Adaptation

Reading comprehension can also be assessed by having students create summaries, synopses, abstracts, and adaptations from specific sources. Sources suitable for summarization include *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c.1200, 3rd Ed* by M.C. Ricklefs; *A Short History of Indonesia: The Unlikely Nation?* by Colin Brown; *World History In Brief: Major Patterns of Change and Continuity, 6th Ed* by Peter N. Stearns; and *A Short History of the World* by H.G. Wells.

The task of summarizing chapters from literature encourages students to engage with academic English texts related to their field of study. Through this, students can familiarize themselves with specialized terms used in the discipline of history. Therefore, students are expected to become more willing to read international journals. The reading activity developed is *reading for getting information*. Students are not only required to comprehend the content of the text but also to discern and select key information, as these tasks typically come with word limits or specific elements that must be included.

The assessed aspects in creating summaries, synopses, abstracts, and adaptations also include message accuracy and language (Nurdiyantoro, 2010: 416). Thus, in addition to content integrity, the choice of vocabulary, grammar, and the student's ability to construct cohesive and coherent paragraphs are also part of the evaluation criteria.

The research results show that the reading competence test with constructing answers requires history students to construct answers independently based on a deep understanding of the text, rather than simply recognizing explicit information. Critically, this finding indicates that this type of test is more relevant to the characteristics of the history discipline, which emphasizes interpretation, analysis of written sources, and evidence-based reasoning. Students are tested not only on literal comprehension but also on their ability to integrate information, deduce implicit meanings, and relate the reading content to specific historical contexts. Therefore, this test has higher cognitive validity because it aligns with the higher-order thinking skills required in the study of history.

However, the use of the reading competence test with constructing answers also has limitations that require criticism. The scoring process tends to be more subjective and requires a clear assessment rubric to maintain test reliability. Furthermore, students' ability to express ideas in writing in English has the potential to influence test results, so that scores obtained do not fully reflect reading competence, but also writing ability. This shows that although constructive tests are effective for measuring in-depth understanding, test developers need to ensure a balance between reading demands and productive language skills so that the results of measuring the reading competence of history students are more accurate and fair.

Discussion

According to this findings, history students' use of a range of English reading proficiency assessments may be divided into two primary groups: reading competency assessments that need them to build answers and reading competency assessments that require them to respond to answers. This result is consistent with the categorization of reading assessments that differentiate between created and selected replies in academic

reading evaluations (Alderson, 2000; Brown, 2004). Even though the cognitive depth assessed by these two exam kinds differs, their prevalence suggests that English lecturers in history departments have made an effort to modify the assessment style to fit the needs of the curriculum and students' skill levels.

The use of multiple-choice, true-false, and matching tests of reading proficiency that require responses suggests a focus on assessing both literal and inferential understanding of English historical literature. These results are in line with studies by Grabe & Stoller and Khalifa & Weir, which found that, especially when it comes to non-language learners, selected-response exams are still often utilized because of their effectiveness, dependability, and simplicity of assessment (Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Khalifa & Weir, 2009). However, a number of studies have also critiqued this kind of examination for failing to capture the complexity of historical thinking processes that are essential to historical study, such as assessing author perspectives and analyzing arguments (Coffin, 2006; Wineburg, 2001). As a result, even if these assessments are useful, they have not done much to advance historical literacy based on English.

Multiple-choice and short answer questions are examples of response-to-answer items seen in examinations, demonstrating that objective test formats are still thought to be useful for gauging students' foundational comprehension of reading texts. This result confirms research by Sulistyo in (Sulistyo, 2016), which claims that because objective reading examinations are effective, dependable, and simple to score, they are frequently employed in Indonesian colleges. Sulistyo further underlined that this kind of test is not the best for evaluating higher-order thinking abilities since it typically measures low-level literal and inferential comprehension.

On the other hand, results pertaining to the reading competency test with relation to creating answers show that instructors are making an effort to motivate students to use English as a thinking tool and to gain a deeper understanding of history. Short essay questions, text summaries, and reading comprehension tests demand that students do more than just identify the right answers—they must also create meaning (Alderson, 2000; Bachman & Adrian, 2010). Constructive exams are more reliable in assessing academic reading abilities because they replicate real-world literacy practices in higher education, according to prior studies in the setting of EAP and ESP (Grabe & Stoller, 2009; Hyland, 2006). This type of assessment is pertinent to the study of history since it meets the demands of students in terms of interpreting sources, comprehending cause-and-effect linkages, and developing text-based historical comprehension (Wineburg, 2001).

An effort to gauge reading proficiency more thoroughly is shown by the use of reading competency exams that require the construction of responses, such as essay and open-ended questions. The results of this study are consistent with those of Nurweni and Read, who showed that constructive reading assessments are better at exposing the breadth of readers' comprehension, especially when used with academic texts (Nurweni & Read, 1999). Because it pushes students to interpret information, connect textual content to historical context, and offer written arguments, this test type is pertinent to history students.

The results of this study also support those of Hidayati in (Hidayati, 2018), who highlighted the need of using a variety of reading test formats to get a complete picture of students' reading proficiency. Hidayati says that a mix of objective and subjective assessments can account for variations in students' cognitive preferences as well as the requirements of academic proficiency in various fields. As a result, the range of tests used in this study shows evaluation procedures that are largely consistent with the ideas of authentic assessment in higher education English language learning.

Overall, the analysis of the study's findings demonstrates that the range of English reading assessments available to history students continues to lie between the needs for academic depth and assessment effectiveness. A shift toward more contextual and disciplinary reading tests is represented by the combination of the reading competency test with answering questions and the reading competence test with creating responses. These findings reinforce the arguments of Alderson (Alderson, 2000) and Messick (Messick, 1996) that the strength of a reading test depends on how well it captures the construct of academic reading skills pertinent to the field, in addition to the format of the questions. Thus, the findings of this study have significant ramifications for how English reading assessments for history majors should be developed in order to better balance validity, practicality, and the growth of text-based historical learning.

Conclusion

One of the ways the ESP (English for Specific Purposes) approach is implemented is by selecting English exam materials that correspond to the students' academic subjects. Test materials for history students can be adapted from textbooks, papers, pamphlets, and other literature. Although the assessments focus primarily on students' reading comprehension ability, this does not imply that other skills are overlooked. If reading comprehension is measured orally, pupils must also improve speaking skills. As a result, the examination encompasses elements such as pronunciation and fluency. Cohesion and coherence in paragraph structure, as well as vocabulary selection and grammar, are crucial evaluation components for written reading comprehension assessments.

This study advances the notion of English language acquisition assessment, especially as it relates to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for non-native speakers. The results of several reading competency tests, including the reading competency test with responding to answers and the reading competency test with constructing answers, support the idea that reading competency is assessed using both the ability to construct meaning and the recognition of information. The study's findings theoretically provide credence to the interactive reading theory, which views the reader as an active participant in comprehending scholarly literature, especially historical texts that are rich in chronology, context, and event interpretation.

In practice, English lecturers in history departments might use the study's findings to inform the creation of reading evaluation tools that are more pertinent to students' fields of study and contextual. Lecturers can get a more complete view of their students' reading skills at the literal, inferential, and critical comprehension levels by using a range of exam types. Higher education institutions are also encouraged by this research to use subjective examinations that call for the synthesis and interpretation of historical data in English in addition to objective tests.

A range of reading competency assessments should be incorporated into English courses, especially those that are based on scholarly historical literature, according to the research findings. It is recommended that lecturers create reading assessments that correspond with the Graduate Learning Outcomes (CPL) and the features of historical discourse, including scientific papers, original documents, and historical narrative texts. Furthermore, to guarantee the caliber and durability of learning assessments, a disciplinary-based reading question bank must be continuously developed.

The association between different reading competency tests and students' thinking levels (HOTS) or with other factors including learning motivation, historical background knowledge, and English language ability should be investigated by future researchers. An experimental design might potentially be used in future studies to examine how well each kind of test improves reading comprehension. Additionally, extending

the study's focus to include more non-language majors would improve the findings' generalizability and support the assessment of English language instruction in higher education.

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