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# Question Prompts in Teaching Relevant and Authentic Texts to Improve Students' Reading Competence During Pandemic Covid-19 Outbreak

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**Abstract: Question Prompts in Teaching Relevant and Authentic Texts to Improve Students' Reading Competence During Pandemic Covid-19 Outbreak. Objectives:** This research investigates whether: 1) QPs and relevant and authentic texts can improve students' reading ability especially during the outbreak of pandemic Covid-19, and 2) there is any effect of students' gender on their reading ability. **Methods:** Quantitative approach was used with one-group pretest-posttest design. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and t-test. **Findings:** the use of QPs can improve student reading ability especially during the outbreak of pandemic Covid-19, there is difference in students' reading ability before and after using QPs in teaching authentic texts, but there is no difference in reading ability by gender. **Conclusion:** Findings provide implications to add the body of knowledge relevant to the theories about the acquisition of English as an ESL or EFL during the pandemic Covid-19.

**Keywords:** reading comprehension ability, question prompts, relevant and authentic texts.

***Abstrak: Question Prompts dalam Mengajarkan Teks yang Relevan dan Otentik untuk Meningkatkan Kompetensi Membaca Siswa Selama Pandemi Covid-19. Tujuan:** penelitian ini mengkaji: 1) apakah QPs beserta teks relevan dan autentik bisa meningkatkan kemampuan membaca terutama pada musim Pandemi Covid-19, dan 2) apakah ada pengaruh jenis kelamin terhadap kemampuan membaca. **Metode:** Pendekatan kuantitatif dengan menggunakan desain one-group pretest-posttest diterapkan. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan t-test. **Temuan:** penggunaan QPs bisa meningkatkan kemampuan membaca mahasiswa terutama pada saat pandemi Covid-19. Terdapat perbedaan kemampuan membaca sebelum dan sesudah menggunakan QPs dalam mengajarkan teks relevan dan autentik, tetapi tidak ada perbedaan dalam kemampuan membaca berdasarkan jender. **Kesimpulan:** Temuan penelitian memberikan implikasi menambah hazanah pengetahuan yang relevan dengan teori tentang pemerolehan bahasa Inggris sebagai ESL maupun EFL terutama selama pandemi Covid-19.*

***Kata kunci:** Kemampuan membaca, question prompts, teks relevan dan autentik.*

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# ■ INTRODUCTION

Reading is a very important skill. People need it to stay alive in any community. As asserted by Levine, Ferenz, and Reves (2000), students are required to be capable of comprehending academic text. It is risky when university students have deficiency and tend to fail in reading comprehension (Giuliano & Sullivan, 2007). Indonesian students of university ideally have the capability to comprehend the advanced reading texts but this is the case. Even though they have finished the study the high school course content, a number of students could not read the texts for the university level.

Reading comprehension is considered an important key for successful learning. When having difficulty comprehending university textbooks, students will suffer from performances. It is important to provide students with challenging reading materials, neither too difficult nor too easy, to challenge their engagement (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009).

English has been learned from junior high schools to university levels, even some state and private schools have implemented English instruction starting from elementary school level. English gets a substantial emphasis and reading is the core of Indonesia's EFL curriculum in schools and universities. However, more university students in Indonesia find themselves in the difficulty of the reading components in EFL courses. It is clear to us that the weakness on the part of students is in the reading comprehension skills.

Despite this emphasis on reading comprehension, many instructors of English in the Indonesian universities claim that there is deficiency of reading comprehension skills of the students when coping with the whole text as a unit. This debility ruins their use of texts within and outside the academic context (Saiegh-Haddad, 2003). This lack ability in reading comprehension is associated with many factors such as the kind of reading texts assigned to and how reading materials and reading skills delivered at high school and university. Armbruster, Anderson, and Ostertag (1989) say that reading comprehension is interfered by some conditions consisting of text structure, vocabulary, worthiness of the reading texts with students' disciplines, and prior intake.

Teachers are charged with determining the proper reading level for students and supervise the student's level of comprehending the texts they read. The way to know the suitability of the reading materials to the grade of the students is through Content Analysis (CA). The CA is a systematic, objective research method used to rate texts in order to elaborate words, terms, concepts, themes, phrases, paragraphs, characters, items, concepts, semantics, or sentences within texts for the purpose of identifying the frequency of the subject's presence there (Palmquist et al., 2005). The problem of students in taking English learning at the research site includes very big class with heterogeneous students coming from a lot of different departments and irrelevant reading texts that could meet students' needs.

This research proposed the use of authentic texts (Abbasian, Mahmoudi, & Shahbazi, 2016; Akbari & Razavi, 2016; Ghanbari, Esmaili, & Shamsaddini, 2015; Kýlýç & Ýlter, 2015; Kusumawardani, Santosa, & Roschsantiningsih, 2018) defined and discussed below in details. The texts were taken from journals that were relevant to students' interest, instead of using texts from a book, a newspaper, or any other source. The materials were also determined and chosen by each of the students based on their major of study and interest from an international journal which students consulted with the lecturers to make sure whether the journal they selected was suitable or not. The research participants were given question prompts (Chen & Bradshaw, 2007; Ge, Chen, & Davis, 2005; Xun & Land,

2004) as guidance for them before they were requested to read the text. The students were pushed to do this activity cooperatively discussing the texts with peer group from the same department. In other words, they did peer correction, and peer feedback (Havranek, 2002; G. H. C. Lin & Chien, 2009; Maarof, Yamat, & Li, 2011; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994) that made the class very active, even more active than expected. In short, this research used students-centered learning (Asoodeh, Asoodeh, & Zarepour, 2012; Dano-Hinosolango & Vedua-Dinagsao, 2014; Kaput, 2018; Nair, Shah, Seth, Pandit, & Shah, 2013) rather than lecturer-centered learning; students' activities were evaluated using authentic assessment (Dano-Hinosolango & Vedua-Dinagsao, 2014; Frey, Schmitt, & Allen, 2012; Kearney, 2013) from the beginning and such evaluation was informed to the students (research participants) in the first week so that they knew what to do, how to do it, why they did it, and how they were evaluated.

Based on the aforementioned analysis, the following formulated research questions are posed to fill the gap in previous studies:

1. Can question prompts be used in teaching authentic and relevant texts to improve students' academic text comprehension?
2. Is there any difference in academic text comprehension ability between the two genders?

■ **LITERATURES REVIEW**
*Question Prompts*

Encouraging students with suitability questions is another potent strategy for building (Hacker & Tenent, 2002; Rosenshine & Meister, 1994). Asking as a technique can guide students to work on assignments with the intention of making students experts strengthen, assess questions that are responsible for the problems that must be resolved. Prompt questions facilitate

to expose student mental activities (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1985). The question could be more directly to develop metacognition.

Lecturers can design prompts for procedural guidance to give students specific procedures that ease the fulfillment of a task. Students can temporarily depend on this request until they build their own internal structure to complete the task. Researches tell us that question delivered is able to ease students' comprehending their knowledge to activate the previous intake and highlight their process of thinking (King, 1992, 1994). The question can help learners' complete the learning and reduce the cognitive burden on students by reminding them how to complete activities (Ge et al., 2005; Zellermayer, Salomon, Globerson, & Givon, 1991). The questions give guidance from high-level planning processes, copying, identifying, and correcting, which readers are not possible to turn on themselves, too (Zellermayer et al., 1991).

The questions asked to supply a technique for encouraging control, explanation, and assessment by the learners, and understanding fusing. Also, the prior research unveiled that learners who are asked to stop at times during completing the tasks and asking metacognitive questions to themselves are more probable to center on completing the task processes and own greater accomplishment in completing the tasks (Schoenfeld, 2014). Learners' metacognitive questions encourage knowledge transfer completing tasks (King, 1992; X. Lin, 2001; Zellermayer et al., 1991). Assisting learners to develop the ability to control and alter their own method and use of property empower them to increase common learning skills where the learners can utilize in various settings (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1985; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1985). By controlling the benefit of self-study and the use of properties, learners can notice the requirement to catch up with new levels of study

and comprehension (X. Lin & Lehman, 1999).

### Defining Authenticity

There are many meanings associated with authenticity, therefore it is not surprising that this label still ambiguous in the minds of almost all educators. Moreover, it is always possible to captivate in significant debates about the different opinions of authenticity up to come to an agreement on what we are discussing. In any case, there are seven definitions come up from the literature:

Authenticity concerns the language produced by native speakers and for indigenous speakers in their language group (Little, 1997; Porter & Roberts, 1981). Authenticity concerns the real speaker/writer language produced by people origin, sending actual words (Benson & Voller, 2014; Morrow, 1977; Nunan, 1989; Porter & Roberts, 1981; Swaffar, 1985). Authenticity refers to the qualities given to a text by the recipient, so that it is not perceived as something paste in a text, but is given on it by the recipients (Breen, 1985; Widdowson, 1978). Authenticity refers to the reciprocation between learners and educators (Van Lier, 2014). Authenticity refers to the kinds of assignment selected (Bachman, 2002; Benson & Voller, 2014; Breen, 1987; Guariento & Morley, 2001; Lewkowicz, 2000; Van Lier, 2014). Authenticity refers to the social circumstances of the learning room (Arnold, 1999; Breen, 1985; Guariento & Morley, 2001; Rost, 2006). Authenticity refers to society and the capacity to conduct or reckon an objective language cluster so that it is identified (Kramsch & Widdowson, 1998).

From this, the researchers know the concept of authenticity can be put both in the text, people, society, or cultural situations and the goal of act of communication, and the combination. Morrow (1977) said that authentic text is a piece of real language either spoken and written for real community and constructed to deliver messages.

Referring to this definition authentic text is based on the source and the production contexts. This idea is agreed by Porter and Roberts (1981) point out, native speakers are able to know authentic texts with little skeptic and enough accuracy. Furthermore, by defining authenticity in this way, In addition to, the researchers, through this definition, are able to start to know the features surface of authentic discourse and assess text created or students' result is identic (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Gilmore, 2007)

### ■ METHOD

### Research Design

The method used is quantitative design with one group pretest-posttest design with the help of SPSS Version 23 because this design is considered appropriate to answer the research questions. In this study, the single group of students was given pretest before being exposed to experimental treatment, and this group was given posttest after being treated.

### Participants

This study took place in Sumatra Institute of Technology Panel et al. (2000) Indonesia. The total number of students taking subject was 3,500 students. The participants in this study comprised 406 students.

### Materials and Instrument

*Academic Text Comprehension* focused on comprehending ideas. To comprehend ideas in details, the objectives of this subject were to make students able to read as well as improve their vocabulary mastery. They are requisites to be able to convey their ideas for presentation.

Concerning the learning texts required the students to browse journal articles relevant to their own departments and individual interests. The students were given freedom to choose and determine certain texts congruent with their interests.

**Procedure**

In this study, academic text comprehension activities were divided into three stages: *pre-*, *while-* and *post*-comprehensions. In pre-comprehension activities, that is, in the first week of the semester, the lecturers introduced the activities that the students would do during the whole semester; explained why they needed English. The students were reminded that they were prospective engineers who were specially prepared for supporting the development of Indonesia in particular and ASEAN in general. Consequently, they were required to be able to read, understand and interpret ideas, concepts, new theories and best practices from international journals.

The contents were mostly the findings of recent research by experts in a certain discipline. Besides, the English language used in the international journals were reviewed by some qualified experts that the quality of both content and language could be guaranteed. Furthermore, at the same time, the students were advised that they would get abundance of vocabulary relating to their majors of study, and what was more important was that they would be exposed to how experts in their disciplines expressed their ideas scientifically in English that they could imitate them. The use of numerous digital technologies are able to promote students' English language mastery (Wafa', 2020).

Another activity which was done in the first week was that the students were told that they would be given question prompts (QPs) to guide them in comprehending the ideas conveyed in the authentic texts. They should learn one journal article each week at home, and discussed it in the classroom. They were advised that they would be more exposed (Bisson, van Heuven, Conklin, & Tunney, 2015; Todd, 2017) to authentic texts that might make them more familiar with them.

The QPs comprise ten questions pertaining to whatever a journal article they would read; from whichever department the reader came from. The QPs are as follows:

1. What is/are the problem(s) as the gap of the research that the author tries to answer?
2. What is/are the objective(s) of the research?
3. Where is the location of the research? Why is the location chosen as the location of the research?
4. What is the population and sample or object of the research?
5. What research instruments are used to gather the data? What for?
6. How are the data analyzed?
7. What are their findings?
8. What are their conclusions?
9. What are the implications?
10. In your opinion, what is something important which is not found or dealt with in the research?

By reading the text guided by the question prompts, the learners were more directed to identify the info needed. Other authors called question prompts problem-based learning (Hmelo Silver, Bridges, & McKeown, 2019).

The important activity which was told to the students in the first meeting was that they were expected to be very active in taking part in classroom activities because the lecturer(s) would use authentic assessment (Glogger-Frey, Gaus, & Renkl, 2017), the assessment which would be done from the beginning of the semester while each student was doing an activity such as presenting the results of reading at home, putting forward questions relating to the topic under discussion, and commenting on the topic. Therefore, the scores of the academic comprehension would be obtained from the quizzes, mid and final-semester exams, authentic assessment students' daily activities which had the highest proportion (40%) of the total scores. The

complete proportion of the assessment was also informed to the students in the first meeting as follows: Daily-based activities (presentation, forwarding questions, giving comments) (40%), assignments (20%), mid-semester- (20%) and final semester exams (20%).

Finally, still in the first week, after describing briefly to the students what to do, how to do it, why should do it, as well as how to assess it, and letting the students ask questions about anything unclear, the students were invited to have a practice of how to browse an international journal by means of their Android mobile phones, took one example of international journal, and discussed it based on the QPs. The students were supposed to work in groups so that they are able to share ideas, and study to one and other. Once the students understood what to do and how to do it, at the end of the meeting in the first week, the lecturer(s) assigned them to browse an international journal relevant to their major of study selecting the most interesting topic for him-/herself so that he/she would be more motivated to learn it and more beneficial for him/her.

In the second week and on through week 15th, the students worked by themselves as what they practiced during the first week, that is, choosing an article for every week, then reading, analyzing, criticizing, and interpreting the findings using the QPs as their guidance in doing the tasks throughout the semester. This can be considered while-stage. Briefly, the activities in the second week and on could be summarized as below:

**Pre-Activities**

The leaners replied to the lecturer's greeting. They were paying attention to the lecturer's appreciation about what had been done in the previous week and relating it to what they would do in the current week. They were briefed about what would be presented in the current week, how many presenters would present different topics, how the presentation should run, and how all the activities would be evaluated.

**While-Activities**

One volunteer from a certain department came forward to present what he/she had prepared a week before, telling her name and department so that the lecturer could identify him/her in the students' list to score his/her performance. The presenter put forward her topic for about 5–7 minutes comes after by three questions, or comments from the assembly. Not only presenters but also questioners / commentators were scored ranging from 10 through 100. Such presentation, questions, and comments last for about 10 minutes for each presenter. The researchers observed and evaluated the learners' activities from the beginning through the end of the meeting. The observation was done to see what was going on when the students were in the class. Given that the learners knew that not only the presenters who were evaluated and scored but also the questioners and commentators.

**Post Activities**

At the end of the presentation, questions, and comments, the lecturers provided closing remarks pertaining to the discussion as a whole, which just finished, appreciated the presenters, questioners, and commentators. Sometimes the lecturers explicitly stated feeling of proud of the whole discussion and especially the presenters, who were very enthusiastic, high self-confident, and convincing. The lecturers re-affirmed the authentic assessment that was used throughout the process of presentation. The leaners were invited to take part in the coming presentation in the following week with new topics and new presenters which might be more challenging and interesting. They were encouraged to gather more scores on the Academic Text Comprehension.

**Table 1** Comparison between common practices and the novelties in current research

| | Common Practices in ITERA | | Novelties in this Study |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Book-based or newspaper-based materials selected by the lecturer | 1 | International journal-based selected by the students based on their own department and individual interest. |
| 2 | Texts followed by questions, vocab identification and grammar practice | 2 | *Question Prompts* provided in the beginning of the semester |
| 3 | Single competence (mostly reading and grammar competences) | 3 | *Integrated competences* (reading for writing, writing for discussion/speaking, presentation for listening, and listening for speaking) |
| 4 | Using questions comprised explicitly stated information, rote learning | 4 | Using *high thinking order skills* |
| 5 | Mostly lecturer-centered learning | 5 | Mostly *student-centered learning* |
| 6 | Measured by using quizzes, mid-semester and final-semester exams | 6. | Measured by using presentation, forwarding questions, commenting were scored in situ |
| 7 | Scoring proportion – e.g. quizzes (20%), mid-semester (35%) and final-semester exams (45%) | 7 | Scoring proportion – e.g. classroom activities (presentation, forwarding questions and commenting) (40%), assignment (20%), mid semester test (20%) and final semester test (20%) |
| 8 | Lecturer feedback | 8 | *Peer feedback* |
| 9 | Sometimes with take home assignment, but frequently without it. | 9 | *Take home assignment every week.* |
| 10 | Almost no exposure to authentic material | 10 | A lot of *exposure to authentic materials*. |
| 11 | Learning in the class managed by the lecturer | 11 | Managed each of the students together with their peer group |
| 12 | Lecturer as the source of knowledge | 12 | Lecturer as a *facilitator, communicator and guidance* |

The benefits of using these activities are as in Table 1 below.

Table 1 shows the novelties that were implemented in this study which were not found in conventional ESP classrooms in ITERA and in other universities in Indonesia. And these novelties were found to be very suitable for engineering students, at least, in this study. In the week 16, they had final semester examination.

**Data Analyses**

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to answer the first research question and t-test to answer the second research question.

### ■ RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
### Result Regarding RQ 1

The following is the result of the descriptive data analysis to respond to the first question: Can question-prompts be used in teaching authentic and relevant texts to improve students' academic text comprehension?

Table 2 shows that the participants were involved at the pretest and posttest (N = 406). At the pretest the lowest point was 45, while in the posttest the lowest score was 75. Table two tells that there was an progress in the lowest score by 30. It is clear that question prompts on relevant and authentic texts can be used to improve students' academic text comprehension ability. At the pretest the average score is 51.80 while the posttest average score is 80.30. There is an increase in score of 28.50. This suggests that question prompts used in teaching relevant and authentic texts can improve student academic text comprehension, (See Table 2 above). This improvement can be attributable to the nature of the ESP learning activities carried out in this research which was very different from the

**Table 2** Descriptive Statistics

| | **Descriptive Statistics** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | | Std. Deviation | Variance |
| | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Std. Error | Statistic | Statistic |
| Pretest | 406 | 45 | 86 | 51.80 | .330 | 6.659 | 44.336 |
| Posttest | 406 | 75 | 86 | 80.30 | .174 | 3.516 | 12.359 |
| Valid N (list wise) | 406 | | | | | | |

Source: Data Analysis

conventional way of ESP teaching and learning especially in ITERA.

The students are usually given passages from texts or some printed newspaper-based passages in English. They have to read them, answer the questions that follow, underline difficult vocabulary, and then look up the meaning of the new and difficult words in dictionaries. There is almost no real interplay among the learners or between learners and the lecturers. Frequently, the English lecturers explain grammatical structure and the students have to do a task relating to the topic of grammar under discussion but the teaching materials are not related to the students' major of study or discipline.

By contrast the materials as stated in the previous section were authentic and relevant journal articles browsed by the each individual of the students, analyzed in their homes based on the question prompts, presented by students in front of the class (hence *student active learning* and *student centered learning*), all students' activities in the classroom were assessed in situ from the beginning through the end of the semester (hence *authentic assessment*), and most of the ESP activities were done by students whereas the lecturers acted as facilitators, (see Table 1). By this sort of nature of ESP in ITERA, the findings are as expected – the students were very active, enthusiastic, tend to have high motivation, very critical, analytical, have higher ability to interpret and make more inferences. Noted that less appropriate text presented by the lecture

miscalculations can be detrimental for reading-motivation (Afreen Faiyaz, 2020).

**Result Regarding RQ 2**

The following is the result of the data analysis to direct the second question: Is there any difference in academic text comprehension ability by gender? Table 3 tells us that Levene's Test for Equality of Variances Equal variances assumed is .976 greater than p 0.005. It implies that there is no distinction in academic text comprehension on each of the gender category (sig. = 0.976>0.005).

**Question Prompts to Improve Academic Text Comprehension Ability**

The results of the data analysis indicate that the use of question prompts together with relevant and authentic materials can improve learners' academic text comprehension ability and there is a noteworthy difference in learners' academic text comprehension ability before and after teaching. This finding suggests that the employment of authentic texts is efficacious to help learners increase their academic text comprehension ability provided that they are guided by QPs. This happens because QPs may have encouraged them to think more specific about the information they need to answer each of the questions given to them. Many pieces of research have been done pertaining to the result of the use of QPs (Chen & Bradshaw, 2007; Ge et al., 2005). It is crucial to record that pragmatic competence was defined

**Table 3** Result of Independent Samples Test by Gender

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | Lower | Upper |
| Posttest | Equal variances assumed | .001 | .976 | .307 | 404 | .759 | .113 | .367 | -.609 | .834 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .307 | 285.216 | .759 | .113 | .367 | -.610 | .835 |

as the capability to utilize language successfully in context and to meet particular purposes (Xiao, 2015); earlier in much more general concept, (Ward, 2016) defined practical ability as the students' understanding of the nonnative language or second language about the accurate use of language in a certain situation and context. All authors have found that QPs have been proven to make students able to do the tasks given to them easier, more directed, more accurate, and finally more successful. To improve reading skills students must be given flexibility in several cognitive styles. In addition, teachers should educate students in various reading activities and reading assignments to hone reading skills (Valencia, 2019).

Without QPs, they tend to read all the passage. They tend to be like a person trapped in a jungle, without knowing what to do and to find and how to find it. However, by providing QPs before they start reading, they have a "compass" on what to find, where to find it, and how to find it. This has been found to have increased their motivation to read as well because they feel that they can do it successfully. The feeling of being success may have motivated them to learn and learn more. By contrast, when the students have feeling of failure, they tend to be frustrated and make them stop reading. There are differences between those previous studies with the current study. In the previous studies, the materials used as the reading tasks were not based on international journal articles; and the students were not assigned to select the materials by themselves, and they were not made active participants in learning process. Consequently, the students felt bored, unmotivated to learn, producing unsatisfactory results, which also happen in other countries (Celik Korkmaz & Karatepe, 2018; Qiu, Chen, Xu, & Sun, 2019; Tong, 2018), consequently in this study the students were more enthusiastic, active, and challenged to comprehend the materials. Similar to the question prompts (QPs) authentic materials can also be used to improve students' interest and comprehension ability. This discovery in line with the discovery of the prior research (Abbasian et al., 2016; Kýlýç & Ýlter, 2015). Another important thing that has caused the students to have higher enthusiasms to engage in academic text comprehension activities was that the lecturers appreciated students' performances. The students felt highly appreciated; therefore, they have decreased levels of anxiety and became more motivated to learn better and better. Also, they were able to recall vocabularies when composing a resume and pronounce troubled words during which speaking. The students who experienced an increase in learning achievement the lower the level of anxiety got (Alhuwaydi, 2020).

**Question Prompts on Gender Effects**

Another finding of the results of the data analysis above suggests that all students in every department had similar potential to be developed. This idea can be seen from the interaction between departments and academic comprehension. Almost all students in each class from every department showed their high capacity and understanding of what they had read, analyzed and interpreted. This may have happened because they had sufficient background knowledge that they brought to the texts which made them easy to digest them although the texts were taken from international journals which were considered more difficult by other students from other departments who did not have enough background knowledge. It also implies that students' background knowledge should be considered in helping them improve their comprehension ability.

One thing that might be interesting is the comparable reading achievement of boys and girls. This is an honor where people notice the distinction between countries, even though gender distinction in reading performance scores are not vivid or considerable in any country. Differences in this subject are global and rather notable. However, one suspects that these results represent more than uniformity, the culture between the countries in which we operate rather than something that is inherently and biologically established (Loh & Sun, 2018; Solheim & Lundetræ, 2018; Thorndike, 1976). In this study, it has been found that, males' academic comprehension is Equal variances assumed to females'. This suggests that each gender has potentials to reach better achievement than that of the other. The necessary is that the appropriateness and suitability reading text being chosen (Diana, Wello, & Jabo, 2020)

■ **CONCLUSIONS**

Question prompts in teaching relevant and authentic texts can be used to help improve student academic text comprehension. The finding indicates that question prompts encourages the students to think more specific about the information they need to answer. The question prompts can be used to improve students' interest in reading comprehension and thus can result in students' reading text comprehension improvement.

There is no difference in academic text comprehension by gender. The finding indicates that both male and female students in every department have comparable potential to be developed in terms of their reading text comprehension using the question prompts. These findings are relatively new in an Indonesian higher education context, particularly in Lampung Province. Therefore, this study is a scratch for further studies in terms of question prompts used in teaching reading texts to improve academic comprehension ability of diverse students from various departments.

**Limitations and Strengths of this Study**

There are some limitations and strengths of this study. First, the classes were very big (90 students in one class). It was very hard to handle. In addition, there were only two air conditions in each of big classrooms, which frequently did not operate well, consequently not only the lecturers but also the students felt inconvenient to work in such a warm and big classroom. Furthermore, there has not been any internet connection provided by the university in all classes. This made the students sometimes get problems if their mobile phones were problematic such as low battery, or was

left at home. During this study, all students used their mobile-phone-internet connections. In this study, the focus was only on the students' academic text comprehension.

## ■ IMPLICATIONS

### Implication for theory

Findings of this research add to body of knowledge in line with the existing theories about the acquisition of English as either a second (ESL) or foreign language (EFL) especially in the context of pandemic Covid-19 outbreak; in terms of the use of QPs; the importance of authentic materials for ESL or EFL students; high order thinking skills; authentic assessment; active student learning; student-centered learning; exposure to authentic ingredients; and the role of the lecturer as a facilitator.

### Implication for practice

The researcher recommends in order that the learning process run effectively and efficiently, first of all, class size, 35 students in one class may be more effective and efficient. Second, it is recommended that university authorities must consider things such as class atmosphere, and free and adequate internet access. More importantly, finding of this paper could be applied by educators in using question prompts in teaching to help improve student academic text comprehension.

### Implication for further research

Future researchers are recommended to carry out more studies on other language competences using question prompts in teaching relevant and authentic texts to improve students' writing, presentation and listening competencies to support the findings of this study.

## Implications for Instructional Designers

This study provides evidence that the question prompts facilitate and promote students' metacognitive skills. Therefore, when instructional designers plan activities in their learning, they need to take into consideration using question prompts as a scaffolding strategy because of the deficiency of face-to-face between learners and lectures in the learning environment. Question prompts have the potential to function as "cognitive partners" to facilitate student reasoning and focus on the substance of learning. This is one of the new techniques as outlined in Table 1 from this research, particularly in the Indonesian education context. Based on the findings of this study, this technique is highly recommended not only for off line class, but also and especially for on line class like during the pandemic Covid-19 outbreak.

## Acknowledgement

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