



Analysis of Indonesian Language Proficiency Test in High School Students' Reading Section

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Abstract: This study aims to identify and evaluate high school students' scores in Sukabumi City on the reading section of the Indonesian Language Proficiency Test. The research method used a descriptive with a qualitative approach. The subjects of this research are students from SMA Muhammadiyah in Sukabumi City, consisting of 5 classes, namely classes X, XI A, XI B, XII IPS, and XII IPA. The instrument used was an Indonesian Language Proficiency Test sheet containing 40 questions. The data analysis technique used was a qualitative descriptive method to describe the results of the students' proficiency data. The results showed that the initial abilities of the five classes in high school in Sukabumi City, namely classes X, XI A, XI B, XII IPS, and XII IPA, obtained an average score of 170, while the abilities in the second test of the five classes in high school in Sukabumi City, namely classes X, XI A, XI B, XII IPS, and XII IPA, obtained an average score of 194. The results of the data from the two test sessions, the scores of the UKBI test in the reading category, showed that from the five classes, the results for test 1 show an average student ability score of 170 with a "Madya" predicate, while test 2 shows an average student ability score of 194 with a "Madya" predicate, indicating an improvement between test 1 and test 2. Although the reading proficiency predicate remains "Madya" between test 1 and test 2.

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Introduction

Indonesian language proficiency refers to an individual's ability to understand, speak, read, and write in Indonesian. As the official language of the Republic of Indonesia, proficiency in Indonesian is important for native residents and anyone wishing to communicate effectively in Indonesia. Indonesian language proficiency consists of several aspects: listening comprehension, speaking ability, reading ability, and writing ability (Zalmansyah et al., n.d.). Reading is one of the four main language skills, alongside listening, speaking, and writing. Reading is not only about spelling words or forming sentences but also involves understanding, interpreting, and analyzing information. Reading is a written language skill that can be developed separately from listening and speaking skills (Tarigan, 2021).

According to Abidin (Abidin, 2012), "Reading instruction can be interpreted as a series of activities carried out by students to acquire reading skills." Thus, reading is a mental process that involves understanding the visual symbols represented by text to comprehend information, ideas, or messages conveyed. This process is not limited to word recognition but also involves understanding context, interpretation, analysis, and integrating information with the reader's prior knowledge. Reading is an essential basic language skill and an important



tool for lifelong learning, access to information, and social interaction. In this regard, reading ability is a crucial aspect of language proficiency. In the context of the Indonesian language, especially at the education level, analyzing proficiency in reading ability becomes relevant.

In the current digital era, information flows rapidly through various media, especially text. The ability to read quickly, accurately, and critically is increasingly important for understanding and filtering information. Although reading skills are taught from an early age, many students still struggle with comprehension or critical reading, which is an integral part of the education curriculum in Indonesia (Ceyhan & Yıldız, 2020). When reading, the mind, on one hand, creates meaning from what the eyes see in writing, and on the other hand, combines it with the meaning of the previous line. In other words, the mind carries thoughts from one line to the next and connects them with previous and subsequent thoughts. Critical reading ability allows students to question, analyze, and evaluate the information they read. This is essential for developing independent thinking skills. Surveys and research indicate that literacy levels in some regions of Indonesia are still low (Pitri & Sofia, 2022). Good reading ability is one key to improving literacy. Language competence is a skill that students must acquire to listen, follow rules, read, and write (Spolsky & Bachman, 1991). Additionally, proficiency in reading and writing is a crucial focus in Indonesian language education (Ibda, 2020).

Another issue concerns readiness for higher education and the workforce. Academic texts and professional documents often require in-depth reading skills. Readiness in reading ability will help students transition to higher education or the workforce. Good reading ability often correlates with good writing, listening, and speaking skills. Analyzing reading ability can also provide insights into overall language proficiency. The Indonesian Language Proficiency Test aims to maintain the identity of the Indonesian language on the global stage and as the identity and existence of the Indonesian nation. According to Wahyuni et al. (Wahyuni et al., 2021), "The Indonesian Language Proficiency Test appears to be striving to protect the identity of the Indonesian nation. The Indonesian Language Proficiency Test not only preserves Indonesian language on the world stage but also enhances its presence so that the nation's culture is increasingly recognized by foreigners. This decision can be made by incorporating cultural information into the issues examined regarding the Indonesian Language Proficiency Test."

Efforts to maintain Indonesian language proficiency include mastering reading ability because good reading proficiency is important in many aspects of life. In education, career, and daily life, the ability to understand, analyze, and critique texts is a valuable skill. Developing reading ability requires consistent practice and exposure to various types of texts and literature. According to Oktriono (Oktriono, 2019), "UKBI (Indonesian language proficiency test) is a type of language proficiency test. Language proficiency tests show the context in which participants use the language." In the learning process at schools, especially at Muhammadiyah High School in Sukabumi City, students have studied the four language skills in Indonesian language subjects. However, in practice, students have not taken the actual UKBI test to know their true reading ability. Based on this, the researcher feels it is important to conduct the UKBI test for high school students to determine their ability level. If the results are lacking, it will become an evaluation material for researchers and teachers. If the results are good, it should be maintained and continuously improved. According to Hudaa (Hudaa, 2020), the function of the UKBI test is to encourage Indonesian language users to think quickly and responsively in answering relatively short questions. Considering the background of the problem above, analyzing reading ability in the context of Indonesian



language proficiency is very relevant, both from an educational perspective and individual character development.

Solving some of these problems can be done by finding alternative solutions to improve Indonesian language proficiency. Researchers can ensure that their findings are relevant and significantly contribute to the advancement of knowledge and practice in the field. Research on the analysis of Indonesian language proficiency in the reading section provides solutions by understanding the concepts related to reading proficiency, such as cognitive processes while reading, reading strategies and common mistakes.

Other studies have explained that UKBI is an Indonesian language proficiency test that was previously paper-based and has now evolved into an adaptive UKBI (Pratama, 2021). The target audience for the UKBI program ranges from the general public to students, with no age limit for taking the UKBI test (Rahadian et al., 2022). There are seven UKBI score categories: level 1 (excellent), level 2 (very good), level 3 (good), level 4 (fair), level 5 (moderate), level 6 (marginal), and level 7 (limited) (Syahrir, 2017).

Therefore, this study will focus on the analysis of Indonesian language proficiency, specifically on reading comprehension. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on analyzing Indonesian language proficiency within a single section, particularly the reading proficiency aspect, as well as the scoring formula for this proficiency. Typically, the scoring formulas apply to all competencies, not just one. The outcome of this research is expected to provide alternative solutions for improving Indonesian language proficiency. As we know, the minimum score for Indonesian language proficiency tests at the high school level is intermediate (*madya*).

The reading proficiency test for high school students focuses on a single section, namely reading. If the test scores are calculated for three sections only—Section I, Section II, and Section III—and Sections IV and V are not considered, then the proficiency test scores are calculated by multiplying the number of correct answers by the score per item. The score per item for each section is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Score Per Item for Each Section

Section	Section I (40 items)	Section II (25 items)	Section III (40 items)
Score/item	9	7,2	9

Section Score = Number of Correct Answers x Score Per Item

Example:

- Section I Score = $40 \times 9 = 360$
- Section II Score = $25 \times 7.2 = 180$
- Section III Score = $40 \times 9 = 360$

However, this study tests only one aspect, namely the reading section, with the formula: reading section score = number of correct answers x score per item. The maximum reading section score = $40 \times 9 = 360$.

Thus, if the reading proficiency test score is between 313–360, it indicates exceptional proficiency. 2. If the score is between 261–312, it indicates very superior proficiency. 3. If the score ranges from 209–260, it shows superior proficiency. 4. If the score is between 157–208, it indicates intermediate proficiency. 5. If the score is between 105–156, it indicates adequate proficiency. 6. If the score is between 54–104, it indicates marginal proficiency. 7. If the score is between 0–52, it indicates limited proficiency.

This research focuses on Indonesian language proficiency in the reading section alone, tested twice with high school students. This limitation is aimed at maintaining a focused discussion on reading ability. The research objectives are clear and specific: (1) To



determine the initial reading proficiency of high school students in Sukabumi in the Indonesian language proficiency test. (2) To identify and evaluate the reading proficiency test scores of high school students in Sukabumi. (3) To identify the most common mistakes made by students during the reading proficiency test.

Research Method

The research method used was a descriptive with a qualitative approach using primary data obtained from the Indonesian Language Proficiency Test focusing on reading skills among high school students in Sukabumi City in 2023. Qualitative research produces descriptive data in verbal form to understand social phenomena, particularly linguistic phenomena (Mahsun, 2005). Descriptive qualitative research presents complete data without manipulation or other processing. The goal of descriptive research is to provide a complete picture of an event or to explain and clarify an ongoing phenomenon. It simply elaborated on a number of variables relevant to the issue being studied. This research explained and described data related to the current situation, attitudes, and opinions within a community (Rusandi & Muhammad Rusli, 2021).

The instrument for analyzing Indonesian language proficiency consists of written test results used to assess students' proficiency in Indonesian language. The results of this Indonesian language proficiency test provided an overview of students' abilities in using the Indonesian language. Descriptive methods were chosen because they provided a transparent picture of language data in terms of students' language abilities. Once the data were obtained, reading proficiency results were analyzed using simple quantitative methods and then described with qualitative data analysis. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (Miles et al., 2014), Qualitative data analysis involved three concurrent activities: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing.

Results and Discussion

The researcher conducted the study at high schools in Sukabumi City, administering two tests: the first test on November 14 and 15, 2023, and the second test on January 22, 23, and 31, 2024. The first data is the analysis of the results of test 1 of Indonesian language proficiency in the reading section and its average scores (Yanti et al., 2018). The second set of data consists of the results from the second UKBI reading test, revealing any improvements or declines, and the third set includes common errors in students' answers. The scoring analysis only calculated scores for one section, focusing solely on reading proficiency. The tests were administered twice with different test items each time. The first test aimed to gauge students' initial comprehension as a baseline for their abilities and understanding of the texts they read. The results of the first test were summarized, showing the average reading proficiency scores across five high school classes in Sukabumi City. The second test aimed to determine whether students' results improved or declined from the previous test.

The Indonesian Language Proficiency Test covers five language skills. And for the assessment formula of language proficiency test, of those five skills are:

- 1) If the reading proficiency test score is between 717–900, it indicates exceptional Indonesian proficiency (Very Superior or Exceptional).
- 2) If the reading proficiency test score is between 593–716, it indicates excellent Indonesian proficiency (Superior).



- 3) If the reading proficiency test score is between 466–592, it indicates good Indonesian proficiency (Intermediate).
- 4) If the reading proficiency test score is between 247–465, it indicates fair Indonesian proficiency (Marginal or Adequate).
- 5) If the reading proficiency test score is below 247, it indicates limited Indonesian proficiency (Limited) (PRASETIYO, 2019).

Reading proficiency scores were derived from answers to 40 questions based on five reading passages, with each passage containing eight questions of varying difficulty.

The following are the average reading proficiency scores for high school students in Sukabumi City from Test 1:

Table 2. Average Reading Proficiency Scores for Test 1

Sukabumi City High School	Class X	Class XI A	Class XI B	Class XII IPS	Class XII IPA
Average Score	175	213	153	152	158
Overall Average	170				

Meanwhile, the researcher in this study only tested one level, namely the reading section with its formula score = number of correct answers x score per item. The reading section score = 40 x 9 = 360 as the maximum value. 1. If the reading proficiency test results range from 313 to 360, it means mastery of Indonesian with an outstanding predicate. 2. If the reading proficiency test results range from 261 to 312, it indicates mastery of Indonesian with a very excellent predicate. 3. If the reading proficiency test results range from 209 to 260, it shows proficiency in Indonesian language with an excellent predicate. 4. If the reading proficiency test results range from 157 to 208, it indicates mastery of Indonesian language with a moderate predicate. 5. If the reading proficiency test results range from 105 to 156, it indicates proficiency in Indonesian language with a fair predicate. 6. If the reading proficiency test results range from 54 to 104, it indicates proficiency in Indonesian language with a marginal predicate. 7. If the reading proficiency test results range from 0 to 52, it indicates insufficient proficiency in Indonesian language or limited predicate.

Therefore, the data acquisition in test 1 Average Reading Proficiency Test 1 in Table 2 is the average reading proficiency of 25 students in class X, the average reading proficiency is 175 with a medium category, while the average reading proficiency of class XI A is 8 students, with an average proficiency of 213 with an excellent predicate, class XI B 10 students with an average proficiency score of 153 with a fair predicate, class XII IPS as many as 9 students have an average proficiency score of 152 with a fair predicate, while class XII IPA of 7 students obtain an average score of 158 with a moderate predicate. Based on the average of classes X, XI A, XI B, XII IPS, and class XII IPA in SMA in Sukabumi City are in the medium category.

This means that high school students in Sukabumi City have adequate communication skills in Indonesian, both oral and written; With these skills, those involved have good communication skills to serve scientific and social needs but still face challenges in complex professional fields. The following table shows the average reading proficiency scores for high school students in Sukabumi City from Test 2:

Table 3. Average Reading Proficiency Scores for Test 2

Sukabumi City High School	Class X	Class XI A	Class XI B	Class XII IPS	Class XII IPA
Average Score	175	194	196	205	202
Overall Average	194				



Based on Table 3, the average reading proficiency of 25 students in class X is 175 with a moderate category, while the average reading proficiency of class XI A consists of 8 students with an average proficiency of 194 and a moderate predicate, class XI B with 10 students has an average proficiency score of 196 with a moderate predicate, class XII IPS as many as 9 students achieve an average proficiency score of 205 with a moderate predicate, while class XII IPA, comprising 7 students, obtains an average score of 202 with a moderate predicate. In this second test, based on the average of classes X, XI A, XI B, XII IPS, and class XII IPA in SMA in Sukabumi City are in the moderate category. This means that high school students in Sukabumi City with a "Moderate" predicate in UKBI demonstrate adequate proficiency or are in the middle range. This indicates that participants have good proficiency in Indonesian language, although there is still room for improvement or further enhancement of skills. This is consistent with the results of tests 1 and 2, showing an increase in their average scores by 24 point.

Discussion

Based on Tables 2 and 3, the average scores between Test 1 and Test 2 indicate that three classes experienced an increase in scores after taking the tests twice. Specifically, Class XI B increased from an average of 153 in Test 1 to 196 in Test 2, Class XII IPA increased from an average of 158 in Test 1 to 202 in Test 2, and Class XII IPS increased from an average of 152 in Test 1 to 205 in Test 2. Conversely, Class XI A saw a decrease in average scores, dropping from 213 in Test 1 to 194 in Test 2. Class X did not show any change, maintaining a consistent score of 175 on both tests. To address the third research question regarding the most common errors made after taking the reading proficiency tests, the analysis focuses on identifying the most frequently incorrect answers across all student responses. This helps in understanding the cognitive processes involved in reading comprehension (Ampuni, 2015).

Analysis of Errors in Test 1

In Test 1, several questions were consistently answered incorrectly across five classes (X, XI A, XI B, XII IPS, XII IPA). The common errors, occurring in nineteen questions, are as follows: 10, 12, 15, 16, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 39, and 40.

Detailed Error Analysis for Test 1

- 1) **Question 10:** The correct answer is (A) "tuber." The misunderstanding likely stems from the term "rhizome," which means "tuber" in the context of plant propagation.
- 2) **Question 12:** The correct answer is (D) "lower than." The confusion here arises from the description of bed heights in agricultural text.
- 3) **Question 15:** The correct answer is (C) "the planting distance of 15 cm x 15 cm or 20 cm x 20 cm is optional." The error stems from misinterpreting the flexibility of planting distances mentioned in the text.
- 4) **Question 16:** The correct answer is (B) "proven contrary." This question tests the students' ability to understand contradicting statements within the text.
- 5) **Question 20:** The correct answer is (A) "the light source is behind the photographer." This highlights a common misunderstanding about light placement in photography.
- 6) **Question 21:** The correct answer is (D) "does not produce a sense of movement in the object." The error likely results from misunderstanding shutter speed implications.
- 7) **Question 23:** The correct answer is (C) "low light contrast, tripod, and contrasting background colors." Misunderstanding the technical details for capturing moving objects leads to this error.



- 8) **Question 25:** The correct answer is (A) "energy." The high caloric content of dates is misunderstood by many students.
- 9) **Question 26:** The correct answer is (A) "non-elastic arterial walls." This highlights a misunderstanding of the physiological effects of potassium on arterial walls.
- 10) **Question 27:** This question frequently sees incorrect answers due to a misunderstanding of various types of dates.
- 11) **Question 28:** The correct answer is (C) "tension." The term "contraction" is often misunderstood.
- 12) **Question 31:** The correct answer is (D) "arterial walls." Students often misinterpret the effects of potassium described in the text.
- 13) **Question 32:** The correct answer is (C) "not proven, but related." This question tests the ability to interpret research findings.
- 14) **Question 33:** The correct answer is (C) "indigo light." This stems from a misunderstanding of the visible light spectrum.
- 15) **Question 34:** The correct answer is (C) "work performance." The term "performance" is often misinterpreted in the text.
- 16) **Question 35:** The correct answer is (C) "the independent nature of light." Students struggle with the concept of light's independence in movement.
- 17) **Question 37:** The correct answer is (C) "not proven, but related." The comfort of different light wavelengths is often misunderstood.
- 18) **Question 39:** The correct answer is (D) "Retina not needing to contract." Misunderstanding the physiological effects of light on the retina leads to errors here.
- 19) **Question 40:** The correct answer is (B) "vital energy not just visible light." Misinterpreting the significance of different light types causes this error.

The questions on Test 1 that students often got wrong include Question No. 10, which tests literal comprehension ability, followed by Question No. 12, which tests reasoning/literal comprehension ability, and Question No. 15, which tests the use of context to practice reorganization skills. Question No. 16 tests reasoning or literal comprehension ability, Question No. 20 tests decision-making ability, and Question No. 21 tests decision-making ability. Question No. 23 tests literal comprehension, while Question No. 25 tests reasoning or literal comprehension ability. Question No. 26 tests reorganization or application ability, and Question No. 27 tests literal comprehension. Question No. 28 tests reorganization, while Question No. 31 tests decision-making. Question No. 32 tests reasoning/literal comprehension ability, while Question No. 33 tests reorganization ability. Question No. 34 tests reorganization ability, while Question No. 35 tests decision-making ability. Question No. 37 tests literal comprehension ability, while Question No. 39 tests reorganization or application ability. Finally, Question No. 40 tests reorganization or application ability. Literal comprehension refers to the ability to achieve a basic level of understanding by using information explicitly stated. In this type of literal comprehension, readers are simply instructed to answer literal questions that require them to recall what is explicitly mentioned (Muis, 2013).

Analysis of Errors in Test 2

In Test 2, common errors were found in eight questions: 03, 07, 15, 23, 30, 35, 36, and 40.

Detailed Error Analysis for Test 2



- 1) **Question 03:** The correct answer is (D) "to receive living allowances." Misunderstanding administrative requirements for Wage Rudolf Supratman's name change leads to this error.
- 2) **Question 07:** The correct answer is (C) "common." The idiom "not strange" often confuses students.
- 3) **Question 15:** The correct answer is (B) "incorrect." Students misinterpret the therapeutic equivalence of parts of the candlenut tree.
- 4) **Question 23:** The correct answer is (D) "only related." The high cost of swiftlet farming is often misunderstood.
- 5) **Question 30:** The correct answer is (B) "society layering." Students struggle with inferring implicit information about Banten society.
- 6) **Question 35:** The correct answer is (B) "difficulty accessing the internet at home." Understanding internet usage statistics leads to errors here.
- 7) **Question 36:** The correct answer is (B) "real-time event reporting." Misinterpreting factors contributing to the e-commerce boom is common.
- 8) **Question 40:** The correct answer is (B) "4:1." Misunderstanding numerical comparisons and their implications leads to this error.

These analyses highlight the types of errors and the cognitive processes students struggle with, such as literal understanding, reasoning, reorganization, and decision-making based on textual information.

The discussion of student errors for Test 2 in answering the reading test questions includes several questions. There were eight consistent errors found, specifically in Questions No. 03, 07, 15, 23, 30, 35, 36, and 40. These errors were derived from the responses of students from five classes, namely Class X, XI A, XI B, XII IPS, and XII IPA. The questions on Test 2 that students often got wrong include Question No. 3, which tests literal comprehension ability (Kholiq & Luthfiyati, 2020), Question No. 7, which tests literal comprehension ability, Question No. 15, which tests reorganization ability, Question No. 23, which tests reorganization comprehension, Question No. 30, which tests literal comprehension, Question No. 35, which tests decision-making comprehension, Question No. 36, which tests decision-making comprehension, and Question No. 40, which tests decision-making comprehension. The final results on Test 2 show a balance between students' responses to questions that practice reorganization and decision-making skills. Reorganization ability requires students to be able to rearrange information to help them analyze, sequence, or organize ideas or information explicitly presented by the author in the reading material. In contrast, decision-making ability involves guiding students to evaluate the text, such as providing opinions or judgments on the reading material (Nisa et al., 2022).

Conclusion

The results showed that ; (1) the average reading proficiency scores were as follows: Grade X students scored an average of 175, Grade XI A students scored 213, Grade XI B students scored 153, Grade XII Social Sciences students scored 152, and Grade XII Natural Sciences students scored 158. Consequently, the overall average proficiency score of the students from the five classes was 170, categorized as intermediate (madya). (2) The initial reading proficiency scores were: Grade X students averaged 175, Grade XI A students averaged 194, Grade XI B students averaged 196, Grade XII Social Sciences students averaged 205, and Grade XII Natural Sciences students averaged 202. Therefore, the overall average proficiency score of the students from the five classes was 194, also categorized as intermediate (madya).



Between the first and second tests, three classes showed an increase in scores. Specifically, Grade XI B increased from an average of 153 in the first test to 196 in the second test, Grade XII Natural Sciences increased from 158 to 202, and Grade XII Social Sciences increased from 152 to 205. However, Grade XI A experienced a decrease from an average score of 213 on the first test to 194 on the second test, while Grade X showed no change, maintaining a score of 175 on both tests. (3) Analysis of the answers from students in five classes at Muhammadiyah High School—Grades X, XI A, XI B, XII Social Sciences, and XII Natural Sciences—revealed recurring mistakes. In the first test, there were nineteen identical errors in questions No. 10, 12, 15, 16, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 39, and 40. In the second test, there were eight identical errors in questions No. 03, 07, 15, 23, 30, 35, 36, and 40.

Recommendation

For future research, it is recommended that the analysis of data from reading proficiency tests should not be limited to reading alone but should also include listening comprehension, grammatical responses, and a broader range of subjects for data analysis. While for teachers based on the analysis of Indonesian language proficiency tests in high schools include regular evaluation of students' Indonesian language abilities, implementation of teaching strategies that encompass reading skills, variation in teaching methods to support different learning styles, encouragement of active participation in using Indonesian language in discussions and activities, and providing regular feedback to enhance students' language skills.

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