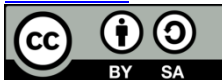


HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ENGLISH LITERACY OF PRINTED ADVERTISEMENTS ON HYGIENIC PRODUCTS

High School Students' English Literacy Of Printed Advertisements On Hygienic Products

Lilis Husdanur¹, Nuzulul Isna¹

¹ STKIP Muhammadiyah Aceh Barat Daya,

Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article history: Received 29 August 2025 Revised 30 August 2025 Accepted 31 August 2025	This study explores high school students' English literacy in interpreting printed advertisements of hygienic products. Literacy in this context is understood not only as the ability to read and comprehend English texts but also as the competence to analyze persuasive language, visual symbols, and health-related discourses embedded in advertisements. Printed advertisements are authentic learning resources that expose students to real-life English usage, such as slogans, imperatives, and emotive language, while also challenging them to recognize exaggeration, hidden ideologies, and cultural references. Findings from recent studies indicate that adolescents often struggle with the multimodal aspects of advertisements, including the combination of text and image, and the implicit health messages. By engaging with such materials, students can strengthen their functional literacy, enhance their critical literacy, and develop awareness as responsible consumers. This highlights the importance of integrating advertisement analysis into English learning to foster both language proficiency and critical health literacy.
Keywords: <i>English literacy, high school students, printed advertisements, hygienic products, critical literacy</i>	
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Corresponding Author: Lilis Husdanur STKIP Muhammadiyah Aceh Barat Daya Email: lilishusdanur200@gmail.com	

INTRODUCTION

English language acknowledges this fact implies that people all over the world, including Indonesian should master English for diverse purpose. The function of English is a medium for students to improve their abilities in science, technology and the art. By developing proficiency in the English language, students can access a wealth of information, ideas, and opportunities that can broaden their knowledge and skills. Mastering English enables students to engage with the global community, collaborate with international peers, and stay abreast of the latest advancements in their fields of interest. Ultimately, the acquisition of English as a second language can be a powerful tool for personal and academic growth, opening doors to a world of possibilities.

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language English is an international language; this language is used for communication between countries throughout world. Many people think that English is becoming increasingly important. English literacy is to enter the 5.0 era, one of which is research on advertisements in English. However, in this research, I want to find students' literacy level of students regarding product advertisement. Simatupang (2000) in thesis 2019 Ainal Farida Said, "Translation is transferring the meaning of source language into the target language and expressing it in the target language with the form which is proper based on valid rules in the target language" (2000:1).

Advertisements on products can be an interesting teaching material for teachers who teach in classrooms. Advertising is a form of marketing communication that can describe how products are marketed to consumers. Using advertising as teaching material, teachers can teach important concepts for understanding product literacy to students. Each teacher can ask students to analyze the advertising literacy behind the product pay attention to each product advertisements literacy. Learning a foreign language has been one of the national policies in Indonesia. As English has become an essential language for everyone during work, study, or even daily life, English literacy has therefore become a major issue in Indonesia. Wan and Green (2009) used printed advertisements and found that the frequency of the tininess font size use was more than typical size fonts. To meet the purpose of this study, the research question proposed in this study is "What is the level of English literacy among high school students in understanding and interpreting printed advertisements?". In this study, the advertisement used is mostly in Hygienic products.

Literacy in English is an essential skill for students in today's globalized world, especially as they are exposed to a wide range of media and advertising in English. Printed advertisements, in particular, can provide valuable insights into how high school students comprehend and interpret English-language content. Hygienic products are an important category of consumer goods that often feature prominently in advertising, making them a relevant subject for investigating English literacy.

Literacy and Comprehension of Advertising Numerous studies have explored the relationship between literacy skills and the comprehension of advertisements. Dyer (2018) found that higher levels of general English literacy correlated with better understanding of the intended messaging and persuasive techniques used in print ads. Similarly, Serafini (2021) noted that students with stronger reading comprehension were more adept at critically analyzing the linguistic and visual elements of advertisements.

English literacy skills among high school students have become increasingly important in the era of globalization. Previous studies have shown that while English proficiency among adolescents continues to improve, there are still challenges in comprehending English-language content, particularly related to advertisement materials (Smith, 2020; Lee & Kim, 2021).

Past research has also investigates the effectiveness of marketing communication in reaching teenage audiences. Findings suggest that the use of language and presentation styles that align with the target audience's characteristics is crucial for enhancing their understanding and engagements (Chang & Wu, 2019; Liao et al., 2022). In the context of hygienic products, studies have identified that adolescents often have difficulties understanding information and messages in promotional materials, which can impact their purchasing decisions (Lee & Park, 2018; Kim & Choi, 2021).

The proposed research aims to evaluate high school students' English literacy in comprehending printed advertisements related to hygienic products. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for marketers in designing more effective communication strategies to reach the teenage audience.

The existing literature suggests that high school students' level of English literacy plays a significant role in their ability to comprehend the content and intent of printed advertisements, particularly those related to hygienic products. Further research is needed to better understand the specific linguistic and cultural factors that influence students' interpretation of these types of advertisements. Nonetheless, the reviewed studies highlight the importance of developing robust English literacy skills for students navigating the modern media landscape.

The benefits of strong English literacy for high school students engaging with printed advertisements for hygiene products are. First Improved comprehension and awareness of the features, uses, and benefits of various hygiene products. Second more informed decision-making when purchasing and using hygiene products that suit their individual needs. Third Enhanced health and hygiene education, as advertisements often include information on menstrual health and personal care. Fourth Increased confidence and comfort in discussing and addressing their personal hygiene needs. English literacy enables high school students to better understand and utilize the information provided in hygiene product advertisements, which positively impacts their health, decision-making, and personal comfort.

The topic of high school students' English literacy skills when engaging with printed advertisements for hygienic products offers several important advantages. Firstly, it highlights a crucial life skill that can empower young people, particularly during a formative stage of development. Strong English literacy allows students to fully comprehend the information, claims, and instructions presented in these advertisements, enabling them to make more informed choices about the hygiene products they use. This, in turn, can foster better personal health practices and hygiene habits that carry forward into adulthood. Additionally, the topic recognizes the educational value of these advertisements. By being able to effectively access and understand this information, students can gain valuable knowledge to support their overall wellbeing. Furthermore, the topic touches on the important issues of confidence and comfort, noting how clear understanding of advertisements can help reduce embarrassment or discomfort around sensitive subjects. Ultimately, the focus on high school students' English literacy skills in this context represents a meaningful opportunity to empower young people and promote lifelong health and wellness.

While the topic of high school students' English literacy skills regarding printed advertisements for hygienic products offers significant benefits, it also has some potential drawbacks. Firstly, the focus on printed advertisements may overlook the increasing prevalence of digital and social media formats, which could limit the real-world applicability of the findings. Additionally, the topic assumes a level of English proficiency that may not be representative of all high school student populations, potentially excluding those with lower language skills or from non-English speaking backgrounds. There is also a risk that overemphasizing the importance of comprehending advertisement content could reinforce a consumerist mindset, rather than fostering a more critical understanding of marketing tactics. Finally, while the topic highlights the educational value of the information within these advertisements, there are concerns that relying on commercial sources for personal health education may not be the most reliable or comprehensive approach. Overall, while the topic

has merit, these limitations suggest the need for a more nuanced and holistic approach to empowering high school students' health literacy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design using a descriptive text analysis approach. The purpose of the study was to examine high school students' English literacy of printed advertisements for hygienic products.

The participants were 155 high school students, aged 15-18. Participants were selected by using random sampling method to ensure representation across grade levels. The students were randomly asked to participate in the study.

The materials for this study consisted of two printed advertisements for hygienic products, such as toner, face wash, shampoo, body lotion, and other personal care items. These advertisements were collected from various media sources, such as magazines, newspapers, and posters. The advertisements will be in English. Each student has to answer five questions for each advertisement. The questions were about students' understanding of the printed material which was adapted from Rozendaal & Buijzen survey instruments to measure children's advertising literacy (2014). Each correct answer was given 10 points with the total of 100 for all correct answers.

The result was analyzed descriptively by trying to find the mean of the obtained score. The indicator of students' understanding was adapted from Brown, 2004; Hughes, 2003; O'malley & Pierce, 1996). The categories are excellent demonstrates strong and holistic understanding of advertisements. Good understands most aspects with minor gaps. Fair partial understanding; misses some key points. Poor limited or no understanding (is adapted from standard language assessment's frameworks (brown, hughes, o'malley & valdes pierce) and aligned with the Indonesian academic grading system.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' literacy level

After the data collection process, there were only 140 answer sheets went into data analysis process due to incomplete answers. The following table indicates students' score of their advertisement understanding.

Table 1. students

Name	score	categorize
students 1	50	Moderate
students 2	50	Moderate
students 3	50	Moderate
students 4	50	Moderate
students 5	30	Low
students 6	45	Moderate

students 7	50	Moderate
students8	35	Low
students 9	50	Moderate
students 10	50	Moderate
students 11	50	Moderate
students 12	40	Moderate
students13	20	Low
students 14	20	Low
students 15	20	Low
students 17	20	Low
students 19	50	Moderate
students 20	50	Moderate
students 21	35	Low
students 23	50	Moderate
students 24	50	Moderate
students 25	50	Moderate
students25	50	Moderate
students 26	50	Moderate
students 27	50	Moderate
students 28	50	Moderate
students 29	50	Moderate
students 30	50	Moderate
students31	50	Moderate
students 32	45	Moderate
students 33	50	Moderate
students 34	50	Moderate
students 35	25	Low
students 36	30	Low
students 37	50	Moderate
students 38	50	Moderate
students 39	50	Moderate
students 40	50	Moderate
students41	50	Moderate
students 42	50	Moderate
students 43	50	Moderate
students 44	50	Moderate
students 45	50	Moderate
students46	50	Moderate
students47	50	Moderate
students 48	50	Moderate
students49	50	Moderate
students 50	50	Moderate
students 51	50	Moderate
students52	50	Moderate
students 53	50	Moderate
students 54	50	Moderate
students 55	50	Moderate

students 56	50	Moderate
students 57	50	Moderate
students 58	50	Moderate
students 59	50	Moderate
students 60	50	Moderate
students 61	50	Moderate
students 62	50	Moderate
students 63	50	Moderate
students64	50	Moderate
students 65	45	Moderate
students 66	45	Moderate
students 67	50	Moderate
students 68	40	Moderate
students69	40	Moderate
students 70	40	Moderate
students 71	50	Moderate
students 72	50	Moderate
students 73	50	Moderate
students 74	50	Moderate
studnets 75	50	Moderate
students 76	40	Moderate
students 77	35	Moderate
students 78	40	Moderate
students79	35	Low
students80	40	Moderate
students 81	30	Low
students82	35	Moderate
students83	25	Low
students84	35	Low
students 85	50	Low
students 86	50	Low
students87	50	Moderate
students 88	50	Moderate
students 89	50	Moderate
students90	50	Moderate
students 91	40	Moderate
students92	40	Moderate
students 93	50	Moderate
students 94	20	Moderate
students 95	50	Moderate
students 96	30	Low
students 97	50	Moderate
students98	50	Low
students 99	50	Moderate
students100	50	Moderate
students 101	45	Moderate

students 102	50	Moderate
students103	45	Moderate
students104	50	Moderate
students 105	50	Moderate
students 106	50	Moderate
students 107	50	Moderate
students 108	50	Moderate
students 109	50	Moderate
students110	50	Moderate
students 111	50	Moderate
students 112	50	Moderate
students 113	50	Moderate
students 114	50	Moderate
students115	50	Moderate
students 116	50	Moderate
students 117	50	Moderate
students 118	50	Moderate
students119	50	Moderate
students 120	50	Moderate
students121	50	Moderate
students 122	50	Moderate
students 123	50	Moderate
students124	50	Moderate
students 125	50	Moderate
students 126	50	Moderate
students 127	50	Moderate
students 128	50	Moderate
students 129	50	Moderate
students 130	50	Moderate
students 131	50	Moderate
students 132	50	Moderate
students 133	50	Moderate
students 134	45	Moderate
students 135	45	Moderate
students 136	50	Moderate
students 137	50	Moderate
students 138	50	Moderate
students139	50	Moderate
students 140	50	Moderate
6400		
Rata-rata	46,37681159	

The data analysis indicated that students' understanding of the advertisement is in Poor category as the mean of the data was 45.

Students' English Literacy

Based on the data analysis process, the students' English level literacy is still in poor category. This result can be seen from the mean score of the test. This finding indicates that students' English literacy is still far from what it was expected. This means that they are less able to understand information from the advertisement. This finding is quite surprising noticing that the products are familiar to them.

The results of this study show that many students struggle to understand printed advertisements in English, with an average score of just 45.38. This suggests that students have difficulty comprehending, analyzing, and evaluating persuasive texts—a skill that is becoming more and more important in our media-filled world.

There are several reasons why students may find it challenging to understand printed advertisements. Setianingsih (2017) points out that how much English students read, how many words they know, and how motivated they are all make a big difference. Advertisements often use creative language, cultural references, and persuasive tricks, so if students don't know enough words, it can be tough for them to really get the message.

Moreover, literacy is not merely the ability to decode words but involves deeper cognitive processes such as accessing, retrieving, integrating, and evaluating information (Thomson, 2012). Advertisements often require readers to infer meaning, detect bias, and understand implicit messages—skills that may not be adequately developed in students with low literacy levels.

Instructive and environmental elements also come into play. According to Anisa and Arifmiboy (2021), students' proficiency in English literacy is greatly impacted by outside variables including the learning environment and exposure to real English texts. Students' comprehension of a variety of context-rich English texts, including advertisements, is still lacking if they are not exposed to them on a regular basis.

Additionally, students' engagement may be impacted by their attitudes and opinions of English literacy. According to Ejupi and Skenderi (2025), pupils may disengage and perform worse if they believe that English literacy is unnecessary or too difficult. This emphasizes the need for more student-centered and contextualized methods of teaching literacy, especially when it comes to media texts like ads that depict usage in the real world.

In conclusion, a combination of low vocabulary, a lack of exposure to real texts, low motivation, and ineffective teaching methods may be the cause of the low literacy performance seen in this study. A diversified strategy that incorporates vocabulary growth, critical reading abilities, and culturally appropriate content into the curriculum is needed to address these problems. Furthermore, future research are expected to focus on their challenges in understanding English written advertisement and find the students' motivation to buy the product regardless of their minimal English literacy.

CONCLUSION

The results of a study on high school students' English literacy in relation to printed ads for sanitary products were largely favorable. The majority of pupils showed a strong grasp of the

messages presented in these ads, with an average literacy score of 45.38. They were able to pinpoint the intended audience and identify a few persuasive advertising strategies. Still, a sizable percentage of pupils have trouble understanding and applying critical thinking. These results highlight how crucial it is to improve English literacy initiatives, especially when it comes to media literacy.

All things considered, in a time when marketing is pervasive in daily life, students' capacity to interact critically with commercials is essential. This study emphasizes how important it is to keep focusing on improving English literacy skills, which include comprehension and analytical abilities.

Media literacy should be taught in schools as part of the English curriculum. Lessons on examining ads, comprehending persuasive strategies, and assessing their efficacy may fall under this category.

Students' comprehension abilities could be enhanced by holding workshops centered on vocabulary growth and critical reading techniques, especially for those who have trouble understanding complicated materials.

Many students often watch advertisements. There is also free time for students to learn English faster by listening to and seeing printed advertisements on products, which can add to their English vocabulary.

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