

THE ANALYSIS OF THAI STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION IN INDONESIA AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MUHAMMADIYAH JEMBER

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Abstract

Reading comprehension is a very basic skill that students must master because it is such a bridge that connects the incoming written knowledge or information and mind's capability to master it. However, reading comprehension is considered a major problem of students worldwide especially for EFL learners who study English in another non-native English country. Therefore, it is important to conduct a research deal with the difficulties of Thai Students of the University of Muhammadiyah Jember in learning English reading comprehension in Indonesia, factors that caused the difficulties, and their techniques to overcome the difficulties. The design of this research is qualitative and the type is descriptive research. The research subjects two Thai students who study English at the University of Muhammadiyah Jember. The data are collected using interview, test, and questionnaire. The researcher took about six months to finish this research.

The findings of this research are expected to be useful for the potential readers to understand the condition of EFL learners in Indonesia especially Thai students who study English in Indonesia specifically in reading comprehension.

Key Words : Reading Comprehension, International Students, Reading Comprehension difficulties.

Introduction

Reading comprehension is a very basic skill that students must master because it is such a bridge that connects the incoming written knowledge or information and the mind's capability to master it. Without proper comprehension skills, students cannot understand what they read (Rutzler, 2020).

However, reading comprehension is considered a major problem of students worldwide especially for EFL learners. Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) stated that reading difficulties among primary school learners are an issue of concern in any society. Chawwang, (2008) investigated English reading problems among Thai EFL learners, and he

found that most of the students face difficulties in reading English texts.

Concerning the conditions where the students are involved in this situation and the area of effects, some questions such as what are the difficulties of Thai Students of the University of Muhammadiyah Jember in learning English reading comprehension in Indonesia, what factors caused the difficulties, what their techniques to overcome the difficulties come up. The research was conducted to analyze and describe the subjects' factual condition based on the problems above.

This research can be a reference to understand the difficulties faced by international students such as in this case. It is expected to be useful for the development of teaching-learning that involve international students theoretically and practically. Furthermore, this research is expected to get the attention of any other researchers to create or complete the existing formula or techniques for foreign students.

Method

The design of this research is qualitative research and the type of this research is descriptive research. The purpose of this research is purely to analyze and describe without any aims to change, transform, modify, or manipulate the natural phenomena and condition of these students.

The data of this research are the subjects' difficulties in reading comprehension, the factors that caused the difficulties, and the techniques to overcome the difficulties. The data of the research have the form as a series of information taken from the subjects' answers of the data collection techniques. This research collects multiple data sources by applying multiple data collection techniques. The use of multiple data collection techniques and sources strengthens the credibility of outcomes and enables different interpretations and meanings to be included in data analysis (Flick, 2004). Those of which are interview, test, and questionnaire.

To verify the trustworthiness of the collected data that is related to the Thai students' difficulties who study at

the University of Muhammadiyah Jember, the researcher applied triangulation of technique and triangulation of source. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple data collection techniques and sources to strengthen the credibility of outcomes and enables different interpretations and meanings to be included in data analysis.

Result and Discussion

The findings of the research subject's difficulties are resulted from interview and test technique given to Subject 1 and Subject 2. The results show that they face a various difficulties such as guessing meaning of text, finding the main idea, finding the references, pronunciation, and words identification in sentence structure. In this respect, those difficulties are considered as fundamental and influential things to their reading comprehension learning process. Those difficulties are such a barrier that obstructs the subject to achieve their goals in learning English reading comprehension. By ignoring these difficulties, the subjects are most

likely left more behind in English reading comprehension.

The difficulties found by the researcher above are highly related to the factors that caused the incoming difficulties. The causes of those difficulties is not only come from the subjects themselves (internal factors), but also from external factors. In this research the researcher figures out the factors using data collection techniques those of which are interview and questionnaire in order to get the relevant valid results. The research results that the difficulties of the subjects in learning English reading comprehension come from a various factors such as different native language lack of its vocabularies, their inability to catch the point of lecturers' explanation, lack of confidence, easily forget the lessons, and reading interest problem.

The results show that the subjects apply several techniques which are considered helpful to ease those difficulties. Those of techniques are asking friends, using Google Translate online dictionary, double translating from Indonesian into Thai

into English, applying extensive reading to gain reading skills and intensive reading to dig information from the text.

After found the result, the researcher presents the research's findings which are discussed and compared to the former studies. This research found a various reading difficulties faced by Thai students who study English in Indonesia at the University of Muhammadiyah Jember. Those of which are guessing meaning of text, finding the main idea, finding the references, pronunciation, and words identification in sentence structure. The researcher compared to a former research conducted by Permatasari (2017) that took four Thai EFL learners as the subject of the research, resulted that those Thai students who study English at IAIN Surakarta found reading difficulties in spelling, identifying main ideas, recognizing plot and generic structure, word analyses, translation. Compared to Permatasari's research, this research has a lot of similarities in reading difficulties findings such as difficulty in spelling or pronunciation,

identifying main ideas, and word analysis, and translation or guessing the meaning. However, there are a little difference between both research findings, which is recognizing plot and generic structure that is not found in this research. This difference is caused by different instruments and techniques of data collection application of the research. The former research applied interview, observation, and document as data collection techniques. Meanwhile, this research applied interview, test, and questionnaire as data collection techniques. Also, the informants and respondents in this research are limited to only two Thai students. Meanwhile in this former research, the informants and respondents come from four Thai students, the reading comprehension lecturers, and classmates of those subjects. Nevertheless, the findings of this former research are in line with the findings of this research.

Conclusion

There are three problems show up in this research. Those of which are what kinds of difficulties that face by Thai students who study English in

Indonesia at the University of Muhammadiyah Jember, what factors that caused those difficulties, and what their techniques to overcome the difficulties.

Based on this research findings, the researcher found that the two Thai students who study English in Indonesia at the University of Muhammadiyah Jember face several difficulties in reading comprehension such as guessing meaning of text, finding the main idea, finding the references, pronunciation, and words identification in sentence structure. The main and most common difficulty that they face is difficulty in guessing the meaning which can lead them into other difficulties such as difficulty in finding main idea and difficulty in finding references. The researcher concluded that their difficulties of reading comprehension are caused by a various factors. Those of which are different native language and lack of its vocabularies, their inability to catch the point of lecturers' explanation, lack of confidence, easily forget the lessons, and reading interest problem. The researcher also concluded

that to overcome those reading comprehension, the research subjects apply several techniques such as asking friends, using Google Translate online dictionary, double translating from Indonesian into Thai into English or vice versa, applying extensive reading to gain reading skills and intensive reading to dig information from the text.

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Comprehension of Thailand Students
of English Education Department at
IAIN Surakarta In Academic Years
2016/2017. Disertation is not

published. Surakarta: Islamic
Education and Teacher Training
Faculty IAIN SURAKARTA



