

**STUDENTS DIFFICULTIES IN READING COMPREHENSION
AT THE FOURTH SEMESTER OF ENGLISH EDUCATION
STUDY PROGRAM IN UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH KOTABUMI
ACADEMIC YEAR 2022/2023**

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Abstract: This study focuses on the difficulties students face in reading comprehension. The purpose of this study is to determine the difficulties in reading comprehension faced by fourth semester students of the English education study program at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University for the academic year 2022/2023. The method used in this study is a descriptive quantitative method, with the entire population taken as a research sample totally 37 students. The reading comprehension test was used as an instrument for data collection methods. The test consists of 25 items which are divided based on difficulties in reading comprehension, which include difficulties in integrating ideas of text, difficulties at the level of sentences, difficulty at the single-word level, difficulties in making inferences and difficulties in inferring implicit information of text. The percentage of difficulty is used to analyze the data. The test results show that in difficulties in integrating ideas the percentage of difficulty is 43%, which is classified as the lowest percentage of difficulty. In the difficulties at the level of sentences, the percentage of difficulty is 66%. Furthermore, the difficulty at the single-word level is categorized as the highest percentage of difficulty with a total of 77%. In the difficulties in making inferences the percentage of difficulties amounted to 67%, which is only one percent different from difficulties at the level of sentences. Meanwhile, the difficulties in inferring implicit information gets a difficulty percentage of 56%. Based on these results it can be concluded that fourth semester students in the English education study program at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University for the academic year 2022/2023, are still experiencing difficulties at the level of sentences, single-word level, making inferences and inferring implicit information of text. The single-word level is categorized as the most difficulties for students.

Keywords: *Reading, Reading Comprehension, Students Difficulties*

Abstrak: *Penelitian ini berfokus pada kesulitan yang dihadapi mahasiswa dalam membaca pemahaman. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kesulitan-kesulitan dalam membaca pemahaman yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa semester empat program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris di Universitas Muhammadiyah Kotabumi tahun akademik 2022/2023. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kuantitatif deskriptif, dengan seluruh populasi yang diambil sebagai sampel penelitian berjumlah 37 siswa. Tes membaca pemahaman digunakan sebagai instrumen metode pengumpulan data. Tes terdiri dari 25 item yang dibagi berdasarkan kesulitan pemahaman bacaan, yang meliputi*

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kesulitan dalam mengintegrasikan ide teks, kesulitan pada level kalimat, kesulitan pada level satu kata, kesulitan dalam membuat kesimpulan dan kesulitan dalam menyimpulkan informasi implisit teks. Persentase kesulitan digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasil pengujian menunjukkan bahwa pada kesulitan dalam mengintegrasikan ide persentase kesulitannya sebesar 43% yang tergolong persentase kesulitan terendah. Pada tingkat kesulitan kalimat persentase kesulitannya sebesar 66%. Selanjutnya, tingkat kesulitan pada tingkat kata tunggal dikategorikan sebagai persentase kesulitan tertinggi dengan total 77%. Pada kesulitan dalam membuat inferensi persentase kesulitannya sebesar 67%, hanya berbeda satu persen dengan kesulitan pada tataran kalimat. Sedangkan kesulitan dalam menyimpulkan informasi implisit mendapat persentase kesulitan sebesar 56%. Berdasarkan hasil tersebut dapat disimpulkan bahwa mahasiswa semester empat program studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Muhammadiyah Kotabumi tahun akademik 2022/2023 masih mengalami kesulitan pada level kalimat, level kata tunggal, membuat inferensi dan menyimpulkan secara implisit informasi teks. Tingkat satu kata dikategorikan paling sulit bagi siswa.

Kata Kunci: *Membaca, Membaca Pemahaman, Kesulitan Mahasiswa.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is an activity in the form of reciting or spelling an text. Reading is the most important skill among the four language skills because it can improve overall language proficiency (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998; McDonough & Shaw, 1993; Krashen & Brown, 2007, as cited in Qrgez & Ab Rashid, 2017, p.422). There are several types of people in reading, including reading as entertainment and reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is an activity to understand the intent of a text or reading material. The ability to understand the text is influenced by skills and abilities in processing information. According to Klingner (as cited in Syafutri Lisiana &

Mega Putri, 2021, p.758) the action of comprehending the meaning of a text or reading material is referred to as reading comprehension. The ability to understand the text is determined by information processing abilities and capacities.

Reading comprehension is an important thing for someone, especially students, with reading comprehension making them fully understand the meaning and information presented from a reading material. In fact, there are some students who find it difficult in reading comprehension. As found in third semester students of English education study programs who still experience difficulties in reading comprehension.

Based on the results of an interview with a lecturer in advanced reading in the

third semester of the English education study program at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University, on January 13, 2023. She stated that there were some students who still had difficulties in reading comprehension because this was a new experience for them. Students also find it difficult when ordered to analyze very long texts and are required to understand it thoroughly. When analyzing, each student has different difficulties such as lack of vocabulary mastery, lack of self-confidence and dependence on the dictionary.

Based on the description above, to ascertain what difficulties students face in reading comprehension, the researcher choose Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University as the research location, and fourth semester academic year 2022/2023 will be chosen as a research subject.

II. THEORY REVIEW

Difficulty is a condition that shows the characteristics of obstacles in an activity to achieve a goal, so that more active efforts are needed to overcome these obstacles. Many students also face difficulties in participating in learning. Difficulty in reading comprehension definitely has an impact on academic achievement and daily activities (Taraban, Rynearson, & Kerr, 2000; Meneghetti, Carretti, & De Beni, 2006,

as cited in Carretti et al., 2009, p.248). There are several things that make students difficult in reading comprehension.

According to Oakhill (1993, p.224-227) there are some difficulties or problems in reading comprehension, which include difficulties in integrating ideas of text, difficulties at the level of sentences, difficulties at the single-word level, difficulties in making inferences and difficulties in inferring implicit information of text.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

Based on the characteristics of the research, this research was categorized as a descriptive quantitative method which aims to reveal what something is. According to Arikunto (2006), quantitative research requires a lot of use of numbers, starting from data collection, interpretation of the data, as well as the appearance of the results. Meanwhile, Arikunto (2005) stated that descriptive research does not aim to test a particular hypothesis, but only describes what is true about a variable. Sometimes in descriptive research you also want to prove allegations, but this is not very common.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique

a. Population

The first step in collecting and analyzing data in a study is determining the population. According to Sugiyono (2016) population is a generalization region that includes: items/subjects with certain attributes and characteristics chosen by researchers to be investigated and conclusions drawn. The population in this study were the fourth semester students of the English education study program at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University academic year 2022/2023, consisted of 37 students.

b. Sample

Sample is part of the population taken for research which is considered to be representative of the population. According to Sugiyono (2016) the sample is part of the quantity and characteristics of the population, and what is taught from the sample will be given the conclusion to the population. However, in this study the entire population was used as a sample, namely the fourth semester students of the English education study program, totaling 37 students.

c. Sampling Technique

The sampling technique is a way of taking a representative sample from the population. According to Sugiyono (2016) data collection techniques are the most

important process in research because the aim of research is to obtain data. The researcher employed the total sampling technique to obtain the information and data required. According to Sugiyono (2008) The total sampling technique is a sampling technique that gives members of the population the same opportunity to be selected as members of the sample. The use of total sampling can be done if the population is relatively small so that all members of the population are sampled (Sugiyono, 2015).

Research Instrument

The research instrument is an important factor to consider in research. Research instruments are used to measure the value of the variables to be studied (Sugiyono, 2014). The instrument used in this research was a test. The type of test used is multiple-choice with a total of 25 questions with each aspect consisting of 5 questions. Students were given multiple-choice test which related to reading comprehension, then students answer on the answer sheets provided.

Data Collecting Technique

Data collection techniques are the types of techniques used by researcher to collect data. The data collection technique used in this study was the test technique. Tests could

be in the form of a series of questions, worksheets, or the like that could be used to measure the knowledge, skills, talents and abilities of research subjects. The test is seen as a tool to measure students' mastery of skills and knowledge (Marsh et al., 2007, p.194). There are several types of tests that are commonly used, such as multiple-choice, short answer, essay, matching and others. In this study, the type of test used was multiple-choice.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in research was carried out after the completion of data collection. According to Sugiyono (2018) data analysis techniques are activities after data from all respondents (population/sample) has been collected. After being given a reading comprehension test, correct and incorrect answers were used as indicators of student difficulty. In this study, students were classified as having difficulty in reading comprehension if the percentage of incorrect answers was more than 50% of the number of questions for each aspect. To determine the types of questions that are difficult for students, the following formula is used as Sudjono (2001) Suggested:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where,

P = Proportion or index of Difficulty

F = Number of the students who answer the item incorrect

N = The total number of the students

Calculating the average percentage of incorrect answers using the mean:

$$A = \frac{\sum P}{N}$$

A = Average

$\sum P$ = The total percentage of incorrectness

N = Total questions for each aspect

IV. RESEARCH RESULT

This research was carried out for three days, namely on Thursday, 6 July 2023, Wednesday, 12 July 2023, and Sunday, 16 July 2023. On the first day, 6 July 2023, the test was carried out offline with 29 participants or research subjects. The following day, 12 July 2023, the test was carried out offline with 7 participants. On the last day, 16 July 2023, the test was carried out online with 1 participant, this was done because there were several reasons that did not allow participant to take the test offline.

To find which types of questions items are difficult for the students, the question items were divided into five aspects as stated by Oakhill (1993, p.224-227). In this case, the results of reading comprehension tests regarding students' difficulties in integrating ideas of text, level of sentences, single-word level, making inferences and inferring

implicit information of text. The analysis is explained as follows;

a. The Students Difficulty in Integrating Ideas Item

In this item, there were five questions to integrating ideas in the text. The question items were listed in numbers 2, 5, 12, 16, and 21. Student test results in integrating ideas can be seen in the following table;

**TABLE 1
THE CALCULATION OF THE PERCENTAGE OF DIFFICULTY IN INTEGRATING IDEAS**

No	Question Item's Number	The Number of Incorrect answer	The Percentage of Incorrect Answer	The Percentage of Student's Difficulty in Integrating Ideas
1	2	14	38%	43%
2	5	10	27%	
3	12	15	40%	
4	16	32	86%	
5	21	8	22%	

Based on the table above, it was known that 14 students (38%) answered question number 2 incorrectly. This shows that question number 2 was categorized as not difficult for students. Furthermore, there were 10 students (27%) who answered incorrectly in question number

5. This means that the question was not difficult. There were 15 students (40%) who answered question number 12 incorrectly. This means that the item was not difficult. In question number 16, there were 32 students (86%) who answered incorrectly. This shows that the question was very difficult for students. Furthermore, in the last number in this aspect, there were 8 students (22%) who answered question number 21 incorrectly. That was, the item classified as not difficult. The results showed that the percentage of students' difficulty in integrating ideas was 43% out of 100%. This shown that the identified students have no difficulty in answering questions about integrating ideas of text.

b. The Students Difficulty In the Level of Sentences Item

In the item level of sentences, there were five questions contained in numbers 7, 15, 17, 19, and 23. The following table presents the percentage results for these items;

**TABLE 2
THE CALCULATION OF THE PERCENTAGE OF DIFFICULTY IN THE LEVEL OF SENTENCES**

No	Question Item's Number	The Number of Incorrect answer	The Percentage of Incorrect Answer	The Percentage of Student's Difficulty in
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				the Level of Sentences
1	7	22	59%	66%
2	15	28	76%	
3	17	22	59%	
4	19	31	84%	
5	23	20	54%	

Based on the table above, it shows that in question number 7, there were 22 students (59%) who answered the question incorrectly. In question number 15, there were 28 students (76%) who answered incorrectly. In item number 17, there were 22 students (59%) answered incorrectly on that item. Furthermore, there were 20 students (54%) who answered question number 23 incorrectly. This shows that the questions were classified as difficult for students. Whereas in question number 19, there were 31 students (84%) who answered Incorrect. That was, the question is very difficult to be answered correctly by students. Based on the students' incorrect answers for each item, the average percentage of students' difficulty in the level of sentences was obtained, namely 66% of the five items. That was, there were still difficulties for students to answer questions about the level of sentences.

c. The Students Difficulty in the Single-Word Level Item

There were five questions to understand the meaning of word or vocabulary. Questions were in numbers 3, 6, 10, 14, and 18. Students were instructed to determine word or vocabulary by finding synonyms and antonyms. The results of student difficulties in this item can be seen in the following table;

**TABLE 3
THE CALCULATION OF THE PERCENTAGE OF DIFFICULTY IN THE SINGLE-WORD LEVEL**

No	Question Items Number	The Number of Incorrect answer	The Percent age of Incorrect Answer	The Percent age of Student s' Difficul ty in the Single-Word Level
1	3	30	81%	77%
2	6	30	81%	
3	10	27	73%	
4	14	27	73%	
5	18	29	78%	

The results show that 30 students (81%) answered questions number 3 & 6 incorrectly. This shows that the two questions were categorized as very difficult for students. Meanwhile, there were 27 students (73%) who answered incorrectly in items number 10 & 14. In addition, there

were 29 students (78%) who answered question number 18 incorrectly. That was, in questions number 10, 14 & 18, students were still relatively difficult to answer these questions. The average percentage of students' difficulty in the single-word level was 77% / 100%. This means that students still experience difficulties in answer the single-word level questions.

d. The Students Difficulty in Making Inference Item

In the question of making inference, there were five questions to find out students' difficulties in making inference from text. The items were in numbers 9, 11, 13, 22, and 24. The following table presents the results of the percentage of difficulty in making inference;

**TABLE 4
THE CALCULATION OF THE PERCENTAGE OF DIFFICULTY IN MAKING INFERENCE**

No	Question Item's Number	The Number of Incorrect answer	The Percentage of Incorrect Answer	The Percentage of Students' Difficulty in Making Inference
1	9	31	84%	67%
2	11	20	54%	
3	13	27	73%	
4	22	24	65%	

5	24	22	59%	
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Based on the table, it was known that in question number 9, there were 31 students (84%) who answered incorrectly. That was, students were still categorized as very difficult in answering this question. Meanwhile, in number 11, there were 20 students (54%) who answered incorrectly. Furthermore, there were 27 students (73%) who answered incorrectly in item number 13. In number 22, there were 24 students (65%) who answered incorrectly. In the last question for this aspect, there were 22 students (59%) who answered number 24 incorrectly. This means that students were still relatively difficult to answer questions in numbers 11, 13, 22 & 24. Calculation of the average percentage of students in answering making inference questions is 67%. This shows that students still have difficulty in answering questions in this aspect.

e. The Students Difficulty in Inferring Implicit Information Item

In inferring implicit information in the text, five questions were provided in numbers 1, 4, 8, 20, and 25. The results of the percentage of students' difficulties in inferring implicit information can be seen in the following table;

TABLE 5
THE CALCULATION OF THE
PERCENTAGE OF DIFFICULTY IN
INFERRING IMPLICIT
INFORMATION

No	Question Item's Number	The Number of Incorrect answer	The Percentage of Incorrect Answer	The Percentage of Students' Difficulty in Inferring Implicit Information
1	1	3	8%	56%
2	4	26	70%	
3	8	23	62%	
4	20	27	73%	
5	25	24	65%	

The results show that there were 3 students (8%) who answered question number 1 incorrectly. This means that students were categorized as not difficult in answering this question. Meanwhile in item number 4, there were 26 students (70%) who answered incorrectly. Furthermore, there were 23 students (62%) who answered incorrectly in question number 8. In question number 20, there were 27 students (73%) who answered incorrectly. And also, there were 24 students (65%) who answered incorrectly in item number 25. This means that the questions were said to be difficult for students. Based on the average percentage

of incorrect student answers, it could be calculated that the student's difficulty in inferring implicit information in a text is 56% out of 100%. From these results it could be concluded that students still have difficulties in answering questions about inferring implicit information.

Discussion

This section will discuss the results or research findings described in the previous section (4.1), in order to answer questions in the research problem. The discussion will emphasize several important things related to the results of the research. This discussion is focused on finding out students' difficulties in reading comprehension.

To provide an explanation of students' difficulties in reading comprehension, there are five aspects that are used to provide details about it. These aspects are difficulties in integrating ideas of text, difficulties at the level of sentences, difficulty at the single-word level, difficulties in making inferences and difficulties in inferring implicit information of text. Thus, from this aspect it can be seen what difficulties in reading comprehension are experienced by students of the fourth semester English education study program at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University academic year 2022/2023.

The findings show that the first aspect, namely difficulties in integrating ideas, gets

a difficulty percentage of 43%. Based on these results, this aspect is not classified as difficult for students because the difficulty percentage is below 50%. Another study conducted by Saraswati et al. (2021) revealed different findings that the aspect that was most difficult for students to face was integrating the main idea.

The second aspect is difficulties at the level of sentences which obtains a percentage of 66%. This percentage shows that this aspect is categorized as difficult for students because the percentage of difficulty is above 50%. Another research by Hidayati (2018) obtained the same result that students still found it difficult to find pronoun or references with a difficulty percentage of 71%.

The third aspect is difficulty at the single-word level which results in a difficulty percentage of 77%. These results indicate that this aspect is the most difficult aspect faced by students. It turns out that students are still difficult to determine word or vocabulary by finding similar or opposite meanings. A study by Saraswati et al. (2021) revealed the results of a study that obtained a difficulty percentage of 68%. This shows that the results of the study are the same as this study, that students experience difficulties at the single-word level .

The fourth aspect is making inference which reaches a difficulty percentage of 67%. This means that students still

experience difficulties in this aspect. This aspect is slightly more difficult than the locating reference aspect which is only one percent different. A study conducted by Hidayati (2018) revealed the results of the same research that students find it difficult to answer questions of this type with a difficulty percentage of 56%.

The fifth or last aspect is difficulties in inferring implicit information which results in a difficulty percentage of 56%. This shows that in this aspect students still experience difficulties. Research by Saraswati et al. (2021) revealed the same findings that students still find it difficult with a difficulty percentage of 67%. However, in another study, namely that conducted by Hidayati (2018) found different findings that in this aspect students were not categorized as having difficulties with the result that the percentage of difficulties only reached 9%.

Based on the discussion described above, there are several difficulties in reading comprehension faced by fourth semester students in the English language education study program at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University academic year 2022/2023. These difficulties are difficulties at the level of sentences, making inferences and inferring implicit information of text. Of these aspects, the single-word level is the most difficult aspect for students.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion in the previous chapter, it has been stated that the purpose of this research is to determine the difficulties in reading comprehension faced by fourth semester students in the English education study program at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University academic year 2022/2023. The research results show that students still experience difficulties at the level of sentences, single-word level, making inferences and inferring implicit information of text.

This research also found one aspect with the most difficulty in reading comprehension. The single-word level is the most difficulty faced by fourth semester students in the English language education study program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kotabumi academic year 2022/2023.

Suggestion

Based on the conclusions above, several recommendations are made which hopefully

can be useful for several parties. This is explained as follows:

1. Student

Students are expected to be more active in learning reading skills, especially reading comprehension. In addition, often practicing doing reading comprehension tests can help students to have a good understanding in reading tests.

2. Lecturer

Lecturers are expected to be able to provide teaching that can improve students' ability in reading comprehension. Lecturers are also expected to be able to provide teaching techniques and methods that are suitable for students, so that they can achieve even better reading comprehension.

3. Next Researchers

For next researchers who will conduct research related to reading comprehension, the results of this research can be used as material for study. It is hoped that future researchers will be able to carry out research related to this topic, so that they can present more findings related to reading comprehension.

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