

The students' perception toward reading in academic context course to improve their reading comprehension

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to evaluate students' perceptions of reading in academic settings and how these perceptions can affect their reading comprehension. The research method used was interviews with respondents, namely fourth-semester English Education students. The results showed that the majority of students have a positive perception of reading in academic settings and consider it important to improve their reading comprehension. Through learning media in the form of TOEFL reading section questions, students become more accustomed to foreign vocabulary and can apply skimming and scanning techniques to facilitate their understanding of reading materials. However, of course, they also face challenges such as difficulty in understanding complex reading materials. From the results of the research, it is concluded that it is important for universities and faculties to pay attention to students' perceptions of reading and consider ways to help students overcome the challenges they face in reading in academic settings.

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1. Introduction

English is one of the international languages which is used in various countries in the world (Manuaba & Putra, 2021). English has a function as the language of instruction for education if the classes or subjects taken are specifically related to the use of the English language (Agung & Surtikanti, 2020). There are 4 skills that must be mastered in English, namely speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

As one of the skills needed to support English language skills, reading skills must be mastered by students. Students should understand the content of the text students read (Singh, 2019; Yuana, 2016; Cahyo et al., 2019). Reading ability is an important prerequisite for learning. The ability to read and understand text is very important to get the information contained in the text, especially in an academic context. Improving the quality of students' reading comprehension will improve the quality of students' overall knowledge (Ganie et al., 2019).

In reading students need reading comprehension to make connections as students read and make meaning of the text (Nery & Suryani, 2021). According to Kuşdemir & Bulut (2018), to understand, evaluated and remember the ideas, the reader need to finding the main idea, understanding the details, recognizing the structure of the text and predicting the idea of the author (Özdemir, 2019). There are many ways to improve reading skills, such as English class, self-study through digital platforms, read more book, do reading exercise and much more (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021).

But in reality, there are still many students who are not fluent in reading English. Not every student can comprehend the text students read and then students also misinterpret what students read. Students still lack grammar, vocabulary, and motivation to read text in the English language. Students are unable to understand what students read, especially in academic contexts (Adiwinata, 2017). Phuong (2021) states that in this research report reading journal papers is difficult, frustrating, perplexing or simply. Usually, students find the difficult to understand reading because there is new and rarely used vocabulary. Students also feel bored in class when reading with an academic context because students finding a long and boring passage, do not know the meaning of some words in the text, the texts is too boring, difficult and uninteresting, students fail to read, students don't interest in the topic reading (Febriani et al., 2019; Miller, 2020). The problems like that prevent them from having good reading comprehension.

Reading for EFL students will become a habit if students practice it as the main class of their learning activity (Lindawati, 2021; Dilshad, 2013). In the English Education Study Program Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Universitas Ahmad Dahlan there are class that can support students' reading ability (Ahmad, 2020; Al-Jarrah, 2018). One of them is the Reading in Academic Context class. This class is implemented in 4th semester. The aim of the class is developing students' skills in reading English especially in academic context at the English Education Study Program Faculty of Teacher Training and Education in English Education Study Program at Universitas Ahmad Dahlan.

Some of the reasons, the researcher will do this research because the researcher wants to know how students' perception of Reading in Academic Context class is, whether reading academic context class could improve students in developing the reading skill and the obstacles students experienced in class. Based on the explanation above, the researcher thinks that it is important to know the students' perceptions of Reading in Academic Context class in the study program. Because students are subjects in the learning process.

2. Method

Researcher used a qualitative method to conduct the study. In this research, the researcher used a case study. The research conducted the interview by online interviewing. The research subject is the students of Reading in Academic Context class B and C in the English Education Study Program, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan in 2021/2022 with a total of 19 students for class B and 19 students for class C for the total is 38 students. In conducting the research, the researcher will use an interview instrument. The researcher used qualitative descriptions as a data collection method.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Findings

3.1.1. The Students' Perception Toward Reading in Academic Context Course in Improving the Students' Reading Comprehension

In interview question number 1, respondents stated that reading in academic context is an effective course in improving reading comprehension. Respondents said that Reading in Academic Context course can make the students familiar with foreign vocabulary, long reading text and reading text with a fairly high level of difficulty. According to Student A, Reading in Academic Context course is an effective course to improving reading comprehension. Reading section of TOEFL test is the learning media to learn reading academic to made us to be familiar with difficult vocabulary and long reading text.

3.1.2. Reading in Academic Context Helps Students to Improve Their Reading Comprehension

The interview question (number 4) with the sentence "Do you think Reading in Academic Context subject can help improve your reading comprehension through reading practice? Explain!", showed that the reading in academic context course is an effective course in improving reading skills because of the application of the TOEFL reading section as practice in each meeting. The lecturer explained the material related to reading techniques, and after that the lecturer gave repeated reading exercises to determine students' abilities in each meeting. The method can train and increase reading comprehension.

3.1.3. Obstacles Experienced by the Students of English Education Study Program Universitas Ahmad Dahlan in Reading in Academic Context Class

According to the interview question (number 7) with the sentence "What are the obstacles experienced in Reading in Academic Context class?" The data from the interview can be found that is the obstacles experienced by students when learning in reading in academic context class is lack of vocabulary. Most of the students said that the factor that caused them to lack vocabulary was academic texts often contain complex vocabulary that students may not be familiar with. This can make it difficult for students to understand the meaning of the text. Also, academic texts can be lengthy, which can be overwhelming for students. The amount of information can be difficult to process and remember.

According to the interview question (number 7) with the sentence "What are the obstacles experienced in Reading in Academic Context class?" The data from the interview can be found that is the obstacles experienced by students when learning in reading in academic context class is also lack of reading speed.

At the end of the meeting, a quiz is usually held which requires students to complete a number of TOEFL reading section questions within a certain duration. At the beginning of students participating in reading classes in an academic context, students still felt unfamiliar with the scanning and skimming techniques provided. Students struggle with reading quickly and efficiently, which can make it difficult to keep up with the pace of an academic course.

3.2. Discussion

In this discussion, researchers will present findings in the study based on analysis of data that researchers have obtained about the students' perception toward reading in academic context class to improve their reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is a critical component of reading skill development. It plays a pivotal role in understanding written text and extracting meaning from it. Without strong comprehension skills, reading becomes a passive activity, devoid of true understanding and engagement with the material. Reading comprehension is indispensable for reading skill development. It forms the foundation upon which all other reading abilities are built. It is essential for academic success, everyday life, and the cultivation of critical thinking skills. At English Education Study Program Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, reading in an academic context is treated as a mandatory subject.

In the course "Reading in Academic Context," students learn essential skills and strategies to effectively comprehend and analyze academic texts. The primary focus is on developing proficiency in reading complex materials typically found in academic disciplines. The changes that occur because of the transition from online to offline learning make students feel surprised by learning. Even though the class has many enthusiasts. Therefore, the researcher conducted this study to find out about students' perceptions of reading in academic classes and the obstacles experienced by students in that class. 38 students in this study stated that reading in an academic context is an important skill and must be mastered by English education students.

In addition, the results of student perceptions are similar to previous findings, as stated by Febriani et al. (2019) and Inayah (2015) that the majority of the students have problems with reading comprehension. reading in academic courses is important because it facilitates knowledge acquisition, enhances critical thinking skills, supports academic success, develops research and communication skills, teaches critical evaluation of sources, and promotes lifelong learning. It is a foundational skill that underpins academic achievement and intellectual growth (Aspers, 2019; Ceyhan, 2020). Reading in an academic context class helps students improve vocabulary and reading comprehension (Etikan, 2016). Because before taking the reading in academic context class, they still felt difficulty in reading academic texts, long texts with foreign vocabulary. After attending the reading in academic context class, they got a lot of new knowledge about how to read the academic text and improve their reading comprehension (Kozleski, 2017; Maguire, 2020).

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that in this study students gave a perception toward Reading in Academic Context Class in English Education Study Program at Universitas Ahmad Dahlan. This perception not only come from students' answers during interviews but also from the achievements they get after they take reading in academic context class to improve their reading comprehension. The students' perception is the participants said reading in academic context class is important for them. Even though, there is a problem like they do not understand and are not used to reading texts in an academic context. But they also said that reading in an academic context helps students to support their reading comprehension. They also observed their progress after attending the reading in an academic context class and the progress of the students can understand the reading in an academic context by not reading everything because they already understand the technique. The researcher also found that there were several obstacles experienced by students when learning in class such as lack of vocabulary and lack of reading speed.

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