

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the study's background, research questions, objectives, significance, and key term definitions were presented. It provided a comprehensive overview, detailing the context and purpose of the study.

A. Background of Study

Reading is an essential and fundamental skill that plays a crucial role in our daily, providing endless possibilities for learning, growth, and personal development. Whether it is diving into a fictional narrative, exploring the depths of academic literature, or staying updated with current affairs through news articles, reading allows us to expand knowledge, broaden perspectives, and nourish minds.

Developing better academic reading and writing skills results in enhanced education and capabilities, particularly in the realm of academic writing, as highlighted by Tsang in Motlaq and Egesh (2016). This reading provides writers with valuable perspectives on writing mechanics, encompassing aspects such as grammar application, vocabulary selection, organization of discourse, and a heightened comprehension of written communication (Krashen & Lee, 2004, p. 10).

According to data sourced from *Perpustakaan Nasional (Perpusnas)*, the reading engagement metric, denoted as *Tingkat Kegemaran Membaca* (TGM), is anticipated to register at 63.9 points in the year 2022 for the Indonesian populace. Acquiring strong academic literacy,

specifically in reading and comprehension skills, is a pivotal factor in forecasting academic achievement, according to Hermida (2009, p. 20) and Olivier and Simasiku (2015, p. 247). Students' lack of motivation to read academic journals can be attributed to various factors. Firstly, students might be unaware of the advantages of reading such journals. Secondly, some students may simply feel lazy to engage with these materials. Moreover, their limited enthusiasm for academic reading could stem from a range of reasons: (1) the prevalence of shorter attention spans due to excessive time spent on social media and the digital realm, (2) a preference for instant gratification, and (3) challenges in understanding article content due to insufficient vocabulary.

The requirement for Indonesian university students to produce a thesis in their final undergraduate year is a significant and challenging aspect of their academic journey. This obligation necessitates an in-depth exploration of scholarly sources, especially English journals, which demands not only a profound understanding of the content but also a meticulous analysis of linguistic, structural, and communicative elements. This comprehensive approach ensures that these students gain a holistic and rigorous academic experience, marking a meaningful culmination of their undergraduate studies. The benefit of reading in general is to increase intellectual ability as mentioned in Qur'an Surah Al-Qamar verse 17 below.

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّذَكَّرٍ

This verse serves as a reminder that Al-Qur'an functions as a resource for straightforward instruction and comprehension, welcoming anyone seeking to learn from it. In a broader sense, beyond Al-Qur'an, the verse encourages individuals to extract lessons and acquire knowledge from all available books when engaging in reading. The encouragement to learn from all available books extends to scholarly journals, suggesting that a broad and open-minded approach to reading can enhance one's understanding and learning from diverse sources.

Reading interest and reading development are distinct yet interconnected aspects of the learning process. Reading interest refers to an individual's intrinsic curiosity and attraction to reading materials. It involves the emotional engagement and enjoyment one derives from exploring written content, often driven by personal preferences and subject matter. In contrast, reading development pertains to the progressive enhancement of reading skills and comprehension abilities. It encompasses the gradual acquisition of vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension strategies, which collectively contribute to a person's proficiency in understanding and analyzing written texts. While reading interest ignites the motivation to engage with reading materials, reading development focuses on honing the cognitive skills required to navigate and interpret diverse texts effectively. Both elements are crucial for fostering a well-rounded and proficient reader, as a genuine passion for reading can complement and fuel the process of reading development, leading to improved literacy skills and broader

intellectual horizons.

Reading English journals is crucial for university students, playing a key role in developing skills essential for academic and professional success. It helps students refine their thesis proposals, exposes them to diverse perspectives, and enhances critical thinking. Integrating journals into coursework keeps students updated on the latest developments in their fields. This skill set is not only vital for academic achievement but also lays the groundwork for postgraduate studies and research careers, where engaging with scholarly literature is fundamental to advancing knowledge in their respective disciplines. In essence, reading English journals is a fundamental building block, shaping students into informed and analytical contributors to their fields of study.

The initial observations conducted within English Language Education Department of Tarbiyah and Teaching Faculty at the State Islamic University of Antasari Banjarmasin reveal varying levels of student proficiency in utilizing diverse scholarly references. Students in their final semester are notably adept at employing scientific sources, primarily driven by the necessity of referencing for their culminating project, namely the thesis. Conversely, students in lower semesters tend to resort to scientific sources only when required for coursework, paper composition, or presentations. Throughout the first to fifth semesters, the frequency of using scientific sources for reading material remains relatively low, primarily limited to fulfilling academic tasks. Furthermore, students typically rely on

online searches on the internet for assignment completion rather than consulting original.

"The Students' Development in Reading English Journals" served as the title of this research. Based on the identified gap in the field, the researcher conducted a study aimed at enhancing the reading abilities of EFL learners. Using English journals as supplementary resources, the research sought to address the challenges faced by undergraduate students, especially those finding it difficult to comprehend such English journals. The investigation aimed to gain insights into how students experienced using English journals for reference. The overarching goal was not only to generate knowledge but also to provide valuable assistance to struggling students. This underscored the significance of guided support for final-year undergraduates in understanding English journals from reputable sources.

B. Definition of Key Terms

To ensure clarity and minimize any potential confusion within the study, the researcher provided clear definitions of key terms that were essential for understanding the research. These definitions acted as a foundation for consistent interpretation and effective communication throughout the study.

1. Students' Development

The research focused on the continuous growth and improvement of university students in their ability to understand, analyze, and engage with academic journals, specifically concentrating on their progress in

reading and comprehending English journals. The study specifically targeted students who were in their fifth semester in English Language Education Department at the State Islamic University of Antasari Banjarmasin, aiming to examine their academic experiences and progress during that period.

2. Reading English Journals

The students involved actively and critically engaging with scholarly papers that presented research or theories in a particular field. This included understanding, evaluating, and synthesizing information to enhance knowledge and contribute to academic discussions.

3. Reading Skills

The students demonstrated the ability to actively assess, interpret, and evaluate information presented in English journals. This involved discerning key concepts, evaluating the validity of research findings, and forming independent opinions, contributing to their overall development in reading.

C. Research Questions

Upon the provided explanation, the researcher derived the research questions, stated as follows:

1. How significant is the development of fifth-semester students in English Language Education Department at Antasari State Islamic University Banjarmasin in reading English journals?

2. What factors contribute to the development of fifth-semester students in the English Language Education Department at Antasari State Islamic University, Banjarmasin, in reading English journals?

D. Objectives of Study

Given the aforementioned explanation, the objectives of this study became apparent. They were outlined as follows:

1. To investigate the significance of the development of fifth-semester students in the English Language Education Department at Antasari State Islamic University Banjarmasin in reading English journals.
2. To identify the factors that contribute to the development of fifth-semester students in the English Language Education Department at Antasari State Islamic University, Banjarmasin, in reading English journals.

E. Significance of Study

This study served as a practical application for refining academic reading courses, curriculum development, and material creation. Its significance lies in its contribution to past advancements in students' reading performance and proficiency.

1. Academic Success

Understanding how students engage with English journals is critical for their academic success, especially as they approach their thesis proposal. Improving reading strategies can positively impact research competence and critical analysis skills, essential components of academic achievement.

2. Professional Preparedness

Proficiency in reading English journals is identified as crucial for students' future professional and postgraduate pursuits. The study addresses the practical application of reading skills in real-world scenarios, contributing to the assessment of students' readiness for the demands of their careers and further academic studies.

3. Teaching Enhancement

The study provides valuable insights for educators to enhance teaching methods by identifying challenges and successful strategies related to students' development in reading English journals. This contributes to evidence-based instructional approaches, ultimately improving the overall quality of education.