

FACTORS AFFECTING EFL STUDENTS' ABILITY IN READING ENGLISH TEXT

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Abstract

EFL students must be able to read English texts in order to have a broader understanding. However, there are a number of obstacles that EFL students face when reading English texts, preventing them from achieving the goal of reading—to expand one's knowledge. The purpose of this study was to find out what influences EFL students' ability to read English texts. In this study, questionnaires were used for quantitative research. Syntax, vocabulary, word meaning, socio-cultural knowledge, nervousness, and time pressure are among the factors that influence EFL students' ability to read English texts, according to the findings of this study. To improve EFL students' ability to read English texts, the findings of this study suggested that specific aspects must be focused on and taken into consideration.

Key words: affecting factors, EFL students, English text, reading ability.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an essential skill for learning (Aminatun & Oktaviani, 2019), (Asia & Samanik, 2018). One of the receptive language skills is reading (Kuswoyo et al., 2021), (Afrianto et al., 2021). A reader who is receptive reads to gain new experiences, knowledge, and information (Puspita & Pranoto, 2021), (Ivana & Suprayogi, 2020), (Fakhrurozi & Adrian, 2020). The ability to read can be enhanced by acquiring everything from reading (Sinaga & Oktaviani, 2020), (Putri & Aminatun, 2021). The language skills of the student are greatly influenced by reading (Fadilah & Kuswoyo, 2021), (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020). Reading skills are defined as "cognitive abilities that a person can use when interacting with texts" (B. N. Sari & Gulö, 2019), (Mertania & Amelia, 2020), (Samanik, 2019). This indicates that students' fluency and accuracy when reading written words are related to reading ability (Suprayogi & Eko, 2020), (Suprayogi, Puspita, et al., 2021). As a result, reading proficiency plays a crucial role in the educational process for students (Qodriani & Wijana, 2020), (Ahmad et al., 2020), (Aguss et al., 2021). Reading English texts can be a difficult task for Indonesians (Kuswoyo & Siregar, 2019), (Kuswoyo, Sujatna, et al., 2022). However, that is one of the skills that a person must possess (Mandasari & Aminatun, 2020). According to (Oktaviani, 2018), English is more than an international language. English is a world language, European language and Asian language (Maskar et al., 2022),

(Candra & Qodriani, 2019). Thus, English which is more than an international language makes Indonesian people have to learn English (K. Sari & Pranoto, 2021), (Suprayogi, 2019). Mastering English reading skills is a difficult task for students of English as a foreign language (EFL) (Oktaviani & Mandasari, 2019). English as a foreign language is a place where English is not the mother tongue of a country (Yulianti & Sulistyawati, 2021), (Fakhrurozi et al., 2022). English is categorized as a foreign language when taught as a school subject or only to give students foreign language competencies such as: reading, listen, writing, speaking (Afrianto & Gulö, 2019), (Suprayogi, Samanik, et al., 2021).

Reading comprehension is an important skill that helps students develop in their various academic endeavors (Septiyana & Aminatun, 2021), (Kuswoyo, Budiman, et al., 2022). They can use it to decipher a text, analyze it, give an explanation (Gulö et al., 2021), and express their own thoughts about written materials (Fakhrurozi & Adrian, 2021), (Kardiansyah & Qodriani, 2018). To succeed in the academic tasks assigned by their teachers, students should develop strong comprehension skills (Nuraziza et al., 2021), (Yulianti & Sulistyawati, 2020), (Afrianto & Restika, 2018). If students want to become proficient readers, reading comprehension aims to help them improve their skills and comprehension of texts (Wardaningsih et al., 2022), (Fithratullah, 2019). Learning strategies, motivation, family support, school instruction, and other factors affect students' reading literacy (Puspita, 2019), (Journal et al., 2021), (Adelina & Suprayogi, 2020). There are basically three levels to these factors: the individual level, the family level, and the school level (Pranoto, 2021), (Novanti & Suprayogi, 2021). Neurological and cognitive factors can have an impact on reading difficulties (Handayani & Aminatun, 2020). The student's home, school, and social and cultural environments are all examples of environmental factors (Oktaviani & Sari, 2020). Emotional factors can also contribute to reading difficulties (Gulö, 2018). Reading difficulty is frequently linked to intellectual factors and intelligence.

Research Question

The objectives of this current study are:

1. What are the Factors Affecting EFL Students' Ability in Reading English Text ?

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is one previous studies reviewed by the researcher related to the Factors Affecting EFL Students' Ability in Reading English Text.

Study	Objective	Method	Findings
Gilakjani1 & Sabouri (2016)	A Study of Factors Affecting EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension Skill and the Strategies for Improvement	To aid learners improve skills and comprehension of texts if they want to be skilled readers	The findings of this review paper indicated that appropriate reading strategies play a vital role in improving EFL learners' reading comprehension skill.

Reading is an important skill that students must know. Learners read texts for various purposes ranging from getting information to pleasure. This helps EFL learners to become familiar with the subjects of their majors and improve their language knowledge. Kim and Anderson (2011) and Salehi, Lari, and Rezanejad (2014) stated that reading has a key role in completing all university programs. Although EFL learners are proficient in their language, they usually have many problems in understanding texts. Thus, it can be stated that several factors influence students' reading comprehension process.

METHOD

This research used qualitative research which was filled using a questionnaire. The technique used in this study was the identification of EFL students' conceptions related to factors that affect their ability to read English texts (Kothari, 2004). This research was conducted among 75 EFL students at a private University in Lampung. As many as 45 participants were drawn from the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, 20 participants were drawn from the Faculty of Arts and Education, and 10 participants were drawn from the Faculty of Business and Economics. All participants were in the second year of college.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to reveal the factors that influence EFL students in understanding English texts. There are 75 students involved in this study whose characteristics can be seen as follows.

Characteristics		Number
Faculty	Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science	45
	Faculty of Arts and Education	20
	Faculty of Business and Economics	10
Semester	3	46
	5	28
	7	1
Length of Time Studying English as Subject	1	4
	2	46
	3	15
	5	9
	7	1

2.1 Responses to Question 1

- 1) The major factors that cause difficulty in reading comprehension is (choose one factor).
- Unknown EFL vocabulary
 - Too complicated syntax and /or formal structure
 - Unfamiliar content
 - Lack of necessary socio-cultural background knowledge
 - Other factors

This question discusses the main factors that cause difficulties in reading comprehension, which aims to determine students' perceptions of English texts that they have read during the learning process. The options below are the main difficult factors that have been discovered when EFL students read English texts. The first thing is about vocabulary that

is not known by the EFL, where the real meaning is contextual English text, several foreign words can be entered into the text to increase students' knowledge of context. The second is about syntax, which in terms of meaningful foreign content in the context of foreign languages at the university level is usually variable and also scientific content. From the questionnaire distributed to the participants, the researchers found the data for Question 1 as follows. .

A. Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science

The major factors that cause difficulty in reading comprehension (choose one factor)				
Unknown EFL vocabulary	Too complicated syntax and /or formal structure	Unfamiliar content	Lack of necessary socio-cultural background knowledge	Other factors
14 respondents	20 respondents	6 respondents	3 respondents	2 respondents

Students from the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science at a private University in Lampung are designed to have 2 semesters of learning English with only two meetings a week. This implies that the less they learn about English, the less their experience of reading contextual English texts. The majority of respondents decided that overly complex syntax or formal structure of English texts became a major factor in the difficulty of reading comprehension. This is because they lack background knowledge about the structure of English and how words are pronounced or they have forgotten about the basic structure of grammar. That happened because English became a tertiary subject in the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science.

B. Faculty of Arts and Education

The major factors that cause difficulty in reading comprehension (choose one factor)				
Unknown EFL vocabulary	Too complicated syntax and /or	Unfamiliar content	Lack of necessary socio-cultural	Other factors

	formal structure		background knowledge	
12 respondents	3 respondents	3 respondents	2 respondents	0

Total respondents from the Faculty of Arts and Education were 20 students, the majority of whom chose option A, where unknown EFL vocabulary became the problem they faced when reading English texts. EFL students have difficulty reading English texts because of factors such as foreign words that make them unsure of how to pronounce them, because they are rarely heard by them or because they have never heard similar words that have the same pronunciation as words unknown words.

C. Faculty of Business and Economics

The major factors that cause difficulty in reading comprehension (choose one factor)				
Unknown EFL vocabulary	Too complicated syntax and /or formal structure	Unfamiliar content	Lack of necessary socio-cultural background knowledge	Other factors
2 respondents	4 respondents	2 respondents	2 respondents	0

The Faculty of Business and Economics students are also designed to only have two semesters of learning English. The majority of students of the Faculty of Business and Economics choose syntax that is too complicated and or formal structure because they have never been specifically exposed and learned about this subject for 2 semesters of learning English. That is why when they read English texts, they find it difficult to get the meaning of sentences syntactically and pragmatically.

2.2 Responses to Question 2

- 2) English texts, which do not contain new words, may not be understood, mainly because of the following things (choose one factor).

- a) Cannot decide on the meaning of the word used when the word can be used in several different senses
- b) Can not understand idioms in the text
- c) Cannot understand subject content in text
- d) Lack of necessary socio-cultural background knowledge
- e) Can not understand the syntax and formal structure used in the text
- f) Other factors such as (specify)

The second question discusses the English text, which does not contain new words, may not be understood due to certain factors. The factors listed cannot decide on the meaning in which a word is used when the word can be used in several different senses, which means that in most contextual English texts, there are several words which have many different meanings depending on the context of the sentence and on this section students have difficulty understanding the meaning of words based on the text. The second listed factor is not being able to understand idioms in the text which means that students have a hard time understanding and determining the meaning of idioms in sentences. A further factor is not being able to understand the subject content in the text, which means that students have difficulty understanding the content contained in sentences. Besides, lack of knowledge about socio-cultural background is needed, this means that students have difficulty understanding other meanings of foreign languages because they are influenced by cultural backgrounds they have never learned English so they have difficulty understanding the meaning. The fifth factor is not being able to understand the formal syntax and structure used in the text which means students have difficulty in understanding standard grammar and sentence order in English. The last factor is a factor that is not listed in the questionnaire.

A. Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science

The English text, which contains no new words, might not be comprehensible, mainly because of the following factor (choose one factor)					
Unable to decide on the sense in	Unable to understand the idioms in	Unable to understand the subject	Lack of necessary socio-	Unable to understand the syntax	Other factors

which a word is used when the word may be used in several different senses	the text	content in the text	cultural background knowledge	and formal structure used in the text	
28 respondents	5 respondents	3 respondents	4 respondents	4 respondents	1 respondent

This table reveals that a factor that makes students from the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science having difficulty understanding a word that has more than one meaning is that it cannot decide on the meaning in which a word is used when the word can be used in several different senses with 28 respondents. This factor affects them because they feel unable to determine the meaning of words in a sentence. For example, the word 'watch' has various meanings such as 'watch', 'watchman' and 'watch'. Also, maybe because they have little time to learn English so it is difficult for them to understand the meaning of the word.

B. Faculty of Arts and Education

The English text, which contains no new words, might not be comprehensible, mainly because of the following factor (choose one factor)					
Unable to decide on the sense in which a word is used when the word may be used in several different senses	Unable to understand the idioms in the text	Unable to understand the subject content in the text	Lack of necessary socio-cultural background knowledge	Unable to understand the syntax and formal structure used in the text	Other factors

6 respondents	2 respondents	3 respondents	4 respondents	5 respondents	0
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This table discusses factors that make it difficult for students from the Faculty of Arts and Education to understand English texts that do not contain new words. From the table above, this shows that students from this faculty mostly cannot decide on the meaning in which a word is used when the word can be used in several different senses with 6 respondents being the highest number.

C. Faculty of Business and Economics

The English text, which contains no new words, might not be comprehensible, mainly because of the following factor (choose one factor)					
Unable to decide on the sense in which a word is used when the word may be used in several different senses	Unable to understand the idioms in the text	Unable to understand the subject content in the text	Lack of necessary socio-cultural background knowledge	Unable to understand the syntax and formal structure used in the text	Other factors
7 respondents	0	0	2 respondents	1 respondent	0

This table discusses the factors that make it difficult for students from the Faculty of Business and Economics to understand English texts that do not contain new words. From the table above, the highest response comes from the inability to decide the meaning in which a word is used when the word can be used in several different senses. From this research, it can be concluded that the three faculties involved have in common in responding to difficulties arising from English texts that do not contain new words but are

difficult to understand. Respondents pointed out that the difficulty stems from their inability to decide which word meanings should be used in the context of English texts.

2.3 Responses to Question 3

- 3) The main factor that can cause poor performance in reading comprehension is (choose one factor)
- a) Nervous
 - b) Content that is difficult or boring
 - c) Lack of time
 - d) Lack of necessary socio-cultural background knowledge
 - e) Other factors

This question discusses the main factors that can cause poor performance in reading comprehension, which aims to find out the factors behind the poor performance of students in reading comprehension originating from three different faculties at Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia. The factors listed are; nervousness, means anxious feelings or psychological conditions that are uncomfortable suffered by students in reading English texts. The second is difficult or boring content, meaning that the reading content is about something that will make them bored or even difficult enough to understand so that it will not interest them in reading English texts. The third is the lack of time which means the time needed to read English texts is limited and the last is the lack of required socio-cultural background knowledge which means students have difficulty reading English texts because their mother tongue or their cultural background has never been use familiar English words. Because it is difficult for them to say specific words that require them to use different intonations and pronunciations.

A. Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science

The major factors that could cause poor performance in reading comprehension				
Nervousness	Difficult or boring content	Shortage of time	Lack of necessary socio-cultural background	Other factors

			knowledge	
14 respondents	14 respondents	7 respondents	7 respondents	3 respondents

Students from the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science were designed to have 2 semesters of learning English but now the obligation requires them to have 3 semesters of learning English in the hope that they will gain an understanding of English both oral and written. From the table above it is stated that they chose "nervousness" and "difficult or boring content" as factors that can cause poor performance in reading comprehension just because they feel nervous in reading English texts due to lack of knowledge in measuring the correct pronunciation and intonation in reading English texts and boring English content so that it will not attract them in reading English texts or it is difficult for them to understand content in the form of English texts.

B. Faculty of Arts and Education

The major factors that could cause poor performance in reading comprehension				
Nervousness	Difficult or boring content	Shortage of time	Lack of necessary socio-cultural background knowledge	Other factors such as (please specify)
3 respondents	6 respondents	2 respondents	7 respondents	2 respondents

Students of the Faculty of Arts and Education are required to have excellent skills in speaking, reading, listening and writing in English. However, there are challenges faced by students. Because of the table presented above, the majority of respondents chose "lack of required socio-cultural background knowledge" as a factor that can lead to poor performance in reading comprehension, it was only because their mother tongue or cultural background had never used language words English is common, and they also never use words contained in English texts and it is difficult for them to pronounce specific words that require them to use different intonations and correct pronunciations.

C. Faculty of Business and Economics

The major factors that could cause poor performance in reading comprehension				
Nervousness	Difficult or boring content	Shortage of time	Lack of necessary socio-cultural background knowledge	Other factors such as (please specify)
2 respondents	2 respondents	3 respondents	3 respondents	0

Students from the Faculty of Business and Economics tend to be the same as students from the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science. They have 3 semesters of English lessons in the hope that they will understand basic English for business. From the table provided above the majority of students of the Faculty of Business and Economics chose the lack of time and the lack of required socio-cultural background knowledge as factors that can cause poor performance in reading comprehension, lack of time means the time required in reading English texts is limited to completing the entire reading and lack of socio-cultural background knowledge because it is difficult for them to pronounce specific words that require them to use different intonations and correct pronunciations.

2.4 Responses to Question 4

- 4) Suppose you read an English text or sentence for the first time. If you find it easy to understand, it is mainly due to the following factors (choose one factor).
- Absence of unknown EFL vocabulary
 - Simple EFL syntax
 - Familiar socio-cultural background
 - Other factors

The fourth question discusses the factors that make EFL learners easily understand English texts or sentences the first time students read the text. The factors listed are the absence of unknown EFL vocabulary, simple EFL syntax, and familiar socio-cultural background. First, the absence of unknown EFL vocabulary means that EFL learners can understand the text easily because EFL learners know all the vocabulary in the text. Second, simple EFL

syntax means that when the sentence structure is not complicated, EFL students can understand the text easily. Third, a socio-cultural background that is known to be related to society and culture that affects students' understanding when reading English texts.

A. Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science

Suppose you read an English text or sentence for the first time. If you find it easy to understand, it is mainly because of the following factor (choose one factor)			
Absence of unknown EFL vocabulary	Simple EFL syntax	Familiar socio-cultural background	Other factors
12 respondents	28 respondents	4 respondents	1 respondents

This table discusses the factors that make students of Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science can easily understand English sentence for the first time the students read the text. From the table above, it can be concluded that the majority of the answers chosen is simple EFL syntax. 28 students chose Simple EFL syntax becomes the factor which makes the students can easily understand the text.

B. Faculty of Arts and Education

Suppose you read an English text or sentence for the first time. If you find it easy to understand, it is mainly because of the following factor (choose one factor)			
Absence of unknown EFL vocabulary	Simple EFL syntax	Familiar socio-cultural background	Other factors
7 respondents	9 respondents	2 respondents	2 respondents

This table discusses the factors that make students of Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science can easily understand English sentence for the first time the students read the text. From the table above, it indicates that simple EFL syntax becomes the major factor that makes the students can understand English text easily. 9 respondents from Faculty of Arts and Education students chose simple EFL syntax.

C. Faculty of Business and Economics

Suppose you read an English text or sentence for the first time. If you find it easy to understand, it is mainly because of the following factors			
Absence of unknown EFL vocabulary	Simple EFL syntax	Familiar socio-cultural background	Other factors such as (please specify)
0	9 respondents	1 respondent	0

This table discusses the factors that make students of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science easily understand English sentences for the first time students read the text. From the table above, it shows that the majority of respondents chose the simple EFL syntax. 9 respondents from the Faculty of Business and Economics students agreed that the factor that made students easily understand reading English texts was due to the simple EFL syntax.

CONCLUSION

Reading is an important skill that EFL students must possess in addition to speaking, listening and writing skills. Through reading, EFL learners will be able to enrich specific knowledge about indigenous culture or general knowledge written in English. However, it does not rule out the possibility that challenges will always be present in the learning process. As well as reading activities in English subjects faced by EFL learners at the private University in Lampung. Through this study, researchers can conclude that EFL students at the private University found several factors that affect their reading ability. Through the findings in this study, researchers hope that educators can pay attention to the factors that cause EFL students to have difficulty in reading English texts. These factors need to be considered on what topics should be focused on improving the reading ability of EFL learners' understanding.

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