

ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES OF UJIAN TULIS BERBASIS KOMPUTER (UTBK) BY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AT SMAS PANGERAN ANTASARI MEDAN

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the challenges senior high school students encountered when responding to reading comprehension questions on the UTBK exam. This study employed a qualitative methodology. The results of the study showed that the student's lack of interest in reading made them bored when reading the text in front of them. It was also difficult for them to decipher the meaning of the text because they lacked the necessary vocabulary and didn't practice answering questions about reading comprehension. It made them believe that the UTBK test was too difficult for them. In conclusion, the students had to increase their practice of reading comprehension questions both at home and in class, as well as their interest in reading and vocabulary, to overcome these challenges. This would make it simpler for them to solve problems in the reading comprehension section.

Keywords: *Reading Comprehension, UTBK*

INTRODUCTION

English is not a foreign language to everyone in this day and age. Due to the fact that English is a universal language that is spoken everywhere (Rao, 2019). English is now one of the subjects taught in schools in Indonesia (Asrifan, 2020). There are four skills in English, and reading is one of them. According to Hyland

(2018), reading is a method of extracting information from printed material and correctly interpreting that information. Everyone should become proficient in this talent because it allows for the communication of text messages (Tracy, 2019).

One of the talents required in the realm of lectures is the capacity to read English-language texts. This is evidenced by the fact that the Higher Education Entrance Test Institute's computer-based written examination includes an English test (Dastpak et al., 2021). One requirement for pupils to succeed in the academic world in lectures is the ability to comprehend reading in English. There are still many English-language sources of information that are utilized in many different scientific domains (Musser, 2020).

Additionally, there aren't many novels translated into Indonesian because the process is time-consuming and difficult (Akil et al., 2018). Because of this, it is a requirement for college admission that applicants can speak and understand English. The intention is for them to be able to research material from first-hand accounts or English-language sources when they are studying (Cladis, 2020). Sadly, there is a discrepancy in the level of difficulty between the reading texts used in the UTBK and the English reading books taught in high school. English-language journal articles, where complicated sentence structures and the use of academic jargon (McArthur, 2018). High school students or potential UTBK participants will be less familiar with the exam material for the English section as a result (Viridiana, 2021).

According to some accounts, students believe they must seek assistance in order to pass university entrance examinations like the UTBK (Reimers et al., 2020). Because of this, prospective UTBK participants will have to spend more money in order to potentially graduate at a better level (Reimers et al., 2020). However, not every candidate for a test is able to set aside money for tutoring. Recognizing these circumstances, the professors at Diponegoro University's Applied Foreign Language study program took the initiative to create training sessions to go over UTBK questions with potential test takers.

This activity is conducted online via webinars on the Zoom platform in order to reach a larger audience. According to Handayani & Maheswari (2020), the financing for this community service project comes from the Diponegoro University Vocational School DIPA. Students studying Applied Foreign Languages participated in this activity as moderators and speakers as well (Dincer & Dariyemez, 2020). Students' participation is meant to provide them the chance to use what they learn in college to benefit the community.

Previously done research by Kamberi (2019) to this study, eighth-semester students had issues with their lack of background knowledge, comprehension of the text, and reading methods, all of which contributed to their failure to respond successfully to reading comprehension questions on the UTBK test. Hyland (2019)

additionally mentioned they were pupils' challenges with text interpretation, vocabulary limitations, and time restraints.

This study is unique because this research focuses on UTBK. No researcher has yet to discuss reading comprehension in UTBK that it examines students' difficulties with reading comprehension at UTBK (Persada et al., 2020). Since many students frequently struggle with reading comprehension, which lowers their assessment scores, this study is particularly noteworthy. According to Perez (2019), when reading comprehension questions are presented as multiple-choice responses, students often choose carelessly and occasionally choose not to respond at all. And the interesting thing about this is that they already have reading comprehension skills, so they don't have to worry about that anymore (Willingham, 2021).

LITERATUR REVIEW

Instead of reading, several experts have defined meaning. Gerrig (2018) reading can be defined as the process of deriving meaning from text. As stated, there are numerous reading strategies by Cho (2018). It can be summed up as follows: superficial reading, in-depth reading, focused reading, receptive reading, and responsive reading.

A lot of information was discovered throughout this study. Of the 32 participants, 21 claims that they dislike answering questions about what they read because they find it tedious, especially when it's not in their own language. Due to a lack of interest in reading, 6 participants provided explanations for why they didn't like reading comprehension. 4 people said it was very difficult to answer reading comprehension questions in the comprehension reading test at UTBK because it takes a lot of time, while six people said it was confusing to answer reading comprehension questions because it is difficult to find the meaning, intent, and meaning from the text. They believe that less time is spent answering questions, three other respondents noted that practicing reading comprehension questions is extremely infrequent, and two respondents said that there is not enough money to pay for tutoring programs.

As stated by Roe (2018), we need to be able to make words and comprehend the meaning of symbols in order to read. The largest challenge in reading is comprehending the text's contents, according to numerous studies. Hence reading comprehension problems are no longer uncommon. Vogel, as mentioned in Chou (2018), has reported that 52% of persons with L2 reading comprehension issues struggled to learn a second language. However, issues can also occur when a person's vocabulary is limited, making it difficult to understand a text's context and its contents. Lupo (2019) has claimed that even the best readers frequently struggle to make connections between what they already know and what they are reading.

The UTBK test, which is typically used to assess a person's level of English proficiency, also includes reading comprehension questions. The UTBK includes a reading comprehension test. High school students struggle with reading comprehension on a variety of levels. Numerous researchers advised senior high schools to give kids more time to work on increasing their reading comprehension in order to address the problems they are experiencing.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses qualitative description. In a qualitative research approach, participants in observable behaviors provide descriptive information in the form of written or spoken words.

In this study, the researcher started by visiting with students and asking them Yes/No questions from a questionnaire. After gathering information from 32 participants who would take the UTBK test, the researcher asked questions about his research. In this study, the researchers questioned the participants about their opinions of reading comprehension on the UTBK test until, at the study's conclusion, the researchers learned what challenges they encountered. Most people say this when they have to complete a listening assignment, but most also say it when they have to read a particularly dull passage of text in order to complete a question. That means that most people don't have enough time to read the content and respond to questions. Not to mention the text's vocabulary, which includes several challenging terms that make it tough to comprehend the text's meaning and contents.

FINDINGS

To make it simpler for students to complete the researcher's questionnaire later on, the researcher provided reading comprehension questions as a test tool. In order to gather data, researchers gave students the following 10 questions in the form of a questionnaire:

1. *Apakah anda tertarik dengan soal reading comprehension?*
2. *Apakah bagi anda reading comprehension itu membingungkan?*
3. *Apakah menurut anda reading comprehension membosankan?*
4. *Apakah sulit bagi anda untuk menjawab soal reading comprehension?*
5. *Apakah soal yang bertanya tentang purpose membingungkan anda?*
6. *Apakah soal tentang topic of the text itu membingungkan anda?*
7. *Apakah anda membutuhkan waktu yang banyak untuk menjawab soal reading comprehension?*
8. *Apakah anda sering berlatih mengerjakan soal reading comprehension sebelum UTBK?*
9. *Apakah anda mengikuti les bimbel untuk berlatih mengerjakan reading comprehension sebelum UTBK? (Berikan alasannya!)*

10. *Apakah anda sulit memahami arti dari text reading comprehension sehingga anda sulit untuk menjawab soal tersebut?*

At Prince Antasari Medan Private High School, specifically in class XII IPA, where there are 32 students, researchers provided data from test response sheets distributed on paper. The researchers then presented some of their test results as follows:

Students' Responses on the Test

Participants

Target Language

P1. AI

1. *Menyatakan bahwa dia tidak tertarik dengan reading comprehension.*
2. *Reading comprehension itu membingungkan baginya.*
3. *Bagi dia reading comprehension itu membosankan.*
4. *Dia merasa bahwa menjawab soal reading comprehension itu adalah hal yang sulit.*
5. *Soal tentang purpose itu juga membingungkan baginya.*
6. *Selain itu, soal tentang topic of the text juga membingungkan baginya.*
7. *Dia menyatakan bahwa, dia membutuhkan waktu yang banyak untuk menjawab soal reading comprehension.*
8. *Untuk hal ini, ternyata dia jarang melatih dirinya untuk mengerjakan soal reading comprehension sebelum UTBK akan berlangsung.*
9. *Dia tidak mengikuti les bimbel sebagai persiapannya sebelum UTBK, dikarenakan tidak punya biaya yang cukup.*
10. *Dan dia merasa kesulitan untuk memahami arti dari text reading comprehension sehingga dia sulit untuk menjawab soalnya.*

P2. AI

1. *Menyatakan bahwa dia tidak tertarik dengan reading comprehension.*
2. *Reading comprehension itu membingungkan baginya.*
3. *Bagi dia reading comprehension itu membosankan.*
4. *Dia merasa bahwa menjawab soal reading comprehension itu adalah hal yang sulit.*
5. *Soal tentang purpose itu juga membingungkan baginya.*
6. *Selain itu, soal tentang topic of the text juga membingungkan baginya.*
7. *Dia menyatakan bahwa, dia membutuhkan waktu yang banyak untuk menjawab soal reading comprehension.*
8. *Untuk hal ini, ternyata dia jarang melatih dirinya untuk mengerjakan soal reading comprehension sebelum UTBK akan berlangsung.*
9. *Dia tidak mengikuti les bimbel sebagai persiapannya sebelum UTBK, dikarenakan tidak suka bahasa inggris.*

10. *Dan dia merasa kesulitan untuk memahami arti dari text reading comprehension sehingga dia sulit untuk menjawab soalnya.*

P3. OL

1. *Menyatakan bahwa dia tidak tertarik dengan reading comprehension.*
2. *Reading comprehension itu membingungkan baginya.*
3. *Bagi dia reading comprehension itu tidak membosankan.*
4. *Dia merasa bahwa menjawab soal reading comprehension itu adalah hal yang sulit.*
5. *Soal tentang purpose itu juga membingungkan baginya.*
6. *Selain itu, soal tentang topic of the text juga membingungkan baginya.*
7. *Dia menyatakan bahwa, dia membutuhkan waktu yang banyak untuk menjawab soal reading comprehension.*
8. *Untuk hal ini, ternyata dia jarang melatih dirinya untuk mengerjakan soal reading comprehension sebelum UTBK akan berlangsung.*
9. *Dia tidak mengikuti les bimbel sebagai persiapannya sebelum UTBK, dikarenakan dia tidak niat untuk mempelajarinya.*
10. *Dan dia merasa kesulitan untuk memahami arti dari text reading comprehension sehingga dia sulit untuk menjawab soalnya.*

P4. BPWM

1. *Menyatakan bahwa dia tidak tertarik dengan reading comprehension.*
2. *Reading comprehension itu membingungkan baginya.*
3. *Bagi dia reading comprehension itu membosankan.*
4. *Dia merasa bahwa menjawab soal reading comprehension itu adalah hal yang sulit.*
5. *Soal tentang purpose itu tidak membingungkan baginya.*
6. *Selain itu, soal tentang topic of the text juga tidak membingungkan baginya.*
7. *Dia menyatakan bahwa, dia membutuhkan waktu yang banyak untuk menjawab soal reading comprehension.*
8. *Untuk hal ini, ternyata dia jarang melatih dirinya untuk mengerjakan soal reading comprehension sebelum UTBK akan berlangsung.*
9. *Dia tidak mengikuti les bimbel sebagai persiapannya sebelum UTBK, dikarenakan tidak tertarik dengan reading comprehension dan juga dia merasa kekurangan waktu ketika mengerjakannya.*
10. *Dan dia merasa kesulitan untuk memahami arti dari text reading comprehension sehingga dia sulit untuk menjawab soalnya.*

P5. DMP

1. *Menyatakan bahwa dia tidak tertarik dengan reading comprehension.*
2. *Reading comprehension itu membingungkan baginya.*
3. *Bagi dia reading comprehension itu membosankan.*

4. *Dia merasa bahwa menjawab soal reading comprehension itu adalah hal yang sulit.*
5. *Soal tentang purpose itu juga membingungkan baginya.*
6. *Selain itu, soal tentang topic of the text juga membingungkan baginya.*
7. *Dia menyatakan bahwa, dia membutuhkan waktu yang banyak untuk menjawab soal reading comprehension.*
8. *Untuk hal ini, ternyata dia jarang melatih dirinya untuk mengerjakan soal reading comprehension sebelum UTBK akan berlangsung.*
9. *Dia tidak mengikuti les bimbel sebagai persiapannya sebelum UTBK, dikarenakan tidak punya biaya yang cukup dan tidak suka bahasa Inggris.*
10. *Dan dia merasa kesulitan untuk memahami arti dari text reading comprehension sehingga dia sulit untuk menjawab soalnya.*

Students provided supportive comments during the research process. Although the majority of students dislike English and have some difficulty learning the language, particularly in reading activities, they actually have a strong desire to enroll in reading programs. In the pre-activity phase, they were incredibly enthused. Only a small number of students responded to the researcher's queries when they were linked to the course subject. During the activities stage, when the researcher explained the contents to the students and asked them to pay attention, about half of the students did so. The researcher then gave the students the UTBK approach to use when studying the text they had been given. The majority of the pupils responded well and followed the researchers' instructions. They were ready to participate in the reading exercises when the UTBK approach was used. Some pupils are still having trouble understanding the material and determining the meaning of each paragraph. Because there are so many reading text series for pupils to study, they don't have time to do their assignments. As a result, they are still unable to adequately discuss and analyze the material. Researchers used observation to find the results mentioned above. However, the researcher serves as a teacher during this observation.

This investigation yielded a wealth of knowledge. 21 of the 32 participants were not interested in reading comprehension. Twenty-nine people claim that reading comprehension is difficult. There are 21 individuals who believe reading comprehension is really dull. There were 29 persons who stated that it was very challenging for them to understand the meaning of the reading comprehension

questions, particularly when they came across a new language, which made it much more challenging for them to understand and answer. Reading comprehension causing them to get rapidly bored. The objective, according to 17 respondents, and the text's subject, according to 20 respondents, were likewise unclear. Twenty-three participants claimed they didn't have enough time to focus on their reading comprehension and that they needed more time to complete the reading comprehension questions. There were 14 respondents in this example who admitted that they rarely practiced reading comprehension before the UTBK because they disliked English, particularly in reading comprehension. There are 30 persons who do not attend tutoring for a variety of reasons, including financial hardship. Others claim they are uninterested in English because they believe it to be a tough subject and are, therefore, too lazy to attend courses at UTBK tutoring.

Numerous issues were still discovered. The students first lacked clarity regarding their next steps. Second, several students struggled to understand the text's content because they had trouble deducing a word's meaning from each sentence. Due to a large number of reading text series that the students were required to assess, they ran out of time before they could conclude their task. Finally, some pupils' results did not yet meet the standards for success. As a result, the researcher had to make some adjustments for this cycle because the UTBK method's implementation was not yet successful in this cycle.

Based on the data gathered, the researcher draws the conclusion that the participants' lack of interest in reading, the difficulty in understanding the meaning and purpose of the text in reading comprehension questions, a lack of practice, and a lack of time all contribute to the difficulty for each participant who takes the UTBK test in answering reading comprehension questions.

The outcomes fell short of what was required for success. The reading comprehension was modified numerous times by the researcher as a result. Researchers first keep a closer eye on students' actions. In each phase, researchers offer more precise directions and explanations. Researchers are prepared to assist and direct students if they need assistance. Second, the researcher modified the reading material by selecting texts that were appropriate for the students and

providing some definitions of unfamiliar words from the book. Finally, the researcher cut back on the number of reading series she had previously assigned to the students. This is necessary in order for students to fully comprehend the text's substance. Because pupils have a limited amount of time to thoroughly study the text's contents, the more texts they are given, the harder it is for them to do so. Additionally, it makes them less interested in reading and analyzing the content.

DISCUSSION

Every learner needs to be proficient in reading and comprehension because it is one of the English language abilities (Goldenberg, 2020). Additionally, there were reading comprehension questions on the UTBK reading comprehension test. However, there are still numerous challenges that students face, particularly those who have a high level of technical proficiency and are working to solve reading comprehension problems on the UTBK test (Eliata & Miftakh, 2021).

According to Lo (2019), the results of the data collection, many high school students continue to struggle with reading comprehension for a variety of reasons. According to the data, the biggest issue with answering the reading comprehension test questions at UTBK is a lack of interest in reading, difficulty in understanding the text, a lack of time to work on questions, a lack of practice working through reading comprehension problems, and a lack of foreign language vocabulary as a second language rather than their actual culture (M. Handayani et al., 2021).

This is comparable to what is said (Mubarak, 2021) to research the schema theory. If students do not have access to the material in the same way, they risk failing. Other experts contend that one's cultural background has a significant impact on what one reads (McKee, 2020) and accidental vocabulary development (Amin Abdullah & Hamadameen, 2020).

In their studies, Bereiter & Scardamalia (2018) It was stated that high school pupils had the greatest difficulty answering questions because they lacked the knowledge and desire to read. High school students' struggles with reading comprehension in UTBK test issues become a major issue in the field of education. Therefore, it requires a lot of attention, and the issue with the facilities is actually

one of the supporting aspects for boosting pupils' reading motivation so that their reading abilities also improve (Willingham, 2021).

According to Seyhan (2019), therefore, based on the research done, it is anticipated to get over these obstacles. In order to make it easier to work on the reading comprehension section's challenges, high school students must put in more effort on reading comprehension exercises both at home and in class, as well as develop their enthusiasm for reading and their vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

High school students should enhance their reading practice comprehension questions both at home and in the course, as well as their enthusiasm for reading and vocabulary, to make it simpler to work on reading comprehension questions, according to the research that was conducted.

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