

**STUDENTS' READING DIFFICULTIES IN READING ENGLISH  
JOURNAL ARTICLES: A STUDY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
EDUCATION PROGRAM (ELEP) AT UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG**

**THESIS**

*Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements to Obtain Bachelor of  
Education (B.Ed) in English Language Education*



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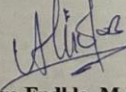
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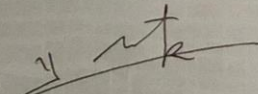
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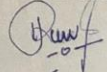
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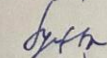
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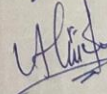
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## ABSTRACT

**Saputri, S (2024). *Students' Reading Difficulties in Reading English Journal Articles: A Study of English Language Education Program (ELEP) At UNP. Undergraduate Thesis. Padang: English Language and Literature Department. Faculty of Languages and Arts. Universitas Negeri Padang.***

English Language Education Program (ELEP) students at Universitas Negeri Padang are burdened with complex English journal articles. This study investigates the difficulties and factors that affect their comprehension of the texts in English journal articles. This study used descriptive research involving 96 participants who answered the questionnaire and two people from each class for in-depth interviews. The results of this study show that seven main factors contribute to students' difficulties: difficulty understanding ideas, main idea, supporting ideas, complicated parts of English journal articles, conclusion of English journal articles, topic-related vocabulary/technical terms/difficult words, inability to read quickly to find information, complicated language style and sentence structure, and difficult topics. Among these difficulties, section of English journal articles and vocabulary problems emerged as the most dominant aspect, posing a significant barrier to comprehension. In particular, this study identified a trend of over-reliance on translation tools that hinders independent comprehension. The findings have valuable implications for future research, finding effective alternatives to increase students' interest in reading journal articles and attempting to find effective strategies to overcome vocabulary challenges when reading English journal articles.

***Keywords: English journal articles, reading difficulties, ELEP***



## ABSTRAK

**Saputri, S (2024). Students' Reading Difficulties in Reading English Journal Articles: A Study of English Language Education Program (ELEP) At UNP. Undergraduate Thesis. Padang: English Language and Literature Department. Faculty of Languages and Arts. Universitas Negeri Padang.**

Mahasiswa Program Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris (ELEP) di Universitas Negeri Padang dibebani dengan artikel jurnal bahasa Inggris yang kompleks. Penelitian ini menyelidiki kesulitan dan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pemahaman mereka terhadap teks-teks yang ada di English journal articles. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian deskriptif; melibatkan 96 peserta yang menjawab kuesioner dan dua orang dari setiap kelas untuk wawancara mendalam. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ada tujuh faktor utama yang berkontribusi terhadap kesulitan mahasiswa: kesulitan memahami ide, ide utama, ide pendukung, bagian artikel jurnal bahasa Inggris yang rumit, kesimpulan artikel jurnal bahasa Inggris, kosakata yang berhubungan dengan topik/istilah teknis/kata-kata sulit, ketidakmampuan untuk membaca dengan cepat untuk menemukan informasi, gaya bahasa dan struktur kalimat yang rumit, dan topik yang sulit. Di antara kesulitan-kesulitan tersebut, bagian-bagian English journal artikel dan masalah kosakata muncul sebagai aspek yang paling dominan, sehingga menjadi penghalang yang signifikan terhadap pemahaman. Secara khusus, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi adanya tren ketergantungan yang berlebihan terhadap alat penerjemahan yang menghambat pemahaman mandiri. Temuan ini memiliki implikasi yang berharga untuk penelitian di masa depan, menemukan alternatif efektif untuk meningkatkan minat mahasiswa dalam membaca artikel jurnal dan berusaha menemukan strategi yang efektif untuk mengatasi tantangan kosakata ketika membaca English journal articles.

***Keywords: jurnal artikel Bahasa Inggris, kesulitan membaca, ELEP***

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## **CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Background of The Problem**

University students must read various texts, including textbooks, modules, and journal articles. This requirement will help students expand their knowledge and skills during their studies and to help them complete their coursework assignments. However, reading is a complex, purposeful, interactive, and comprehension-requiring activity. Therefore, to develop English reading knowledge and skills as described above, time and resources are required, such as reading many modules and scientific journal articles.

Several universities in Indonesia have English Language Education departments, which require students to look for English language sources to complete their coursework. At Universitas Negeri Padang, the curriculum used by 2020 entry-year students in the English Language Education Program (ELEP) contains four compulsory reading-related courses that must be completed by ELEP students, namely basic reading, intermediate reading, advanced reading, and the last is reading and critical thinking activity that must be mastered by ELEP students at Universitas Negeri Padang.

While successful completion of the ELEP program requires reading proficiency in English, it is essential to recognize that not all students will initially demonstrate this ability due to the challenges inherent in reading in a non-native language. Beyond essential recognition of words, reading comprehension involves a complex process of integrating information from the text with pre-existing knowledge, understanding nuances of style and structure,

and constructing meaning relevant to the reader's background, hence the need for reading awareness to enhance readers' comprehension in reading foreign language texts. Reading awareness and understanding language is very important, as said by Nunan (2012); developing language awareness in reading could help learners become more aware of linguistic structures, vocabulary, and stylistic elements within texts, thereby improving their reading comprehension. Therefore, some ELEP students must improve their reading awareness to develop the skills necessary for compelling reading in English.

Navigating the complex world of academic texts, English journal articles significantly present difficulties for ELEP students synthesizing the information in English journal articles. As Phakiti & Li (2011) identified, various factors can impede information synthesis in academic reading, including limited language proficiency, weak reading motivation, different educational backgrounds, lack of confidence, and cultural adjustment difficulties. These difficulties become even more pronounced when facing the demanding content and specialized vocabulary of journal articles, which require a high level of linguistic agility, self-directed learning, academic confidence, and a strong knowledge base. Sultana (2016) further underscores this point, highlighting vocabulary constraints as a significant source of frustration and barrier to understanding for students engaging with academic texts.

The problem of ELEP students in this research arises because many courses in the 2020 English language education program used English journal articles as primary sources, covering areas such as research language teaching, academic writing, essay writing, critical reading and thinking, and thesis writing



through observations and surveys conducted by the researcher among incoming ELEP students in 2020. In particular, when the researcher asked about their reading habits of English journal articles, many students preferred to read the Indonesian translation or even translate the entire text themselves. This phenomenon prompted further investigation, which revealed that students often attribute their choice to difficulties understanding the content of English journal articles. Therefore, this study sought to delve deeper into the underlying causes of this phenomenon, explicitly exploring why ELEP students enrolled in English language education programs tend to prefer Indonesian over English when engaging with academic journal articles.

Based on the problems above, several studies are similar or related to these problems regarding difficulties in reading English journal articles experienced by ELEP students. The first research was conducted by Anwar & Sailuddin, (2022) at Khairun University, Indonesia. The focus of this research is on the difficulties that Indonesian college students, particularly those who are English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, encounter in academic reading. The study aims to identify the specific challenges these students face, such as complex grammar and vocabulary, passage structures, formality, difficult topics, and concentration problems. It also explores the effectiveness of strategies like skimming to improve reading comprehension and suggests ways higher education institutions can support students in developing their reading skills.

The second research was conducted by Eriksson (2023) at Orebro University, Sweden. This study aimed to determine the perceptions of new

students at Swedish University and high schools regarding their ability and knowledge to read academic texts in English. It also sought to find out what challenges first-year students face and how they relate to reading tasks in English. The result of this study was that more than half of the students in the sample expressed negative responses, which are feelings of fear, anxiety, and stress when reading in English. In addition, more than a third of the students stated they had difficulty reading the assigned text in English.

The third research was conducted by Safura & Helmanda (2020). This research examines the challenges faced by English Department students in understanding the main idea in reading comprehension. The study was conducted at Muhammadiyah Aceh University and involved data collection through question sheets and interviews with ten students. The findings indicate that students struggled with vocabulary and comprehending the main idea. They lacked the motivation to improve their reading ability but attempted various strategies such as practicing reading, group learning, and seeking help from the lecturer.

Lastly, the research conducted by Satriani (2018) at the Universitas Islam Riau. This study discussed in the paper highlight the difficulties students face in reading comprehension, including inferring implicit information, finding the main idea, and understanding the meanings of words from context. The research emphasizes the importance of reading habit and motivation in overcoming these difficulties. The research aims to identify the difficulties faced by first-semester students in understanding reading comprehension and finds that they struggle

with motivation, low reading skills, difficulty with complex reading material, unfamiliar vocabulary, and long texts.

The above studies discuss the difficulty of reading English and academic texts. Then, the aspects that are seen are also almost the same, such as difficulties in understanding the main idea, vocabulary, and other aspects such as reading habits, linguistic aspects, and others. Besides, the above research only focuses on difficulties. The topics of the above studies are the same as the topics in this study, namely difficulties in reading texts in English in general, and there are also difficulties in reading academic texts. Meanwhile, the differences between the above studies and this study are as follows: Firstly, this study was conducted on English education students in the 2020 entry year at Universitas Negeri Padang. Secondly, this study focuses on reading English scientific journal articles. In contrast, the above studies only focus on English texts, namely academic texts and English texts in general. Also, this study not only aims to find out the difficulties experienced by ELEP students in reading English journal articles but also focuses on knowing the factors that cause these difficulties, especially for participants who get low scores on the questionnaire.

Participants with low scores on the questionnaire have the highest difficulty when reading English journal articles, so researcher need to find out the difficulty factors experienced by participants. The researcher chose only the low questionnaire score to be interviewed because this study focuses on finding difficulties so that participants who can provide answers related to difficulty factors are only participants who feel high difficulty. This study hypothesises that participants with low scores will represent the answers of participants with

medium and high scores on the questionnaire. Thus, there is a significant difference between this study and previous studies.

Some of the similarities and differences above inspired the researcher to discover the reading difficulties experienced by English language education students in reading English journal articles and what factors caused the participants who obtained the low score on the questionnaire to feel the most significant difficulty. Based on this, the researcher raised the topic of finding out what difficulties and factors caused ELEP students at Universitas Negeri Padang who entered 2020 to experience difficulties reading English journal articles.

#### **B. Focus of the Research**

Concerning the above problems, this study was specifically focus on the difficulties, factors of difficulties experienced by English education students in reading English journal articles at Universitas Negeri Padang. Only English Education Students in the 2020 entry year was identified in this research.

#### **C. Formulation of the Problem**

Based on the focus of the problem above, the formulation of the problem can be formulated as follows: What are the difficulties and factors of difficulties in reading English journal articles experienced by ELEP students while reading English journal articles?

#### **D. Research Question**

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the researcher formulated two research questions:

1. What are the aspects of difficulties in reading English journal article experienced by ELEP students at Universitas Negeri Padang?
2. What are the factors of difficulties in reading English journal articles at low score of questionnaires experienced by ELEP students at Universitas Negeri Padang?

#### **E. Purpose of the Research**

Based on the research question above, the purpose of this research are:

1. To discover the difficulties in reading English journal articles experienced by ELEP students at Universitas Negeri Padang.
2. To discover the factors in high level of difficulties in reading English journal articles experienced by ELEP students at Universitas Negeri Padang.

#### **F. Significance of The Research**

This research is expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, this study is expected to provide helpful information regarding difficulties, factors, and supporting theories in reading English texts, especially in reading English journal articles. Practically, readers can use this research to independently evaluate the causes of difficulties in reading English journal articles. Then, practically, this research is also helpful for future researchers to research solving problems faced by ELEP students at Universitas Negeri Padang related to difficulties in Reading English journal articles. Thus, the results of this study can contribute to students, lectures, and future researchers.

## **G. Definition of the Key Terms**

### **1. Reading difficulty**

Reading difficulty is the difficulty in gathering information and understanding texts from English reading sources, namely English journal articles.

### **2. English Journal Articles**

English journal article is the kind of academic text using complex vocabulary, academic language, and complex sentence.

### **3. ELEP**

ELEP stands for English Language Education Program, one of the departments at Universitas Negeri Padang.