

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The growth number of foreign students studying in Indonesia presents a number of issues, including the fact that international students come from diverse linguistic, educational, and cultural background. International students come from different countries with very diverse cultures and education systems. These differences can affect how they understand, learn and interact with academic material. For example, in some countries, the education system emphasizes memorization and passive learning, while in other countries, the education system emphasizes critical thinking and active learning. These differences in learning styles and academic expectations can be challenging for international students when it comes to adapting to a new academic environment. In addition, different cultural backgrounds can also affect their understanding the nuances of language, idioms and context implied in academic texts. These can make it difficult for international students to understand the author's intended meaning.

For most international students, English is the language of instruction used in educational institutions, in contrast to their native language. Many of them still experience difficulties in understanding lessons given in the foreign language. Complex academic vocabulary, intricate sentence structures, and a distinctive scientific writing style can be a major obstacle for international students in understanding academic texts. Their limited command of the language of instruction

not only makes it difficult for them to read and understand lecture materials, but can also hinder their ability to write, present, and actively participate in class.

Overall, recent studies have shown that international students at Universitas Jambi face a variety of challenges in academic reading, including language barriers, cultural differences, and the need for metacognitive strategies and technological support. Effective strategies to overcome these challenges involve a combination of tailored teaching approaches, the use of technology, and comprehensive academic support. By implementing the right strategies, it is hoped that international students can be more successful in academic reading and achieve better academic success.

International students studying English language programs at Universitas Jambi face a variety of challenges in academic reading that can potentially affect to the fort the learning goal academic success and effective academic reading skills will help them a lot to understanding and engaging with course materials, which often include complex academic texts. However, recent studies have shown that international students often face significant barriers in this regard, involving factors such as language proficiency, cultural differences, and adapting to new academic styles. Research by Zhang and Zhang (2023) showed that international students often struggle to understand academic vocabulary and complex sentence structures, which impacts their ability to employ effective reading strategies. He also emphasized that language barriers not only affect literal comprehension of texts, but also students' ability to analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources, which are essential skills in academic learning.

Related international students' challenges and strategies in academic reading, the researcher has reviewed some journals, including the study conducted by Hsieh and Chang (2022) in their study titled "The Impact of Language Proficiency on Reading Comprehension Strategies of International Students in Higher Education" revealed that low language proficiency can directly affect international students' ability to apply effective reading strategies. The study emphasized the importance of vocabulary mastery and understanding sentence structures in influencing how students read and comprehend academic texts. Meanwhile, the result of the research conduct by Khan and Ahmed (2021) through their literature review, "Academic Reading Difficulties and Coping Strategies among International Students: A Review of Recent Literature," highlighted the various difficulties faced by international students, such as difficulties in comprehending complex texts and adapting to a different reading style than they do in their home country. They also discussed coping strategies that have been identified in recent literature, including the use of tailored reading techniques and more specific academic support. And the other hand the study conduct by Al-Tamimi and Nusairat (2020), titled "Challenges in Academic Reading: Perspectives of International Students in English-medium Universities," provides first-hand perspectives from international students on the challenges they face in the context of English-medium universities. The study shows that differences in academic styles and expectations are often the main barriers, requiring students to develop more specific reading skills and adapt to new reading habits. Overall, these studies underscore that a deep understanding of the challenges faced by international students

and effective strategies to overcome these challenges are essential to supporting their academic success.

Basically, this research has similarities with previous research related to challenges in academic reading. The difference between other research and this research lies in the aspects and subjects studied. The researcher aim in this study was to discuss with international students how difficult the challenges they face in academic reading.

Hence, Cultural differences also play a significant role in academic reading challenges. Research by Brown and Lee (2022) identified that international students often struggle to adapt to writing conventions and academic norms that differ from their own culture. They found that differences in text structure, how arguments are presented, and cultural references can cause confusion and difficulty in understanding reading materials (Brown & Lee, 2022). This study suggests that support in understanding cultural differences and local academic conventions is essential to help international students overcome these challenges.

Metacognitive approaches to reading have also been shown to be effective in helping international students. Research by Miller and Smith (2021) showed that the application of metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating can help students plan and manage their reading process. Miller and Smith (2021) found that students trained in metacognitive strategies showed significant

improvements in reading comprehension and the ability to overcome difficulties in academic texts.

The use of technology has also been shown to provide significant additional support. Research by Johnson and Wang (2023) explored how digital technologies, including text reader applications, dictionary software, and online learning platforms, can help international students overcome academic reading challenges. Johnson and Wang (2023) found that these tools can provide access to additional resources and support that are essential for understanding vocabulary and context, as well as improving overall reading skills.

In addition, academic and social support also play an important role in improving international students' academic reading skills. Research by Carter and Lee (2022) showed that academic tutoring programs, study groups, and social support can help international students adapt to a new academic environment and improve their reading skills. This study emphasizes that integrated support can help students overcome reading challenges more effectively (Carter & Lee, 2022).

Involving international students in the English program at Universitas Jambi aims to understand the challenges they face in comprehending academic material. Many international students encounter difficulties following lessons due to the language of instruction being different from their native language. This often leads to challenges in reading, understanding, writing, and actively participating in class. At Universitas Jambi, international students face various challenges in academic reading,

including language barriers, cultural differences, and difficulties adapting to academic styles. These challenges impact their ability to understand course materials, which often involve complex academic texts. With the right strategies and support, international students are expected to improve their reading comprehension skills, enhance academic reading abilities, and achieve success in their studies.

1.2 Research Questions

According to the previous explanations, the research questions are as follows:

1. What challenges do International Students face in academic reading practice?
2. What strategies do international students use to overcome challenges faced in academic reading?

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of this research are:

1. To identify the challenges faced by international students at Universitas Jambi.
2. To devise effective strategies to overcome academic reading challenges

1.4 Limitation of the Research

This research has a limitation. This will be conducted to determine the challenges in academic reading and strategies to overcome them for international students of the 3th semester English study program at Universitas Jambi.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The significance of this research are:

1. This research can help readers understand the challenges faced by students of the 3th semester international English Education study program at Universitas Jambi in academic reading and the strategies that can be used to overcome them.
2. This research can also help lecturers in developing more effective learning to help international students of the 3th semester English Education study program at Universitas Jambi in academic reading.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

The researcher needs to explain the research terms so the readers can easily understand

International Student

International students in this study are students from Thailand, Egypt, and Pakistan. They are international students batch of 2023. International students generally have to adapt to many differences, such as language of instruction, education systems, learning styles, and academic practices and expectations that are different from their home countries.

Academic Reading

Academic reading is the process of understanding and interpreting various types of scientific or academic texts used in a university environment. Academic texts can include textbooks, journal articles, research reports, lecture materials, and other sources used in learning and research activities in an academic environment.

Challenges in Academic Reading

Challenges in academic reading refers to the various difficulties and obstacles faced by readers when trying to understand and make meaning of scientific, scholarly, or academic texts.

Strategies in Academic Reading

Strategies refer to the methods used to do something better in scale of quality and quantity and strategies in academic reading is the way to understand or comprehend the text.