

**INVESTIGATING STUDENTS' READING STRATEGIES IN
ANSWERING READING SECTION OF USEPT (UNIVERSITY
OF SRIWIJAYA ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST)**

**A Thesis
by**

**Winie Aullya
Student Number: 06011281823073
English Education Study Program
Department of Language and Art Education**



**FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
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**KEMENTERIAN RISET, TEKNOLOGI DAN
PENDIDIKAN TINGGI
UNIVERSITAS SRIWIJAYA
FAKULTAS KEGURUAN DAN ILMU
PENDIDIKAN**

Jalan Raya Palembang-Prabumulih, Inderalaya, Oganllir, 30662,
Telp. 580058, 580085 — Fax. (0711) 353265

Laman: www.fkip.unsri.ac.id, Pos-el: support@fkip.unsri.ac.id

THESIS EXAM

Title : Investigating Students' Reading Strategies in Answering
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Name : Winie Aullya

Student Number : 06011281823073

Study Program : English Education

Department : Languages and Arts

Academic Year : 2021 / 2022

Approved to participate in Final Exam on July, 2022

Approved by
Advisor,

Machdalena Vianty, M.Ed., M.Pd., Ed.D.

NIP. 197411242000122001

Certified by

Head of English Education Study Program,

Hariswan Putera Jaya, S.Pd., M.Pd

NIP 197408022002121003

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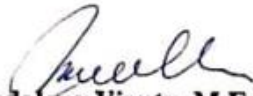
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SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY**

INDRALAYA

2022

**Approved by
Advisor,**



**Machdalena Vianty, M.Ed., M.Pd., Ed.D
NIP 197411242000122001**

**Certified by
Head of English Education Study Program,**



**Hariswan Puteja Jaya, S.Pd., M.Pd.
NIP 197408022002121003**



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Winie Aullya

NIM : 06011281823073

**This thesis was defended by the writer in the final program examination and
was approved by the examination committee on:**

Day : Monday

Date : July 25th 2022

EXAMINATION COMMITTEE APPROVAL

1. Chairperson : Machdalena Vianty, M.Ed., M.Pd., Ed.D.

Machdalena Vianty 25/7/2022

2. Member : Erlina, S.Pd., M.Pd.

Erlina 25/7/2022

Indralaya, July 2022

Certified by,

**Coordinator of English Education Study
Program,**



Hariswan Putera Jaya

Hariswan Putera Jaya, S.Pd., M.Pd

NIP 197408022002121003

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned,

Name : Winie Aullya
Student's Number : 06011281823073
Study Program : English Education

Certify that the thesis entitled "Investigating Students' Reading Strategies in Answering Reading Section of USEPT (University of Sriwijaya English Proficiency Test)" is my own work and I did not do any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethic and rules commended by Ministry of Education of Republic of Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserve to face court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Indralaya, July 2022


METERAI
TEMREL
02AJX95833378
Winie Aullya
06011281823073

THESIS DEDICATIONS

This thesis is dedicated to:

My beloved Parents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

By the blessing of Allah Subhanahu Wata'ala, this thesis entitled *Investigating Students' Reading Strategies In Answering Reading Section of USEPT (University of Sriwijaya English Proficiency Test)* has been completed as the requirement for completing the undergraduate study at the English Education Study Program within Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Sriwijaya University.

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Indralaya, 18th July 2022

The Writer,



Winie Aullya

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXAMINATION APPROVAL.....	i
APPROVAL.....	iii
COMMITTEE APPROVAL	iii
DECLARATION.....	iv
THESIS DEDICATIONS	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF APPENDIX	x
ABSTRACT	xi
CHAPTER I	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Problem of the Study	4
1.3 Objective of the Study	4
1.4 Significance of the Study	4
CHAPTER II.....	5
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
2.1 English Proficiency Test	5
2.2 USEPT	9
2.3 Reading Strategies	10
2.4 Types of Reading Comprehension Question.....	13
2.5 Previous Related Studies.....	15
CHAPTER III.....	17
METHODOLOGY	17
3.1 Research Design	17
3.2 Research Site and Participants.....	17
3.3 Data Collection.....	19
3.4 Validity of the instrument	20
3.5 Data Analysis	20

CHAPTER IV.....	21
FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION	21
4.1 The Students’ Reading Strategies	21
4.2 Intepretation	24
CHAPTER V	27
CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.....	27
5.1 Conclusion.....	27
5.2 Suggestion.....	27
REFERENCES	29
APPENDICES	34
.....	34

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3. 1 Population of the Study	18
Table 3. 2 Number of Students Taking USEPT	19
Table 3. 3 The Sample of Study	19
Table 4. 1 Students' Responses to the Questionnaire (N=10).....	21
Table 4. 2 Strategies in Answering the Reading Question of USEPT as Stated by the Participants	23

LIST OF APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1. Usul Judul Skripsi	34
APPENDIX 2. SK Pembimbing	35
APPENDIX 3. Surat Tugas Penelitian.....	37
APPENDIX 4. Questionnaires	38
APPENDIX 5. Thesis Consultation Card	68

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ABSTRACT

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is used as a requirement to graduate in almost all universities in Indonesia. The use of a test measuring students' English proficiency for the academic matter is also applied at Sriwijaya University, which is called USEPT or University of Sriwijaya English Proficiency Test. The objective of this study was to investigate the strategies that the students of the English Education Study Program within Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Sriwijaya University who have done USEPT more than once applied in their attempt to answer the questions of the Reading section. Applying a quantitative study design, this present study got involved 10 students of the English Education Study Program within Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Sriwijaya University, whose reading score of their USEPT was 52 and above 52, as the participants of study. The data were from the questionnaire responded by the students and analyzed statistically by applying percentage analysis. The result of the data analysis showed that the students did have strategies such as read the question, scanning and skimming, etc., in their attempt to answer the reading questions of the Reading section of the USEPT or University of Sriwijaya English Proficiency Test and their reading strategies were varied.

Keywords : *USEPT, English proficiency test, reading strategies, tertiary students*

A thesis by an English Education Study Program Student, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University

Name : Winie Aullya
Student Number : 06011281823073

Approved by,
Advisor,



Machdalena Vianty S.Pd., M.Pd., Ed.D
NIP 197411242000122001

Certified by,
Coordinator of English Education
Study Program



Hariswan Putera Jaya, S.Pd., M.Pd
NIP 19740802200212103



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the description of the research question, the objective, and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

The Indonesian government has provided overseas Postgraduate Study scholarships for Indonesian students. One of the administrative requirements is that the applicants must provide the certificate of an internationally accepted English test such as TOEFL or Test of English as a Foreign Language, TOEIC or Test of English for International Communication, and IELTS or The International English Language Testing System which shows the required score. The applicants for the postgraduate scholarships to Australia, for example, are usually asked to provide the result of IELTS. The Indonesian Organizing Committee for Educational Fund or Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan (LPDP), which is an agency that provides domestic and overseas postgraduate scholarships, receives TOEFL as the requirement.

The use of a test measuring students' English proficiency for the academic matter is also applied at Sriwijaya University, which is the state university in South Sumatera Province in Indonesia. The test was referred to SULIET or Sriwijaya University Language Institute English Test and now it is called USEPT or University of Sriwijaya English Proficiency Test. As stated in the Sriwijaya University Guidance Book (Universitas Sriwijaya, 2020, p. 37), it is a must for the students to take the test and reach the score as required by their own study program. If the students reach the required score, they are allowed to have the graduation ceremony. However, to reach even the minimum score of USEPT has been a great challenge for the students that many of them have done the test more than once before having the required score. This resulted in the delay of their graduation.

University of Sriwijaya English Proficiency Test or USEPT is a TOEFL-based like test and it consists of 3 sections: Structure, Reading, and Listening. The study conducted by Syafitri (2020), reported that the most challenging part of USEPT was the Reading section. In addition, the students of the English Education Study Program within Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Sriwijaya University participating in Syafitri's study (2020) also reported that they got the lowest score for the Reading section. This is in line with what was reported by Dahlan (2021) that reaching high scores of TOEFL, especially in reading comprehension, is a challenge for a lot of people, especially those who are forced to take the test, because many learners are unable to read fastly and understand quickly due to a lack of a well-established vocabulary. According to Abboud and Hussein (2011), English as a Foreign Language learners face the difficulties in reading section because the limited time of the test. The test takers need to manage their time to answer the question due to the length of the reading text contained in the reading questions.

The importance role of reading in student' academic lives has been highlighted by the scholars and been reported by numerous studies. For example, Harmer (1998) highlights that reading is beneficial for language acquisition because it is required for a career, for academic purposes, and for personal pleasure. It is important because it is useful and needed for our daily life. Reading skill is important for students at all levels of study: elementary to tertiary. As Brown (2000) points out, reading is the most important ability in the educational field because it can be the assessments for students' general language ability. Students must have a high level of comprehension in order to interpret and remember information from reading material. Each subject need reading comprehension since the act of reading is fundamental to each lesson. The study conducted by Pradani (2021) concludes that reading is extremely important because it is a process carried out to obtain messages or information and useful for understanding all the information provided in the reading text so it can give knowledge (intellectual development) for the long term of the reader itself, can

stimulate the mind, reduce stress, increase vocabulary, and widen one's perspectives of thought.

According to Matthiesen (2017, p. 10), good reading strategies and a large vocabulary are essential to performing well on all English Proficiency Test sections. A good reading strategies for each student can be different based on their respective ways of solving problems when carrying out the test. Raqqad, Ismail, and Raqqad (2019) state that reading strategies are important because the use of reading strategies by language learners will assist them in overcoming language barriers, becoming more aware of the language's comprehension and learning method, and developing confidence in learning reading in situations where they have little exposure to English outside the classroom. The study conducted by Zalha, Alfiatunnur, and Kamil (2020) reported that reading strategy and test taking strategy were applied by the participants in their study in doing the TOEFL prediction exam. Some strategies that were applied by the participants for answering reading questions in the English proficiency test were skimming and scanning, and utilizing background knowledge (Zalha et al., 2020). The strategies are important because they help the readers to save time in answering the reading questions. The study conducted by Samad, Jannah, and Fitriani (2017) also reported that knowing appropriate reading strategies could assist the participants in their study to overcome their reading difficulties in doing the TOEFL. Considering these findings and what was previously described in paragraph three that Reading section of USEPT was reported as the most challenging section and the lowest score of all, this present study was aimed to investigate what the students of the English Education Study Program of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education within Sriwijaya University did in order to answer the reading questions of USEPT. Specifically, this present study was conducted by the title *Investigating Students' Reading Strategies in Answering Reading Section of USEPT (Universty of Sriwijaya English Proficiency Test)*.

1.2 Problem of the Study

The problem of this present study was formulated in the following research question: *What were the strategies that the students of the English Education Study Program within Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Sriwijaya University who have done USEPT applied in their attempt to answer the questions of the Reading section?*

1.3 Objective of the Study

In line with the description of the research question, the aim of this study was to find out *the strategies that the students of the English Education Study Program within Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Sriwijaya University who have done USEPT applied in their attempt to answer the questions of the Reading section.*

1.4 Significance of the Study

Getting the required score of USEPT or University of Sriwijaya English Proficiency Test is a must for all Sriwijaya University students. However, it is very challenging to do so. Many students have done the USEPT more than once because they have not been able to reach the required score. Conducting this present study by involving the students who have done USEPT more than once and got the score of reading section that were above the average is expected to shed a light on what strategies they applied in answering the reading questions of USEPT. The findings of this study can specifically serve as the reference for the other students in doing the reading section of USEPT.

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