



**EXPLORING STUDENTS' ANXIETY IN READING  
ACADEMIC TEXT**

*THESIS*

**BY**

**AINUN FEROZA HADI**

**21601073094**



**UNIVERSITY OF ISLAM MALANG**

**FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

**2023**



**EXPLORING STUDENTS' ANXIETY IN READING ACADEMIC TEXT**

**SKRIPSI**

**Presented to**

**Faculty of Teacher Training and Education**

**UNIVERSITY OF ISLAM MALANG**

**In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana* in English Language  
Education**

**BY**

**AINUN FEROUZA HADI**

**21601073094**



**UNIVERSITAS ISLAM MALANG  
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION  
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
DECEMBER  
2023**



## ABSTRACT

Feroza, Ainun. 2023. *Exploring Students' Anxiety in Reading Academic Text. Skripsi*, English Education Department Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Islam Malang. Advisor I : Dr. Atik Umamah, S.Pd., M.Pd., Advisor II : Febti Ismiatun, S.Pd., M.Pd.

**Keywords:** Correlation, teaching method, reading comprehension.

Reading is an important skill to gain knowledge and academic success, especially for university students at higher levels of education. Reading competence is represented by reading literacy, which is affected by reading amount, intensity, and frequency, which can be hindered by reading anxiety, especially in EFL and academic settings. There are several factors that influence the feeling of anxiety in reading foreign language texts. Therefore, the researcher is interested in studying EFL reading anxiety toward academic texts.

This research used descriptive qualitative research to investigate the reading anxiety of the students in terms of reading academic skills. The study was conducted in 7th the semester of the English department of the University of Islam Malang. The instruments used are Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale, while the interview guide is also used to investigate reading anxiety and its causing factors in the form of structured interview. The data collection in this research was carried out online. The data analysis is done by analyzing the questionnaire using Microsoft Excel and analyzing the interview by qualitative analysis method using data selection, organization, and interpretation.

The result indicated that there are 11 students out of 40 with high anxiety levels. The major factor influencing students' level of anxiety is caused by reading topics that can be solved by finding easier material, social strategies, pre-reading and skimming. As for fear of making mistakes, it only happens when students are observed during reading caused by anxiety to have a different understanding with the others, and read in a classroom environment. This can be solved by cross-checking with friends and trying to understand the text as best as possible before entering the class. The other minor factors include vocabulary which is mostly caused by unfamiliar scientific terms, and the only confirmed solution mentioned was being familiar with academic texts.

## ABSTRAK

Feroza, Ainun. 2023. *Exploring Students' Anxiety in Reading Academic Text. Skripsi*, English Education Department Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Islam Malang. Advisor I : Dr. Atik Umamah, S.Pd., M.Pd., Advisor II : Febti Ismiatun, S.Pd., M.Pd.

**Kata kunci:** Korelasi, metode pengajaran, pemahaman bacaan.

Membaca adalah keterampilan penting untuk memperoleh pengetahuan dan keberhasilan akademik, terutama bagi mahasiswa di tingkat pendidikan yang lebih tinggi. Kompetensi membaca direpresentasikan oleh literasi membaca, yang dipengaruhi oleh jumlah, intensitas, dan frekuensi membaca, yang dapat dihambat oleh kecemasan membaca, terutama di lingkungan EFL dan akademik. Ada beberapa faktor yang mempengaruhi perasaan cemas dalam membaca teks bahasa asing. Oleh karena itu, peneliti tertarik untuk mempelajari kecemasan membaca EFL terhadap teks akademik.

Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif untuk menyelidiki kecemasan membaca siswa dalam hal keterampilan membaca akademik. Penelitian dilakukan pada semester 7 jurusan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Islam Malang. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah Skala Kecemasan Membaca Bahasa Asing, sedangkan pedoman wawancara juga digunakan untuk menyelidiki kecemasan membaca dan faktor penyebabnya dalam bentuk wawancara terstruktur. Pengumpulan data dalam penelitian ini dilakukan secara online. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menganalisis kuesioner menggunakan Microsoft Excel dan wawancara menggunakan metode analisis kualitatif dengan pemilihan data, pengorganisasian, dan interpretasi.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 11 siswa dari 40 siswa yang memiliki tingkat kecemasan tinggi. Faktor utama yang mempengaruhi tingkat kecemasan siswa disebabkan oleh topik bacaan yang dapat diselesaikan dengan menemukan materi yang lebih mudah, strategi sosial, membaca awal, dan skimming. Adapun ketakutan melakukan kesalahan, hanya terjadi ketika siswa diamati selama membaca yang disebabkan oleh kecemasan memiliki pemahaman yang berbeda dengan yang lain, dan membaca di lingkungan kelas. Hal ini dapat diatasi dengan melakukan cross check dengan teman dan berusaha memahami teks sebaik mungkin sebelum masuk kelas. Faktor minor lainnya termasuk kosa kata yang sebagian besar disebabkan oleh istilah-istilah ilmiah yang tidak dikenal, dan satu-satunya solusi yang dikonfirmasi adalah membiasakan diri dengan teks-teks akademik.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the background of the studies, the problems and purposes of the study, the scope and limitation, the significance of the study, and the definition of key terms.

#### 1.1. Background of the Study

Reading is a fundamental skill to gain knowledge and academic success, particularly for higher education students. As Anderson (2004) stated, mastering reading is essential to advance and grow in all academic subjects. Additionally, Clapham (2009) defined reading ability as the capacity to comprehend printed or written symbols, come up with a tenable explanation, and comprehend the writer's point. Reading is a complex activity that may be characterized as a cognitive process at different phases of growth (Khalisa, 2020). There are various methods to get data, but reading stands out because it can help you learn things from any time and place on the globe (Palani, 2012). According to Rahmat (2020), reading develops with practice, as reading involves both comprehension skills and background knowledge to process textual information.

Reading competence is represented by reading literacy, it is regarded as one of the key elements that determine how well individuals can process data as well as how intelligent society is as a whole. The Program for International Student Assessment, or PISA (2018), found that Indonesia's reading literacy currently stands at 371 out of a possible 487 points, which is still considered to be low in comparison to other OECD nations like the US and the UK. According to Liu (2011), in the context of EFL, students frequently exhibit anxiety while reading EFL because they struggle with reading comprehension since reading in a

foreign language includes reading new scripts, writing systems, and cultural content. Moreover, anxiety might be influenced by academic situations, as explained by Aisyah (2017) that reading anxiety happens because, in academic situations, EFL learners are required to read texts in English that sometimes do not fit with their preferences and interest.

The experience of anxiousness when reading texts written in a foreign language can be influenced by several variables. According to Faruq (2019), reading anxiety and foreign language anxiety both contribute to foreign language anxiety when reading. When it comes to learning a language in a classroom, foreign language anxiety is defined as an "individual multifaceted of self-insights, faiths, senses, and behaviors dealing with the person's opinions and actions that developed during learning" (Horwitz, 2001). It is based on Horwitz's (2001) assertion that certain students could become anxious only while using specific linguistic skills. As defined by Jalongo and Hirsh (2010), anxiety about reading is a specific or situational fear of reading that manifests physically as sweating, dizziness, or faintness, as well as cognitively as an overwhelming sense of dread, low self-esteem, a sense of helplessness, and a fear of being humiliated in front of others. Additionally, reading anxiety is a component that "arises between interpreting of the text and the concrete processing of reading text," according to Saito (1999). Faruq (2019) said that when students attempt to read and understand texts written in a foreign language, physical and cognitive response is elicited. For higher education such as university level, students might encounter a greater challenge in coping with reading anxiety, as many reading activities at the university level involve academic text.

Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate reading anxiety, for example, research by Rahmat (2020) found that background and culture, general reading aptitude, vocabulary, grammar, and instructional methods can all contribute to readers' fears of reading. Faruq (2019) also showed that the fear of making mistakes was a personal issue,

with the majority of students identifying anxiety at a medium level and being influenced by material characteristics like new vocabulary and culture. Khansary's (2018) research found a strong association between reading anxiety and the perceived difficulty of a text. Rahmat (2020) also discovered that readers' fears of reading might be influenced by background and culture, general reading skills, vocabulary, grammar, and instructional methods. Apart from that, Faruq (2019) discovered that the majority of students rated their anxiety as medium. The majority of the causes of students' reading anxiety were related to the content's aspects, particularly the new terminology, and culture. In terms of the difficulty level of a text, Anwar and Sailuddin (2022) showed that all the students agreed that reading academic text is difficult, and 43% of the students are still unable to cope with academic text very well. This is because of the difficulties caused by translating difficulties and understanding difficult terms. Yet few previous studies aim to examine academic reading anxiety. Moreover, one of the study stated that reading anxiety is affected by the difficulties of a text, but did not explain what kinds of text that is considered difficult and those that are considered easy. Moreover, a study also explains that academic text is the most difficult text to read, There are, several kinds of academic text, as explained by Wang, Zhang and Li (2022), academic work can be classified into four major types including descriptive, analytical, persuasive and critical. Based on recent study by Chatdecha and Liangpanit (2023) on students' opinion in coping with academic text, certain types of text has proven to be more challenging than the other, for instance, the students find more difficulties in coping with critical and analytical than descriptive text. Therefore, the researcher is interested in studying EFL reading anxiety toward academic text.

## 1.2. Research Problems

Based on the background of the study about problems regarding English reading anxiety, the researcher formulates the research problems as follows:

1. What is the level of reading anxiety of University students when reading academic text?
2. What are the factors causing University students' reading anxiety when reading English academic text?
3. How do University students overcome anxiety in reading English academic texts?

### **1.3.Purpose of the Research**

According to the problems of the study, the researcher formulates the purpose of the research as follows:

1. To identify the level of university students' reading anxiety when reading academic text.
2. To identify the factors causing reading anxiety in university students when reading English academic text
3. To identify how University students overcome anxiety in reading English academic text

### **1.4.Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The research will be conducted on 7th-semester students of the English department at the University of Islam Malang because they are more likely exposed to English reading in academic text especially that is used in research such as research articles and thesis. Moreover, the study is focused in the use of interviews only as the aim of the study is to investigate the factors of academic reading anxiety experienced by the participants directly. The study is limited on lack of detail during the interviews because the researcher only focused on the main interview question and rarely expand the question when the answer is not detailed enough.



## 1.5. Significance of the Study

From the focus of the study, the study will contribute information regarding possible reading anxiety in reading academic text in English.

### 1.5.1. Theoretical Benefit

Theoretically, the result of this research can give beneficial information about reading anxiety in reading academic English texts, especially the level of anxiety, factors causing students' anxiety, and how the students solve the anxiety. This study also clarifies the distinction between foreign language anxiety, reading anxiety, and academic reading anxiety.

### 1.5.2. Practical Benefit

The result of the study provides information on what causes students' reading anxiety as well as how the students solve their problems with reading anxiety. The information will give practical information to the readers as follows.

#### 1.5.2.1. For lecturer

This research provides information about what causes reading anxiety towards reading English academic texts. This information helps the lecturer to prevent English academic reading anxiety by identifying causing factors of high anxiety levels and developing new solutions to deal with it or utilizing the solution provided by the participants in this study to their students who have similar problems regarding reading anxiety.

#### 1.5.2.2. For Researchers

This study will inform the next researchers of the steps, theories, and methods of the current research to conduct further research about reading anxiety, reading academic text, and foreign language anxiety. This provides helpful information for the following researcher to find novelty that is not explored in the current topic.

## 1.6. Definition of the Term

To prevent misunderstandings, this section will define the major words used in this study.

### 1.6.1. Academic Reading

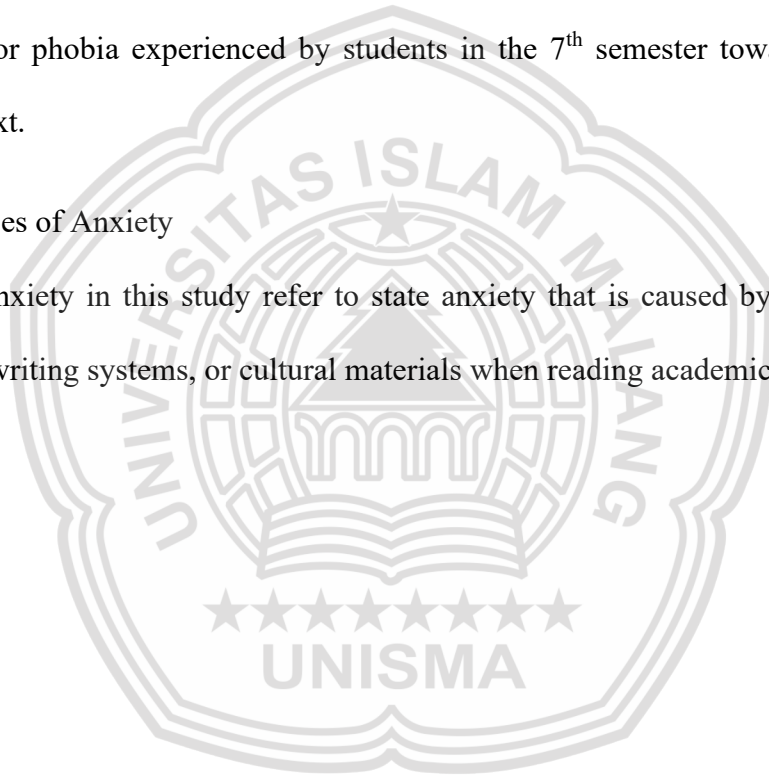
The term academic reading in this study refers to reading activity that involves academic texts such as thesis, and research articles.

### 1.6.2. Reading Anxiety

The term reading anxiety in this study refers to the negative feelings of fear, reluctance, or phobia experienced by students in the 7<sup>th</sup> semester toward reading academic text.

### 1.6.3. Causes of Anxiety

Causes of anxiety in this study refer to state anxiety that is caused by unfamiliar scripts and writing systems, or cultural materials when reading academic text.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and discussion above, the researcher formulates the conclusion of the study as follows.

#### 5.1. Conclusion

The result concluded that the majority of the students are at medium academic anxiety levels, and fewer students have high anxiety levels. The major factor influencing students' level of anxiety is caused by reading topics. The students found topics that were difficult and unfamiliar led to a feeling of laziness or discouragement. The strategies used by students to overcome academic reading anxiety in terms of topics include finding easier material, social strategies such as discussion and peer review, starting reading to determine if the text is difficult or not, and finding summarized points of the text in abstracts and conclusions. The second frequent factor following reading topics is the fear of making mistakes, this study indicates that the fear of making mistakes only happens when students are observed during reading. The case is mostly caused by anxiety to have different understandings with others and read in a classroom environment. The solution used by students to overcome the fear of making mistakes is cross-checking with friends and trying to understand the text as best as possible before entering the class. There are other minor factors such as vocabulary which is mostly caused by unfamiliar scientific terms, and the only confirmed solution mentioned was being familiar with academic texts. The other minor factor is language and culture, here the students stated that they have minor problems with the English language, but their problems mostly come from scientific writing styles, scientific terms, and scientific languages. The only solution mentioned based on the student

who encountered this problem was finding an academic text that was easier and more comprehensive.

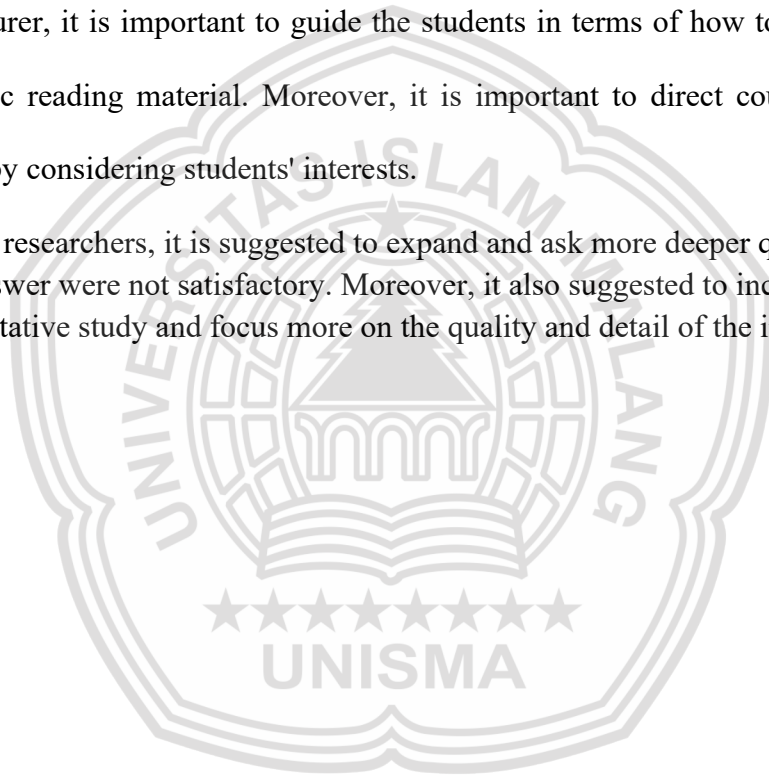
## 5.2. Suggestions

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher provided suggestions to the students, lecturers, and the next researcher as follows.

For students, it is advisable to start reading an academic text before determining its difficulty, because the title might not reflect the difficulty of the entire content of the text.

For the lecturer, it is important to guide the students in terms of how to find good sources of academic reading material. Moreover, it is important to direct courses about academic material by considering students' interests.

For the next researchers, it is suggested to expand and ask more deeper question if the participants' answer were not satisfactory. Moreover, it also suggested to include less participants in qualitative study and focus more on the quality and detail of the interview .



## REFERENCE

- Ahmad, I. S. (2013). The potential sources of foreign language reading anxiety in Jordanian EFL context: A theoretical framework. *English Language Teaching*, 6: (11).
- Aisyah, J. (2017). Students' reading anxiety in English foreign language classroom. *Journal of English and Education*, 5 :(1), 56 - 63.
- Al-Shboul, M. M., Ahmad, I. S., Nordin, M. S., and Rahman, Z. A. (2013). Foreign language reading anxiety in a Jordanian EFL context: A qualitative study. *English Language Teaching*, 6:(6), 38-56.
- Anderson, N.J. (2004). Metacognitive reading strategy awareness of SL and EFL learners. *The CATESOL Journal*, 16:(1), 11-27.
- Baba, J., and Affendi, F. R. (2020). Reading habit and students' attitudes towards reading: A study of students in the Faculty of Education UITM Puncak Alam. *Asian Journal of University Education*, 16:(1), 109. doi:10.24191/value.v16i1.8988
- Brantmeier, C. (2005). Anxiety about L2 reading or L2 reading tasks? A study with advanced language learners. *The Reading Matrix*, 5:(2), 67- 85.
- Chatdecha, C., and Liangpanit, C. (2023). Thai graduate students' opinions on anxiety in writing academic papers. *The journal of sirindhornparithat*, 24(1), 539-555.
- Castles, A., Rastle, K., and Nation, K. (2018). Ending the reading wars: Reading acquisition from novice to expert. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 19, 5–51. doi:10.1177/1529100618772271
- Clapham, C. (2009). *The development of IELTS: A study of the effect of background knowledge on Reading Comprehension*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.978-967-11768-5-6
- Creswell, J. W., and Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research (3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Faruq, A. Z. (2019). *Reading anxiety in English as a foreign language for undergraduate students in Indonesia*. TLEMC (Teaching and Learning English in Multicultural Contexts), 3:(2), 88-95.
- Garcia, Y. P., Ramayan, A. J. R., Sepe, A. P. and Silor, A. C. (2014). Difficulties in reading comprehension and metacognitive strategies for technology livelihood education students. *Proceeding at the Global Summit on Education GSE 2014*
- Gonen, I. (2005). *The sources of foreign language reading anxiety of students in a Turkish EFL context*. Master thesis, Anadolu University, Eskişehir, Turkey.
- Gonen, I. (2009). The sources of foreign language reading anxiety of students in a Turkish EFL context. *Proceeding of the 5th WSEAS/IASME International Conference on Educational Technologies*
- Goodman, K. (1988). *The reading process*. Cambridge University Press.
- Guimba, W.D. and Alico, J.C. (2015), Reading anxiety and comprehension of grade 8 Filipino learners, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1. 44-59.
- Horwitz, E. (2001). Language anxiety and achievement. *Annual review of applied linguistics*, 21, 112-126.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M., and Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70:(2), 125–132.
- Jalongo, M. R., and Hirsh, R. A. (2010). Understanding reading anxiety: new insights from neuroscience. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 37:(6), 431-435. doi:10.1007/s10643-010-0381-5
- Khalisa, N. (2018) *The correlation between students' reading habits and the writing ability*. Unpublished Thesis. English Education Program Faculty of Education and Teacher Training Ar-Raniry State Islamic University Darussalam Banda Aceh.

- Liu, Y. H. (2011). *Syntactic differences and foreign language reading anxiety: An investigation of Taiwanese university students* (Doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA).
- Muhlis, A. (2017). Foreign language reading anxiety among Indonesian EFL senior high school students. *English Franca* 1 ;(1)
- Özbay, M. (2006). Environmental factor in reading education. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 24, 161-170.
- Palani, K. K. (2012). Promising reading habits and creating literate social. *International Reference Research Journal*, 3:(2), 1.
- Rahman, S. A. (2015) Exploring adult undergraduates' learning strategies and their reading comprehension difficulties. *International Academic Research Journal*. 192, 17-25.
- Rahmat, N. H. (2020). The cycle of academic reading fear among undergraduates. *Asian Journal of University Education*, 16:(3), 265-274.
- Rajab, A., and Zakaria, W. (2012). Reading anxiety among second language learners. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 66, 362-369.
- Setiawan, Y. (2020). *Reading Anxiety Among Learners In EFL reading classroom at Muhammadiyah University of Malang* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang).
- Somro, A.H. (2019). Top-down, bottom-up and classroom reading anxiety and their effect on reading performance of undergraduate engineering students in Pakistan, *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JARHE-07-2018-0138>
- Spielberger, C. D. (1966). *Anxiety and behavior*. New York: Academic Press.
- Spielberger, C. D., and Sarason, I.G. (2005). *Stress and Emotion: Anxiety, Anger, and Curiosity*. New York: Taylor and Francis Group, LLC.

- Tsai, Y. R., and Lee, C. Y. (2018). An exploration into factors associated with reading anxiety among Taiwanese EFL learners. *Teflin Journal*, 29:(1), 129-148.
- Wang, Y., Zhang, C., and Li, K. (2022). A review on method entities in the academic literature: extraction, evaluation, and application. *Scientometrics*, 127(5), 2479-2520.
- Zbornik, J. (2001). Reading anxiety manifests itself emotionally, and intellectually. Retrieved from <http://www.lakewoodcityschools.com>
- Zhou, J. (2017). Foreign language reading anxiety in a Chinese as a foreign language context. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 29:(1), 155-173.

