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# CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN ISLAM AND ENGLISH LITERATURE



**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**  
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ISLAM AND ENGLISH LITERATURE



25  
WEDNESDAY  
SEPTEMBER  
2019



PROF. R.H.A. SOEHARJO, S.H.  
BUILDING (1st FLOOR)



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Faculty of Adab and Cultural Sciences  
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*PROCEEDINGS OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENGLISH LITERATURE*

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**"CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN ISLAM AND ENGLISH LITERATURE"**

**Panitia Pelaksana**

Ketua : Harsiwi Fajar Sari, M.A.

Sekretaris : Aninda Aji Siwi, M.Pd.

Anggota : Dr. Witriani, M.Hum

Anggota : Danial Hidayatullah, M.Hum.

Anggota : Dwi Margo Yuwono, M.Hum.

Anggota : Febriyanti D Lestari, M.A

Anggota : Arif Budiman, M.A.

Anggota : Ulyati Retno Sari, M.Hum.

Editor:

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**UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta**

Jl: Laksda Adisutjipto Yogyakarta Indonesia

Surel: [si@uin-suka.ac.id](mailto:si@uin-suka.ac.id)

Telp. +62274513949

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## OBSTACLES TO READING ENGLISH ISLAMIC TEXT ENCOUNTERED BY BIDIKMISI STUDENTS OF IAIN KUDUS

**Anisah Setyaningrum**

State Islamic Institute of Kudus, Central Java, Indonesia.  
anisahsetya@iainkudus.ac.id

### Abstract

Reading skill is one of the essential skills that must be mastered by every student. Students are required to read various sources of reading in improving their knowledge and insight. Islamic university students need to explore various sources of English Islamic text because they are always dealing with Islamic studies. This study aims at exploring the reading strategies applied by the Bidikmisi students of IAIN Kudus and the obstacles in reading the English Islamic texts. The data is collected by conducting observations in the English tutorials program organized by Ma'had Al Jami'ah IAIN Kudus. In addition, document analysis was also done to analyse the text taught to students. Then, researcher also conducted interviews with students of the English tutorials program participants. The results showed that one of the obstacles to reading English Islamic texts was the students' limited English vocabulary mastery, especially the Islamic terms in English. This made them difficult and become the main obstacle in understanding English Islamic texts. Another obstacle faced by the student is the lack of understanding of the English structure. It is one of the obstacles to gaining a good understanding of English Islamic texts.

**Keywords:** *obstacles, English Islamic text, bidikmisi students.*

### Abstrak

Kemampuan membaca adalah salah satu keterampilan penting yang harus dikuasai oleh setiap mahasiswa. Mahasiswa dituntut untuk membaca berbagai macam sumber bacaan dalam meningkatkan pengetahuan dan wawasan mereka. Mahasiswa perguruan tinggi Islam perlu mengeksplorasi berbagai sumber Islam bahasa Inggris karena mereka selalu berhubungan dengan studi Islam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi strategi yang digunakan oleh mahasiswa dalam membaca serta kendala yang mereka hadapi dalam membaca teks Islami berbahasa Inggris. Data dikumpulkan dengan melakukan pengamatan dalam program khusus tutorial bahasa Inggris yang diselenggarakan oleh Ma'had Al Jami'ah IAIN Kudus. Selain itu, analisis dokumen juga dilakukan untuk menganalisis teks yang diajarkan kepada siswa. Kemudian, peneliti juga melakukan wawancara dengan mahasiswa peserta program tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa salah satu kendala dalam membaca teks Islami berbahasa Inggris adalah keterbatasan penguasaan kosakata berbahasa Inggris, terutama kosakata terkait istilah Islami dalam bahasa Inggris. Hal ini membuat mereka mengalami kesulitan dan menjadi hambatan utama dalam memahami teks Islami berbahasa Inggris. Kendala lain yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa adalah kurangnya pemahaman tentang struktur bahasa Inggris. Hal tersebut menjadi salah satu kendala dalam mendapatkan pemahaman yang baik terhadap teks Islami berbahasa Inggris.

**Kata kunci:** *hambatan, teks Islami berbahasa Inggris, mahasiswa Bidikmisi.*

## INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of important skills that must be mastered by every student. It is inline with Anderson's statement that reading is an essential skill for English learners (2003: 2). He emphasized that it is the most important skill for gaining a successful learning. By mastering reading skill well, the students are able to increase and broaden their knowledge and insight.

According to Baumann & Duffy (1997, as quoted by Schoenbach et. al, 1999: 39) good readers are mentally engaged, motivated to read and to learn, socially active around reading tasks, and strategic in monitoring the interactive processes that assist comprehension. The strategies that can be applied by the readers are as follows: setting goals that shape their reading processes, monitoring their emerging understanding of a text, and coordinating a variety of comprehension strategies to control the reading process.

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Reading is also an interesting topic to be discussed. There are various studies on reading comprehension and its problems which were conducted by some researchers, they are Sadeghi & Izadpanah (2018), Kasim & Raisha (2017), Naiken (2016), Shehu (2015), Udaini (2011), and so on. The study that were conducted by the previous researchers mostly discussed the difficulties in reading. However, most of them conducted the research by using quantitative method. This reserach aimed at identifying the obstacles faced by the students in reading Islamic English texts.

Based on the problems in the field, the researcher determined the research questions as follows: what strategies they used in reading english islamic text and what reading problems encountered by the students when they read english islamic texts?

## RESEARCH METHOD

The type of research used in this research is field reserach. In analyzing the research data, the researcher used this kind of research because the reseracher come directly to the location in collecting the data and information. As mentioned by Muhadjir (2002: 13) that in field research, the researcher come to the location directly in looking for the truth of the research object. According to Moleong (2012: 6) the qualitative research used for understanding a phenomenon which are described in words and language. Besides, Sugiyono (2015: 27) also explained the characristic of qualitative research. One of them is the researcher as the instrument (human instrument). It means that the researcher come directly to the location and meet the informants directly.

This qualitative research provide the data in the form of words or pictures, and it is not in the orm of number. In this research, the researcher applied the descriptive method to analyze the obstacles of reading English Islamic text in English program for Bidikmisi students at IAIN Kudus. The sources of the data in this research are the students of Bidikmisi as the participants of English program 2019 which was held by Ma'had Al Jami'ah IAIN Kudus. There are three female students and three male students who involved to be informants in this research. They were interviewed about the process of reading English Islamic text and some obstacles they found in it. Besides, the researcher also use the reading handouts as the source of the research in the form of document. In addotion, the researcher also conducte some observations in the class. The data which were collected then being analyzed by doing the three steps of Miles and Humberman's data analysis model (1984, as cited by Sugiyono, 2015: 334-343), they are: data reduction, data disply, then conclusion drawing or verification.

## DISCUSSION

According to reading experts (as mentioned by Fry, 2011: 46) there are six fundamental purposes for reading, they are: grasping a certain message, finding important details, answering a specific question, evaluating the object of reading, applying the object of reading, and being entertained. In reading english islamic text, one of the purposes is grasping a certain message. In conducting the process of reading class the students were also invited to find the important details. Besides, the students were also demanded to answer specific questions to evaluate what they read. Therefore, it can be said that the reading process which were done by the students in reading english islamic text covered almost all of the fundamental purposes of reading.

Schoenbach et al. (1999: 38) stated that reading is a complex process. In the process of reading, the readers are demanded to work in understanding the text. They are also invited to try relating the text to their exisiting knowledge and understanding. In addition, the readers are also required to have an internal conversation with the aouthor in being agree or disagree with the text.

Based on researcher observation on Reading Comprehension class of English Program for Bidikmisi students at IAIN Kudus, usually, students was taught the reading material by reading aloud and silent method. The Tutor gave a reading material about islamic studies. Then, the tutor invited the students to read the English islamic text silently. After that the students were invited to discuss or share what they read to their partner. In this process, the students showed their understanding of the text that they read before. Some of students perform a good understanding, but most of them got some difficulties in showing their understanding on the text.



*Reading English Islamic Text Strategies of Bidikmisi Students at IAIN Kudus*

Reading strategies are crucial steps in a reading process. Those steps determine the result of reading comprehension. When readers use some proper strategies in the process of reading, they will gain a good understanding of what they read. It was also stated by Garner (1987, as cited by Pokharel: 77) that "reading strategies are an action or a series of actions employed in order to construct meaning.

There are various strategies that can be applied by readers in reading a certain text. Pokharel (2018: 78) proposed a list of reading strategies as follows:

Reading Strategies	Description
Predicting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps activate prior knowledge</li> <li>• Based on clues in text (pictures, subtitles, etc.)</li> </ul>
Connecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting prior knowledge to new information</li> </ul>
Comparing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking more specifically about connections they are making, e.g. How is this different to....?</li> </ul>
Inferring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking information from a text and creating their own interpretation beyond the literal level.</li> </ul>
Synthesising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piecing information together as students read a text, to keep track of what is happening</li> </ul>
Creating Images	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating sensory images to assist with overall comprehension of a text</li> </ul>
Self-questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a framework for active learning as students engage with the text to find answers</li> </ul>
Skimming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glancing quickly through material to gain an overall view of text</li> </ul>
Scanning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glancing through a text to locate specific details, e.g. names, dates etc.</li> </ul>
Determining Importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritizing most important information from phrase, sentence, paragraph, chapter or whole text</li> </ul>
Summarising and Paraphrasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing larger texts to focus on important elements</li> <li>• Re-stating/re-writing text in own words using key words to capture main focus</li> </ul>
Re-Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating opportunities for deeper understanding, word identification and developing fluency</li> </ul>
Reading On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skipping unfamiliar word(s) and reading on to provide sufficient context to determine unknown word/phrase</li> </ul>
Adjusting Reading Rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjusting rate where appropriate, e.g. slowing down to comprehend new information, or speeding up to scan for key words</li> </ul>
Sounding Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using knowledge of letter-sound relationship to decode unknown words</li> </ul>
Chunking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breaking multi-syllabic words into units larger than individual phonemes</li> </ul>
Using Analogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transferring what they know about familiar words to help them identify unfamiliar words</li> </ul>
Consulting a Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using a dictionary, thesaurus, reference chart or glossary to help find word meanings/pronunciations</li> </ul>

Table No. 1: List of Reading Strategies by Pokharel (2018: 78)

Based on the observation which was conducted by the researcher in the class of reading comprehension at English program for Bidikmisi students at IAIN Kudus, it can be seen that the strategies used by the students in reading English Islamic text are: predicting, connecting, inferring, skimming, scanning, re-reading, reading on, and consulting a reference. Those strategies also mentioned by the students in interviews. When the students found unfamiliar words, they always tried to predict the meaning of those words before checking them in the dictionary. They also tried to connect what they read with their experiences or knowledge. For instance, when the reading text discussion is about prayer during travel, the students connected

the content of the text with their experience in performing prayer when they were travelling. Besides, they recall their knowledge related with fiqh that discussed the material. In this case, the students connected the English with another subject.

#### *The Obstacles of Reading English Islamic Text in English Program for Bidikmisi Students at IAIN Kudus*

The studies of difficulties or barriers in reading have been conducted by some researchers. Sadeghi and Izadpanah (2018) mentioned that students' motivation in reading is one of the barriers in reading. In addition, Shehu (2015) explained that vocabulary and working memory are some of problems that cause difficulty in students' reading process.

Based on the observation which was conducted by the researcher in reading comprehension class of English program for Bidikmisi students at IAIN Kudus, it can be seen the following phenomena: some of the students got difficulties in gaining the main idea of the reading text and inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words, deciding what part of speech of a word, deciding which meaning fits in the reading, understanding phrases, understanding long and complicated sentences. The root of those problems is because of they had limited vocabulary treasury and insufficient grammatical knowledge.

It was also reinforced by the interview result that was conducted by some students of Bidikmisi at IAIN Kudus who joint the English program. Most of the problems they mentioned in reading English Islamic text is mostly about the lack of vocabulary treasury. They found difficulties in understanding sentences because they found many unfamiliar words. By observing the students' handout the researcher also found some words that have been highlighted or underlined and written the meaning around the words.

From the above explanation, it is concluded that the common problems faced by the participants of English program -Bidikmisi students of IAIN Kudus- were dealing with vocabulary mastery and grammatical knowledge. Those problems found by most of the participants of English program and become the obstacles in understanding the English Islamic text.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that the process of reading english islamic text in english program for bidikmisi students at IAIN Kudus were conducted by various methods which invited the students to be active. Those methods were engaging them in some activities to make them enjoy the reading activities and easy in grasping the information on the english islamic text. The students also applied various startegies in the process of reading. However, in the process of reading they also find some difficulties. The difficulties they found mostly because of their lackness on vocabulary treasury and lack of grammatical knowledge.

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