

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Reading comprehension is an important skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, as it helps learners understand texts and improve their overall language ability. However, learners often face difficulties such as unfamiliar vocabulary, implicit meanings, and complex sentence structures, which can hinder their understanding. In this context, tolerance of ambiguity becomes an important factor, as it relates to learners' ability to deal with unclear information. Research shows that learners with higher levels of ambiguity tolerance tend to have better reading comprehension, indicating that reading involves not only cognitive aspects but also affective aspects (Shi & Meng, 2016).

When reading English academic texts, learners may respond differently when they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, implicit meanings, or unclear information. Some learners tend to infer meaning from contextual clues, whereas others become uncertain or rely heavily on dictionaries. According to Erten & Topkaya (2009) these different responses reflect learners' levels of tolerance of ambiguity during the reading process.

According to Li & He (2016), tolerance of ambiguity refers to language learners' ability to accept and manage situations involving uncertainty or incomplete information during the language learning process. Such situations may include encountering unfamiliar vocabulary, complex grammatical structures, or meanings that are not fully understood. Learners with a high level of tolerance of

ambiguity tend to continue learning effectively without experiencing excessive anxiety or frustration when faced with linguistic uncertainty. In the context of English reading, ambiguity often arises when learners encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, implicit meanings, or complex sentence structures that are not immediately comprehensible. Learners with a higher level of tolerance of ambiguity are more likely to continue reading by using contextual clues and various reading strategies to construct meaning, whereas those with a lower level of tolerance tend to experience uncertainty and interrupt the reading process. Kurniasari & Indriani (2021) reported that reading is one of the language skills in which EFL learners frequently encounter ambiguity. These findings indicate that tolerance of ambiguity may play an important role in supporting students' English reading comprehension.

Previous research has explored the connection between tolerance of ambiguity and outcomes in English language learning. Erten & Topkaya (2009) discovered that learners exhibiting a higher tolerance for ambiguity often viewed themselves as more successful in reading classes, suggesting a link between ambiguity tolerance and reading performance. In a similar vein, Shi and Meng (2016) found that students with elevated levels of ambiguity tolerance showed improved reading comprehension, indicating that the capacity to manage uncertainty enhances the reading process. Furthermore, Seidi (2018) demonstrated that tolerance of ambiguity had a significant impact on EFL learners' reading comprehension, reinforcing the positive correlation between these two factors. Collectively, these studies reveal a consistent trend where tolerance of ambiguity

correlates with reading proficiency; however, the majority of prior research has been conducted in varied contexts and educational levels, highlighting the necessity for further exploration within the Indonesian EFL setting, especially among university students.

While earlier research has consistently demonstrated a link between tolerance of ambiguity and English reading comprehension (Erten & Topkaya, 2009; Shi & Meng, 2016; Seidi, 2018), the majority of these studies have been conducted in various educational settings outside of Indonesia's higher education system. In Indonesia, investigations into tolerance of ambiguity have predominantly concentrated on language skills other than reading comprehension or on overall English proficiency (Rahmayanti, 2021; Kurniasari & Indriani, 2021). This suggests that there is a scarcity of empirical evidence specifically addressing the connection between tolerance of ambiguity and English reading comprehension among university students in Indonesia. Consequently, additional research is essential to address this gap, especially within the context of English Education students at Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji.

According to the description given above, the goal of this study was to look into the connection between students' reading comprehension skills in English and their ability to tolerate ambiguity. The purpose of this study was to determine whether reading comprehension and ambiguity tolerance were significantly correlated among Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji English education students.

1.2 Identification of The Problem

Based on the background above, the problems identified in this study are as

follows:

1. EFL learners often experience difficulties in reading English texts due to unfamiliar vocabulary, implicit meanings, and complex sentence structures, which hinder their reading comprehension.
2. Learners show different responses when encountering ambiguous information in reading activities; some students attempt to infer meaning using contextual clues, while others tend to feel uncertain or rely heavily on dictionaries, indicating differences in their tolerance of ambiguity.
3. There is still limited empirical evidence examining the relationship between tolerance of ambiguity and English reading comprehension among university students in Indonesia, particularly among English Education students at Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

This study only looks at how English reading comprehension and ambiguity tolerance relate to each other among Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji English education students. This study aims to ascertain whether students' comprehension of English texts is correlated with their tolerance of ambiguity. Other elements that can affect students' reading comprehension are not covered in this study; just these two variables are discussed.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the research background and the issues that have been identified, this study aims to answer the following questions: Is there a significant relationship between tolerance of ambiguity and English reading comprehension

among English Education students of Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji?

1.5 Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a significant relationship between tolerance of ambiguity and English reading comprehension among English Education students of Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji.

1.6 Significance of the study

1. Theoretical Significance

This study is expected to make a meaningful contribution to the development of English language learning theory, particularly regarding the role of affective factors in reading skills. By examining the relationship between *tolerance of ambiguity* and students' reading comprehension, this research sheds light on how the ability to deal with unclear or unfamiliar information influences their understanding of English texts. The findings can enrich the literature on the psychological aspects that support the improvement of students' reading skills in the context of English as a foreign language.

2. Practical Significance

a. School

This study provides schools with insights into the relationship between students' tolerance for ambiguity and their reading comprehension skills. The findings of this study can serve as a reference for designing more effective strategies to improve students' reading skills.

b. English Teachers

Teachers can gain a better understanding of how students respond to texts containing unclear or unfamiliar information. This understanding helps teachers select more effective teaching strategies, enabling students to approach challenging texts with greater confidence.

c. Future Researchers.

This research may act as a resource for upcoming scholars wishing to explore the connection between emotional aspects and language abilities. The gathered data and results can aid additional studies in comparable situations.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. Tolerance of Ambiguity

The ability of a person to deal with situations that're not clear or sure. This means they can handle things that can be understood in ways. In this study tolerance of ambiguity means how well students can stay calm and work well when they read texts that are hard to understand or have new things they do not know. Tolerance of ambiguity is important because it shows how students can handle texts that are unclear or have many possible meanings.

2. Reading Comprehension

The ability of students to comprehend, analyze, and derive information from English writings. This research concentrates on

understanding academic or instructional materials utilized in the classroom.

3. Relationship

The connection or association among two or more variables within the framework of research. In this study, relationship denotes the connection or impact between tolerance for ambiguity and students' reading comprehension.

