STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE USE OF GRADED READERS IN L2 EXTENSIVE READING CLASS

SKRIPSI

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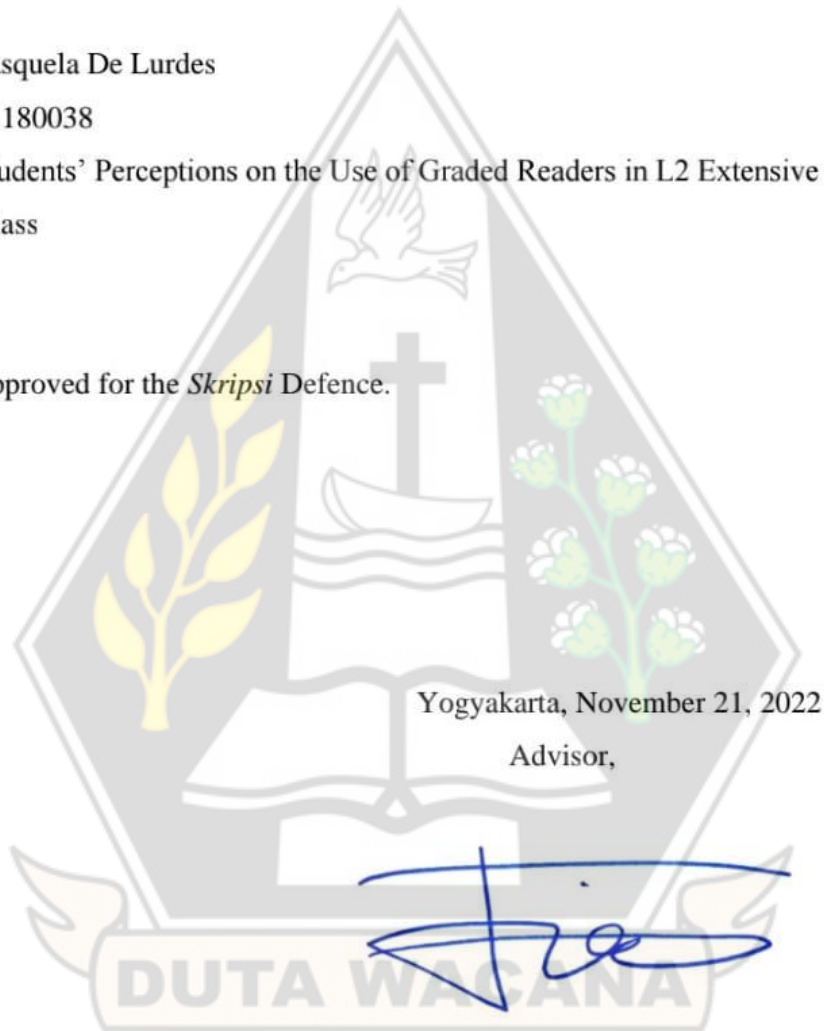# YOGYAKARTA

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I honestly declare that this *Skripsi* does not contain the work or parts of the work of other people, except those cited in the quotations and the references.

Yogyakarta, 19 November 2022

Pasquela De Lurdes

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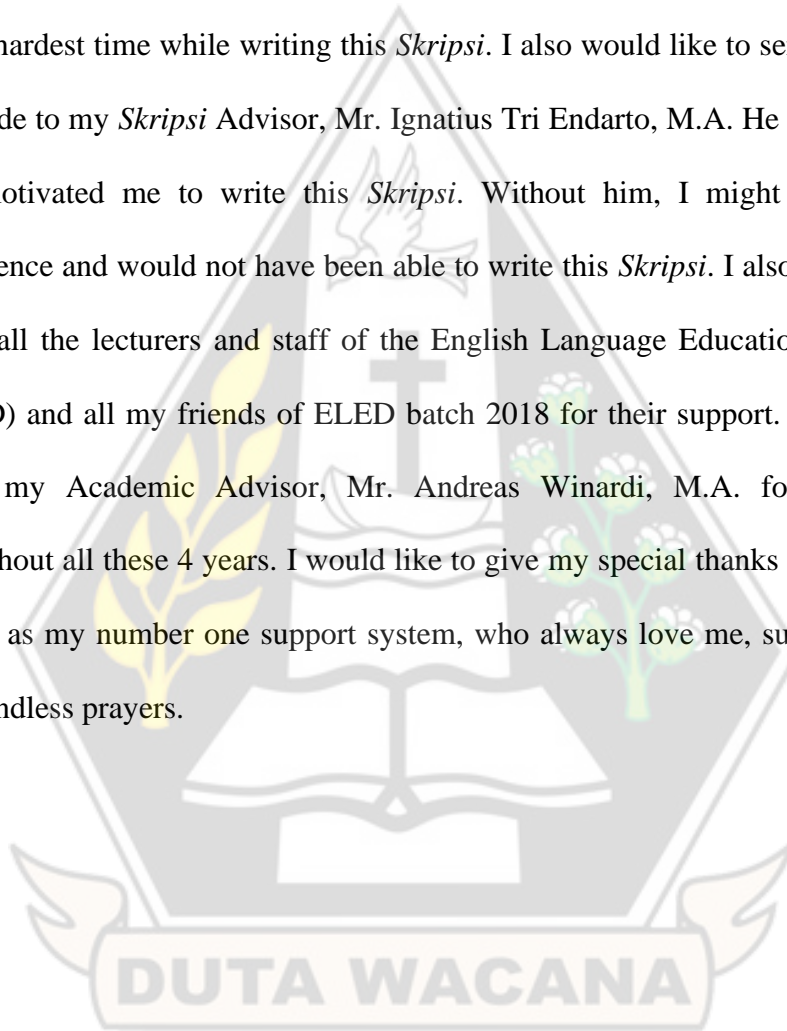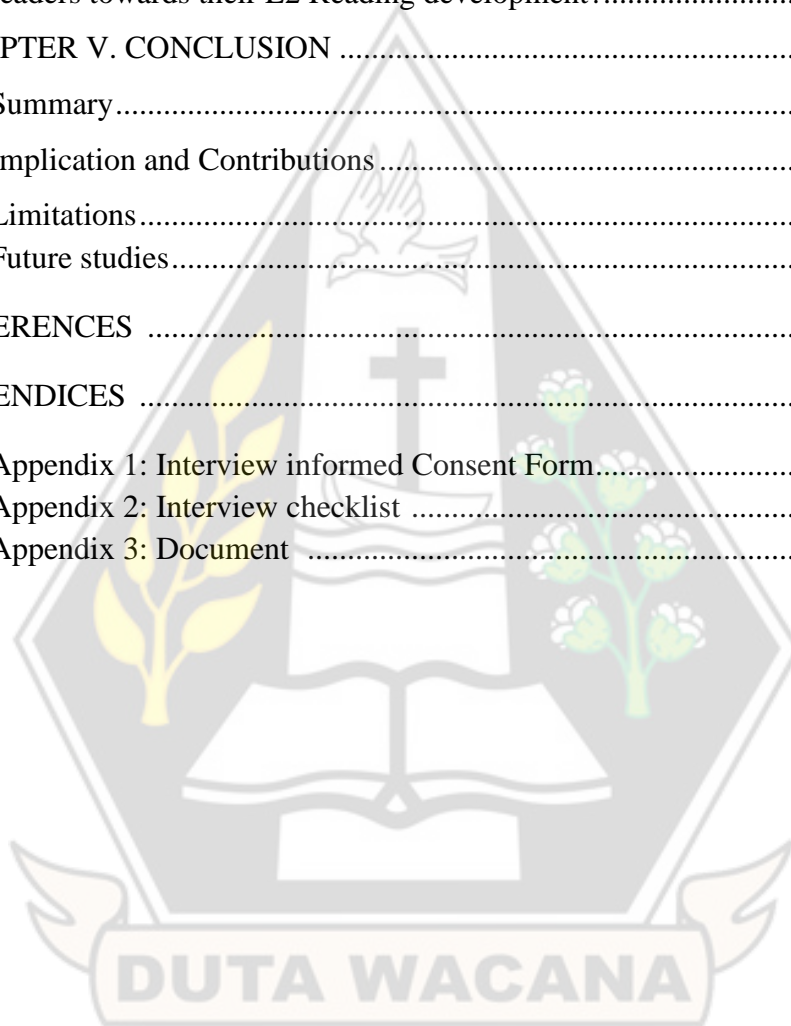
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ABSTRACT

Lurdes, P. D. (2022*) Students' perceptions on the use of graded readers in L2 extensive reading class* (Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis). Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana: Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

The importance of graded readers to L2 language learning has received high commendation from a number of scholars and researchers, and its impacts on language learners can be seen in both linguistic and affective features. Graded readers are important in extensive reading class. Considering the importance of graded readers, it is necessary to conduct research about students' perceptions on the use of graded readers in L2 extensive reading class. This study aims to find out the extent to which graded readers were used in an L2 extensive reading class and to investigate students' perceptions on the use graded readers. Five EFL students majoring in English language education who took an extensive reading class participated in this study. Data was collected through interviews and document analysis. Based on the results of interviews and document analysis, three themes related to RQ1 were identified: 1) graded readers were used in the pre-reading stage, 2) graded readers were used in the while-reading stage and 3) graded readers were used in the post-reading stage. In addition, the results of the interviews produced four identifiable themes related to RQ2: 1) students thought that the graded readers could help them improve their vocabulary, 2) students thought that the graded readers could help them improve their reading comprehension, 3) students thought that the graded readers could help them improve their reading fluency, and 4) students thought that graded readers could help them increase their reading interest and motivation. Considering that the participants in this research had positive perceptions of the use of graded readers in their L2 extensive reading class, the findings seem to support the use of graded readers and suggest that the books provide promising results to the practice of extensive reading.

Keywords: graded readers, extensive reading, L2 reading, students' perceptions

INTISARI

Lurdes, P. D. (2022*) Students' perceptions on the use of graded readers in L2 extensive reading class* (Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis). Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana: Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Pentingnya graded readers untuk pembelajaran bahasa L2 telah mendapat pujian tinggi dari sejumlah akademisi dan peneliti, dan dampaknya terhadap pembelajar bahasa dapat dilihat baik dalam fitur linguistik maupun afektif. Graded readers penting dalam kelas membaca ekstensif. Mengingat pentingnya graded reader, maka perlu dilakukan penelitian tentang persepsi siswa terhadap penggunaan graded reader di kelas membaca ekstensif L2. Lima mahasiswa yang belajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing dari jurusan pendidikan bahasa Inggris yang mengambil kelas membaca ekstensif berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara dan analisis dokumen. Berdasarkan hasil wawancara dan analisis dokumen, teridentifikasi tiga tema yang terkait dengan RQ1: 1) graded readers digunakan pada tahap pre-reading, 2) graded readers digunakan pada tahap while-reading dan 3) graded readers digunakan pada tahap post-reading. Selain itu, hasil wawancara menghasilkan empat tema yang dapat diidentifikasi terkait dengan RQ2: 1) siswa berpikir bahwa graded readers dapat membantu mereka meningkatkan kosa kata mereka, 2) siswa berpikir bahwa graded readers dapat membantu mereka meningkatkan pemahaman bacaan mereka, 3) siswa berpikir bahwa graded readers dapat membantu mereka meningkatkan kefasihan membaca mereka, dan 4) siswa berpikir bahwa graded readers dapat membantu mereka meningkatkan minat dan motivasi membaca mereka. Mengingat bahwa peserta dalam penelitian ini memiliki persepsi positif tentang penggunaan graded readers di kelas membaca ekstensif dalam bahasa asing, temuan tersebut tampaknya mendukung penggunaan graded readers dan menunjukkan bahwa buku-buku tersebut memberikan hasil yang menjanjikan untuk praktik membaca ekstensif.

Kata kunci: graded readers, extensive reading, L2 reading, students' perceptions

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, there are four parts to be discussed, namely research background, research questions, research objectives and research benefits.

A. Research Background

Extensive reading plays a significant role in language learning. One of the materials that learners can use during their extensive reading is graded readers. Bamford (1984) states that in theory, graded readers are important because they facilitate extensive reading and may contribute to reading enjoyment. Graded readers are books written specifically for L2 learners with various levels aimed specifically at facilitating readers with different proficiency levels. According to Wodnsky and Nation (1988) graded readers can provide sufficient reiteration of words at a certain level which can help learners to retain the word knowledge in their memory and to enhance their understanding of the word meaning. Reading graded readers can also help to achieve some learning objectives which include acquiring reading skills and fluency, gaining enjoyment in reading, developing previously learned vocabulary and grammar, and learning new vocabulary and grammar (Nation & Ming-Tzu, 1999).

Graded readers are usually used in the extensive reading class. They can be in the form of fiction or non-fiction books and graded readers are written specifically for learners of English as a foreign language or second language. The books are grouped into levels by considering the grammar features, vocabulary, information content, and cultural backgrounds (Kara, 2019). According to Nation (2009), asking students to read graded readers at an easier level is an effective way to increase students' reading speed. Nation further stated that students should be encouraged to do a lot of reading and re-read the books they really like so that the reading/re-reading will help them to improve their reading speed/fluency, vocabulary, grammar, information context, and reading comprehension.

There are many studies about graded readers in second language learning (e.g. Bamford, 1984; Kara, 2019; Nation, 2009; Nation & Ming-Tzu, 1999; Wodinsky & Nation, 1988). They found that by using graded readers, students could improve their vocabulary, grammar, reading speed, and gain enjoyment in reading. Graded readers are the best way to provide target language input that can increase vocabulary, grammar and reading speed of students, especially in English as a second language learning (Nation, 2015).

According to Hitosugi and Day (2004), students can read many books and other materials according to their linguistic competence. Students can also choose which books they are interested in and are according to their levels, so that they can read at their own pace (Bell, 2001). With self-selection of the books, students can adjust easily and quickly to meet their needs and interests, and it will enable them to develop L2 competencies at their own pace (Hitosugi & Day, 2004). Meng (2009) states that when students read for enjoyment, they can improve their L2 skills even without classes, teachers, learning, and even without people to talk to. However, most of the reading curricula in schools do not provide sufficient time for L2 students to develop their reading skills (Grabe 2002 in Lin, 2010). Therefore, instructors encourage students to practice reading skills outside the classroom (Lin, 2010). Nation and Ming-Tzu (1999) stated that in the absence of graded readers, students would not be able to experience reading in L2 at a level of comfort and fluency that is close to reading L1. Therefore, it is important to conduct research on the use of graded readers in L2 reading class.

Samiha and Hiba (2022) investigated students' attitudes towards the effect of extensive reading on vocabulary acquisition. The result indicated that reading extensively encourages students and gives them the chance to develop their vocabulary acquisition. Extensive reading helps them learn new vocabulary items, expand their understanding of words they know through repeated exposure to them in context, and develop an awareness of collocations and lexical phrases. Tanaka and Stapleton (2007) investigated the impact of a quasi-extensive reading program on Japanese high school EFL learners' reading comprehension, reading speed, and their perceptions. The results showed that the treatment group, particularly those

who read graded readers, performed significantly better in terms of reading speed and comprehension than the control group. Meng (2009)has analysed the situation of teaching and learning reading in Chinese universities and proposed the practical application of extensive reading to Chinese universities, which will definitely improve students' reading competence and linguistic ability. Conclusions suggest that by combining continuous silent reading and pleasure reading outside the classroom, students gradually move from a learn-to-read orientation to a read-to-learn framework. By reading what they choose and enjoying their reading, students have a great deal of flexibility, which caters to the different needs and interests of individual students and allows them to develop reading competence at their own pace. As a result, students' motivation to read will increase, which will ultimately benefit their mastery of the target language. In a small group of Jordanian EFL learners, Ateek (2021) evaluated the effects of ER on reading fluency and vocabulary knowledge and presented evidence of its efficacy. ER results in significant improvements in both reading fluency and vocabulary knowledge. The study's conclusions show that the extensive reading method had a positive effect on the students' vocabulary and reading fluency.

The participants of this study were English language education department students because much of the previous research on the topic was conducted to students of non-English majors. Some of the studies on the use of graded readers in extensive reading that have been conducted to students of non-English majors including Beglar and Hunt (2014), Kara (2019), Azmuddin et al. (2014), and Azmuddin et al. (2019). Therefore, this research was conducted in the Department of English Language Education at a university in Indonesia. It aimed to determine the extent of the use of graded readers in L2 extensive reading class and students' views on using graded readers in their reading. This research was conducted in one of the private universities in Indonesia and in the department of English education because in Indonesia research on graded readers is still lacking. According to Retnaningdyah et al., (2020) very little research on graded readers has been done because in Indonesia, teaching using graded readers was still a relatively new practice.

This study employed qualitative methods to collect data from participants through interviewing students and analysing documents. Qualitative research can help to gain deeper understanding of students' perceptions on the use of graded readers. Since graded readers have been suggested by many scholars to facilitate extensive reading (Ekaningrum & Prabandari, 2015; Kara, 2019; Nation & Ming-Tzu, 1999; Wodinsky & Nation, 1988), knowing students' perceptions will help to provide insights from the views of the end-users. Most previous research on this topic used quantitative methods by conducting experiments and conducting surveys using questionnaires (Beglar & Hunt, 2014; Chien & Yu, 2015; Kara, 2019). Therefore, this study offers a different research design through qualitative methods to collect data because it sought to examine students' views towards the use of graded readers in their extensive reading.

B. Research Questions

This research study attempted to answer two main questions regarding the use of graded readers in second language reading. The questions are formulated as follows:

1. To what extent were graded readers used in L2 reading class?
2. What were students' views about the use of graded readers towards their L2 reading development?

C. Research Objectives

In relation to the abovementioned research questions, there were two objectives to be investigated in this study, namely:

A. To examine how graded readers were used in the L2 reading class.
B. To find out the students' views about the use of graded readers towards their L2 reading development.

D. Research Benefits

The results of this study are expected to provide insights about the topic to students, lecturers, and another research. Knowing the student's point of view in using graded readers might inform lecturers about students' views of the use of graded readers in L2 extensive reading class. With this research, students can also learn about the views of other students regarding the use of graded readers for reading. For other researchers, the same research can be carried out with different participants, such as elementary, senior high school and university students or at the university level with different majors, to determine the views of students using graded readers. In addition, this research can be a reference for research on similar topics at different levels of learners, contexts, and research methods.
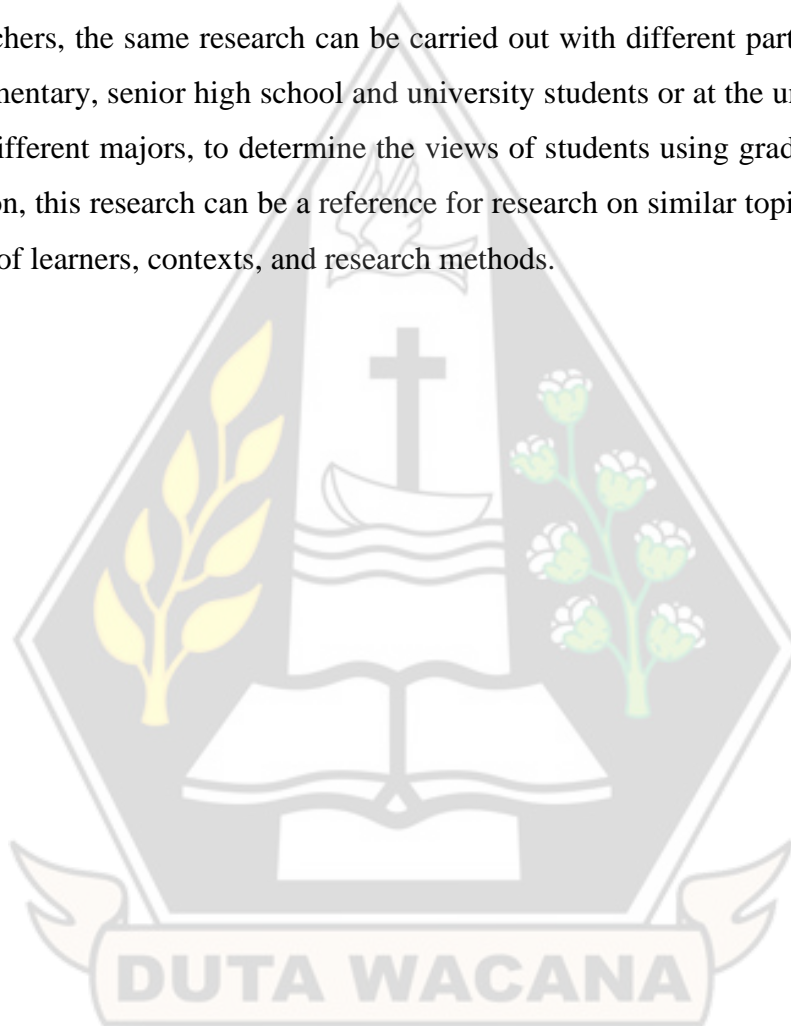
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

To conclude, several important points are highlighted in this chapter, namely summary, implications and contributions, limitations, and future studies.

A. Summary

This study was conducted to determine students' perceptions of the use of graded readers in the L2 Reading Class. The two main objectives of this study were to investigate the use of graded readers in L2 extensive reading class and how the students viewed the use of graded readers for their L2 Reading development. Based on these objectives, interviews were conducted to five students from an L2 extensive reading class, and the class syllabus was analysed. Seven themes were identified based on the data collected from the interviews and document analysis.

Based on the findings and answer to research question (RQ1), it can be concluded that students used graded readers in three stages: pre-reading stage, while-reading stage, and post-reading stage. Graded readers were used by the students in the pre-reading stage through several activities such as looking at the summary of the books, selecting books based on their genres, and implementing the five-finger rule for choosing the right books in accordance with the students' levels. The students used graded readers for the while-reading stage inside and outside the classroom. The activities carried out by students when reading in the classroom include reading together, having reading-related discussion and drawing conclusions from what they read. Outside the classroom, the activities carried out by the students during their while-reading stage include taking notes of unknown words to find out their meaning. In the post-reading stage, there were several activities done by the students such as writing the elements of plots from books, retelling the reading passages that they read, reflection and discussion on the students' reading, taking post-reading quizzes, and collecting words from the books they had finished.

Furthermore, from the findings and answer to research question 2 (RQ2), it can be noted that graded readers brought some advantages to L2 students in their extensive reading class. There were several common themes identified regarding students' perceptions of the use of graded readers in the L2 extensive reading class. Based on the first theme, the students thought that graded readers could help them improve their vocabulary. In the second theme, they thought that graded readers could help them improve their reading comprehension. According to the third theme, the students thought that graded readers could help them improve their reading fluency. In the last theme, the students thought that graded readers could help them increase their interest and motivation to read. The participants had positive perceptions of the use of graded readers in the L2 extensive reading class.

B. Implications and contributions

Based on the results of this study, there are some implications and contributions which can be inferred. First, when teaching extensive reading, teachers can incorporate graded readers in three stages of reading, namely pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading, as already demonstrated by the data of this research. Second, considering that the participants in this research had positive perceptions of the use of graded readers in their L2 extensive reading class, it seems to support the use of graded readers and suggests that the books provide promising results to the practice of extensive reading. As indicated by the findings of this research, the students thought that graded readers helped them improve their vocabulary, reading comprehension, reading fluency, interest, and motivation to read.

C. Limitations

This research still has some limitations that can be seen as consideration in the future. Firstly, I planned to do an observation of the classroom interaction, but because the class that I was planning to observe was conducted online and in limited time, I was only capable of conducting document analysis of the syllabus and collecting additional data from the reading test results. The data would have been

richer if the observation was carried out even though the class was conducted online. Secondly, at the beginning I actually planned to interview 6 participants, but because one of them was not willing to participate in this study, I could only conduct interviews with 5 participants. Thirdly, this study was done within a limited time frame, therefore, this study could not involve more participants that those who have been interviewed. Finally, because it is a qualitative study to a specific group of participants, the results of the study are not to be generalized for wider settings. The findings of this study may not apply in different contexts and settings.

D. Future studies

Based on the above limitations, there are several suggestions for further research. First, future studies on similar topics might use other data collection techniques, such as observation, to obtain more in-depth data about the research question. Second, quantitative research on the same topic with larger number of participants needs to be done to find out whether the same results can be identified and generalized to a wider setting. In addition, it is also useful for future research to involve participants from non-English departments in Indonesia, so that the results can be compared with the findings of this study.
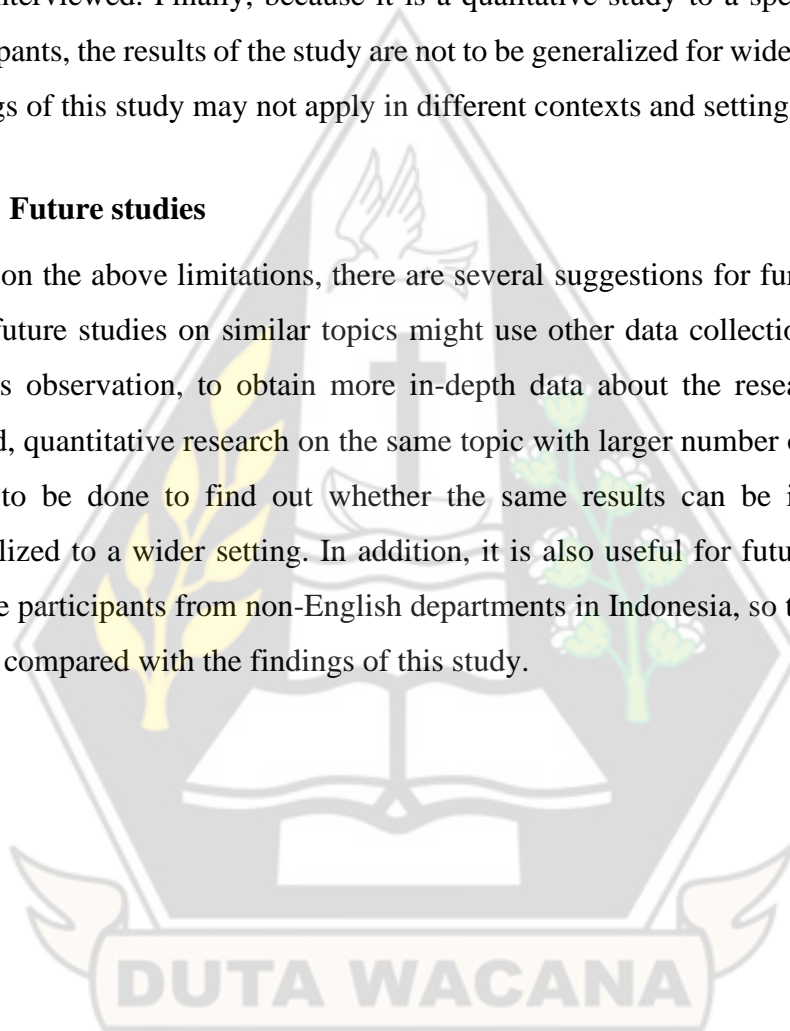
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