

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN SECONDARY STUDENTS' READING ANXIETY AND THEIR READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstrak

Penelitian kuantitatif ini bertujuan untuk menemukan hubungan antara kecemasan membaca siswa sekolah menengah dengan pemahaman bacaan mereka. Pesertanya adalah 49 siswa SMA dari salah satu SMK di Sidoarjo. Desain korelasional digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Dalam pengumpulan data, peneliti menggunakan kuesioner yang diadaptasi dari FLRAS (Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale) oleh Saito (1999). Untuk mengumpulkan skor pemahaman membaca, peneliti menggunakan TOEFL Junior Reading Test dari www.ets.org dan menggunakan metode penilaian CEFR sebagai penilaian. Penelitian ini dilakukan dalam situasi pandemi, sehingga peneliti menggunakan Google Form sebagai platform online untuk mendapatkan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa sekolah menengah mengalami kecemasan membaca pada tingkat sedang dengan jumlah 70,8% siswa. Hasilnya juga mengungkapkan bahwa kecemasan membaca dan pemahaman membaca siswa sekolah menengah berkorelasi negatif. Tingkat signifikansi korelasi adalah ($r = -0,396$). Dengan demikian, tingkat signifikansi korelasi dikategorikan sebagai korelasi rendah.

Kata Kunci: kecemasan membaca, pemahaman membaca, sekolah menengah.

Abstract

This quantitative study has a purpose to find the correlation between secondary students reading anxiety and their reading comprehension. The participants were 49 secondary students from one of the vocational high schools in Sidoarjo. The correlational design was used in this research. In data collecting, the researcher used a questionnaire adapted from FLRAS (Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale) by Saito (1999). To gather reading comprehension scores, researchers use the TOEFL Junior Reading Test from www.ets.org and use the CEFR scoring method as the assessment. This study was conducted in the pandemic situation, so researchers use Google Form as an online platform to gain the data. The result shows that most secondary students experience reading anxiety in the medium level with a total of 70,8% students. The result also revealed that secondary students' reading anxiety and reading comprehension was negatively correlated. The significance level of correlation was ($r = -0,396$). Thus, the significance level of correlation is categorized as low correlation.

Keywords: reading anxiety, reading comprehension, secondary students.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the prior skills in learning every language including English. As one of the major skills in learning English, reading has a big role in successful English learning. We have to know that reading is the support of every learning activity, including in English learning activity. As the core in every lesson and learning activity, reading has a purpose to enhance knowledge for every learner (Al Faruq, 2019). Reading ability is important to improve each student life that also have benefits to get and share information, even for entertaining purpose (Rintaningrum, 2019)

Okkinga et. Al (2018) examined that students could be successful readers if they understand what they read. That make every teacher all over the world will ask their students

to read a lot so they will get better reading comprehension. Yet, most secondary students' see reading as a simple and easy skill. Even though the truth is there are a lot of challenges in reading, especially when they have to complete foreign language or second language acquisition for their interaction (Astuty, 2017).

Reading itself has been promoted to be an important part of language development for the foreign language learning. In countries which use English as the foreign language, EFL reading could be the soul of education and language development as well in Indonesia. Reading and literacy play the role as the benchmark of education development. That's because English plays an important role in the international society as the communication tool and international primary language (Agharwal and Chakraborty, 2019). The role of the teaching of EFL reading also changed. The instruction of the K-13

curriculum in Indonesia make the secondary students the center of the teaching and learning process. So, the performance of the secondary students in reading will be depend on the students itself. In this case, the teacher only plays as a learning mediator (Waseso, 2018). Therefore, after doing this research, hopefully it becomes a source of consideration for teachers on how to treat anxiety in teaching EFL reading. For students, they should be more aware of the anxiety in learning EFL reading, so the teaching and learning process will be more comfortable both for students and teacher.

The other problem of English reading in Indonesia is the difficulties faced by Indonesia's secondary students itself. Previous study found that most Indonesian students may be good in other classes but still struggle in EFL learning (Subekti, 2018). Between the difficulties, the factor may come from inside the readers. We know that reading can be a fun activity, but reading comprehension needs more effort. For Indonesia's secondary school students, reading English is hard because most of them may not understand what they read in various English texts even though they have learned English (Moriyani, Muna & Ismail, 2019). On the other hand, the major goal of every reading activity is understanding the meaning of the text.

Even though reading has a direct relation to written language, reading actually belongs to oral performance more than inarticulate performance. It because individual act from each student takes an interaction with the text (Aisyah, 2017). So, in reading comprehension, secondary students' feeling and mood will play an interaction with text. When acting as a reader, secondary students need to be concentrated. But sometimes the text may become hard to understand and make them confused. This condition may becoming the source of their anxiety when reading an English passage (Mardianti, 2021).

Reading anxiety may become one of the factors affecting secondary students' reading, especially Indonesian high school students (Sari, 2017). Aina and Wijayati (2019) also stated that anxiety as part of academic stress plays a role behind students' motivation when learning EFL and give the impact to their final achievement.

As described by Muhlis (2014), reading anxiety is a feeling of apprehension and worries when students read a foreign language text and try to interpret it. Generally, anxiety can be defined as a feeling of fear about something. In foreign language learning, some researchers put their words in defining anxiety in foreign language learning. Capan and Pektan (2013) said that foreign language reading anxiety is the perception of uneasiness, apprehension or stress from which an individual might suffer when reading a foreign language text. This anxiety usually occurs in the teaching and learning processes that belong to situation-

specific anxiety (Amini M., 2016)

There is contention among the researchers about the effect of foreign language anxiety on students' condition and behavior when learning so far to the students' performances. Some studies show that reading anxiety has a significant impact on students' performance. Teimouri et al. (2019) do the meta-analysis technique and point out moderate negative correlations between foreign language anxiety and students' performance with ($r=-.304$) from 97 students.

The other study by Bonsalem (2020) investigated the connection between reading anxiety and gender. It found that Saudi's female students have higher anxiety than their male peers. Abubakar and Hairuddin (2020) investigated reading anxiety in young learners. The result revealed that young learners have high anxiety in reading so that right reading strategies will be needed to reduce anxiety in young learners. In Malaysia which has English as their second language, study by Petrus and Shah (2020) point out the correlation between reading anxiety, learning strategies, and language competency among Malaysia ESL students. This study shows that Malaysian ESL students feel a medium level of reading anxiety and also have a significant impact on learning strategies and language competency.

Secondary students are a little bit different from any students generally or even the college students. Although secondary students are already growing up, their maturity is still unstable. Secondary students also have unstable emotions that potentially become psychological problems when learning. In terms of Indonesian EFL learning, the psychological aspect should have more attention because EFL reading mostly affected by reading habits (Marpaung, 2020). Therefore, after doing this research, hopefully it becomes a source of consideration for teachers on how to treat anxiety in teaching EFL reading. For students, they should be more aware of the anxiety in learning EFL reading, so the teaching and learning process will be more comfortable both for students and teacher.

In Indonesia itself, only a few studies were conducted about reading anxiety in the EFL context. Previous study by Muhlis (2017) shows some factors affecting students' anxieties in reading. Between them is fear of making errors, unfamiliar culture and topic, and also unfamiliar vocabulary. However, it needs more research conducted to determine the correlation between reading anxiety and students' reading comprehension, especially for secondary students. Thus, this research is aiming to find out the level of reading anxiety experienced by the secondary students and also the correlation between reading anxiety and secondary students' reading comprehension.

METHODS

Regarding the research questions and the aim of this study, the researcher uses correlational research as the design of this study. Correlational research is one type of descriptive research which is opposite to experimental research. Forty-nine secondary students from a vocational high school in Sidoarjo were involved in this study.

To find out the correlation between reading anxiety and secondary students' reading comprehension. The researcher used two main instruments for data collecting. The first one is the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale adapted from Saito (1999) which explores students' reading anxiety based on students' experiences when reading English. The original FLRAS consists of 20 statements. The researcher decided to use 19 statements because one statement is similar to the others. Then, it was translated into the Indonesian version so that the students understood the statements.

The second instrument was the TOEFL Junior reading comprehension test adapted from www.ets.org to know students' reading performance. The TOEFL Junior reading comprehension test consists of three passages with around 4 until 10 multiple choice questions in each passage. The total questions were 20 questions with four possible answers.

The researcher uses Google Form as the online platform to conduct the survey via online questionnaire. The FLRAS was distributed first before doing the TOEFL Junior test. After 2-3 days, the TOEFL Junior reading comprehension test was given.

To check the validity of the FLRAS, the researcher conducted a validity test According to Ghazali (2018), variables can be valid if coefficient correlation is bigger than standardized r table (0,254). The result showed that all questions in the instrument were valid since all statements showed more than r tables with the highest score of coefficient correlation was 0,732 (x_{10}) and the lowest coefficient correlation was 0,454 (x_2).

For reliability, the Cronbach alpha test was used and the score was 0,854. According to the Ghazali (2018), the instrument is reliable if the Cronbach alpha is more than 0,70. Thus, the FLRAS was considered reliable.

Next, to find out students' level of reading anxiety, then researcher use formula proposed by Kuru-Gonen (2007) in the table 1 below

Table 1. Kuru-Gonen Reading Anxiety Level Formula

Type	Formula	Result
High Reading Anxiety	Mean + Standard Deviation	The score higher than this

Medium Reading Anxiety	The score between Mean - Standard Deviation and Mean + Standard Deviation	
Low Reading Anxiety	Mean - Standard Deviation	The score lower than this

Source: Kuru-Gonen (2007)

Based on the formula above, the level of students' reading anxiety was divided into High Reading Anxiety (HRA), Medium Reading Anxiety (MRA), and Low Reading Anxiety (LRA). The researcher will present the interval score based on the formula above in result and discussion. The researcher got the interval score to categorize level of the secondary students' reading anxiety. It was presented in Table 2 below

Table 2. Interval Score for Reading Anxiety Level

Score	Category
>51.15	Low Reading Anxiety
52-71,6	Medium Reading Anxiety
>71.6	High Reading Anxiety

Source: Kuru-Gonen (2007)

Next is calculating the validity and reliability of the TOEFL Junior. To measure the validity, the researcher does the validity test using SPSS as the tool. The result indicated that all of the questions was valid with the highest score being 0,755 (Y5) and the lowest score being 0,365(Y13). According to Ghazali (2018), the instrument was valid if the coefficient correlation was bigger than r table (0,361) .

For the reliability test, researchers use the Cronbach Alpha test. According to Ghazali (2018), the instrument was reliable if the Cronbach alpha score was bigger than 0,70. The result of the Cronbach alpha test was 0,874. Therefore, the TOEFL Junior was considered reliable.

A CEFR method was used by researchers to conduct the scoring of the TOEFL Junior test. The CEFR itself was consist of four level from A2 until B1 as described in the table below

Table 3. CEFR Level

LEVEL	Range Score
C1	63-67
B2	56-62
B1	48-55

A2	31-47
Below A2	<31

Before processing the correlation, the data which have been gained was tested with normality tests. Normality test was used in order to check whether the distribution of the data was normal or not. One sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used. According to Cohen (2007) the data is normal if p value is bigger than 0,05. According to table 1.3, the score of the p value is 0,200 which is bigger than 0,05. Therefore it can be concluded that the data was normally distributed.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Level of Reading Anxiety Experienced by Secondary Students

The result of the FLRAS is shown in the descriptive statistic in the table below

Table 4. Descriptive Statistic of the FLRAS Result

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
FLRAS	48	37.00	89.00	61.3958	10.23914
Valid N (listwise)	48				

From the table above the researcher got the mean and standard deviation were calculated as $M = 61.3958$ and $SD = 10.23914$. The total of the students participated in this research was 48. The minimum score was 37 and the highest score was 89.

Based on the category of the interval score of the reading anxiety level, the result can be sum up in the table below

Table 5. Distribution Frequencies of Reading Anxiety Level

RA	N	Category	Frequencies	%
	48	Low (>51.15)	9	18.75
		Medium (52-71,6)	34	70,8
		High (>71.6)	5	10.41

Based on the table above, most of the participants experienced reading anxiety in the medium level with a total of 70,8% students. Only 10,41% students experienced high reading anxiety and the rest was 18,75% students experienced low reading anxiety. Thus, most students fall in the medium reading anxiety.

Even though high reading anxiety was scored lower, there are still five students who have high anxiety when reading an English passage. It can be seen from their answers which agree with most of the statements in the FLRAS before. In tune with this finding, Azizatuz (2018) also found eight undergraduate students fall into High Reading Anxiety. The high anxiety level student was distinguishable with the total score of FLRAS was seventy two or higher. For example, one of the participant responses was strongly anxious whether she saw a whole page of English. She also strongly agreed with the statement “ i don’t mind reading to myself but i feel very uncomfortable when i have to read English aloud

Next is low reading anxiety level. In low anxiety level, the students mostly disagree with the statement in the FLRAS before. This group of Low Reading Anxiety was distinguished with FLRAS score was fifty one or lower. For the example, one of the student was not upset when she is not sure whether she understand what she was read in English”. In the same way, she was agreed with the statement “Once i get used to it, reading English was not so difficult”.

Meanwhile, 70,8 % of students fall into Medium Reading Anxiety. In accordance with this finding, Azizatuz (2018) also found that 59 % of the undergraduate students also fall to the medium level of reading anxiety. At this level, students agree with some of the statements like unknown vocabulary and symbols in the FLRAS and disagree with some of them. One of the participants was nervous and confused when she did not understand every topic in reading English. Yet, in a different way, she disagreed that reading is the hardest part in learning English.

Correlation Between Reading Anxiety and Secondary Student’s Reading Comprehension

In this section, the researcher will describe the main result of this research. But, before describing the correlation, firstly the researcher will show the toefl score of the secondary students as a dependent variable of this research. Researcher use CEFR scoring to assess the TOEFL Junior result of the secondary students. The result was shown in this chart below:

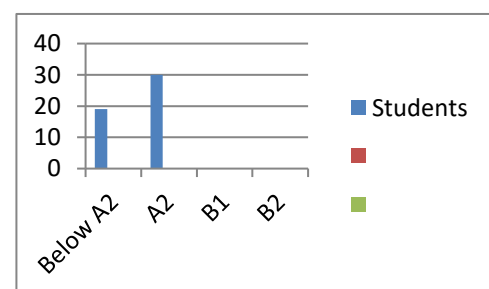


Figure 1. TOEFL CEFR Score

The result of the TOEFL Junior test was shown in the chart above. Total of students participating in this research was forty eight students. The result shows that most of the students (30) belong to A2 grade in CEFR scoring method. The lowest score obtained by the students was twenty one and the highest score was forty four.

To find out the correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension, Pearson product moment was used. The result of Pearson's product moment was shown in table 6 below.

Table 6. Correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension

Correlations			
		FLRAS	RC
FLRAS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.396**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	48	48
RC	Pearson Correlation	-.396**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	48	48

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above shows that there is significant correlation between the reading anxiety and reading comprehension. According to Cresswell (2014), two variables are correlated if the p value .005 or higher. The r value is -.396. It means that there is a negative correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension.

Although there is a correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension, the significance level is weak because the score was reposed between 0,2-0,4 (Creswell, 2014). It means reading anxiety five impact to the students' reading ability in understanding the text but at weak level

The result shows that if the students' anxiety is higher so the reading comprehension will be lower Thus, this study show that anxiety in reading have negative impact to the reading comprehension and achivement. Teimouri et al. (2019) do the meta-analysis technique and point out a negative correlation between general FL reading anxiety and course achievement.

Anxiety in the EFL reading may become one of the difficulties for the secondary students. EFL reading anxiety also affects the difficulty level of reading materials and reading tasks (Sari, 2017). Higher anxiety will affect reading comprehension, thus lowering the quality of the reading itself (Baki, 2017).

Conclusion

This research shows that secondary students felt anxiety in EFL reading. Thus, negative correlation occurs between secondary students' reading anxiety and their reading comprehension. Most of the students felt a medium level of reading anxiety. In the end, this research has successfully

found the correlation between secondary students' reading anxiety and their reading comprehension. Even so, this research is limited due to the time and the amount of participant. So it need further research from various participant to strengthen the correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension.

For the secondary student reading comprehension, students were tested using the TOEFL junior reading task. Most of them belong to A2 grade. It means that their reading comprehension is low. One of the sources may come from their anxiety that is disturbing when they read English passages. The teacher may have to take action to reduce their reading anxiety. Teachers can create fun reading activities using some games so it will lower student's reading anxiety. Teachers also have to encourage the students in improving their reading comprehension.

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