

Levels of EFL reading anxiety among English major students in early year at
Private University in Yogyakarta

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Abstract

Background: Reading comprehension is the act of understanding what we are reading. Reading comprehension is one of the pillars of the act of reading. When we read a text, we engage in a complex array of cognitive processes. In the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language, the effective achievement of four language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are considered important. However, reading is by far one of the most important skills for many L2 language learners, particularly for university students in EFL settings.

Purposes: This study aimed to find out “Levels of EFL reading anxiety among English major student in early year at Private University. The research question of this study is *what is the level of EFL reading anxiety among English major students?* This research adopted a quantitative approach, and it used questionnaire to get the data.

Methods: The participants of this research are 170 students of EFL batch 2018 at Private University in Yogyakarta. They were chosen because they are still new as EFL students. Questionnaire was used to get the data of female and male students’ reading attitude. The questionnaire was adapted from Artola, Sastre, Gratacós and Barraca (2013).

Results: Regarding the level of anxiety, the result shows on background and cultural knowledge component students are on high level of anxiety. The second result from

reading ability component students also on high level of anxiety. The result from vocabulary component students still on high level of anxiety. Same as three components before, the result from grammar component shows that students still on high level of anxiety. From the teaching method component the result shows there is difference from the four result before, the result shows students are on fair level of anxiety. The conclusion from the fives components shows that average score students are on fair level of anxiety.

Conclusion: From this research the result shows that EFL students especially at the early years often face reading anxiety, in reading process and post-test. Study showed that beginner foreign language learners often express a feeling of stress, nervousness or anxiety in learning a foreign language in general Horwitz (1986).

Keywords: *Reading anxiety, Anxiety level*

Approval Sheet

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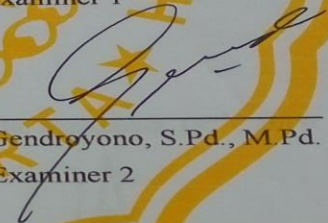
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Research Background

Reading comprehension is the act of understanding what we are reading.

Reading comprehension is one of the pillars of the act of reading. When we read a text, we engage in a complex array of cognitive processes. In the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language, the effective achievement of four language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are considered important. However, reading is by far one of the most important skills for many L2 language learners, particularly for university students in EFL settings. To put it simply, success of learning at university level depends upon the students' ability to read written language with a relatively good comprehension (Dechant & Smith, 1977; Grabe & Stoller, 2001; Shapiro, 2004). Some people are successful in second or foreign language learning while others struggle with different aspects of language learning. Where do these individual differences come from? What is the role of individual differences in second language learning? These issues have been debated in the field of second/foreign language learning for a long time by many researchers (Bailey, 1999; Chastain, 1975; Kleinmann, 1977; Tucker, 1976).

Many people assumed reading as an easy process without knowing there are many factors that influence. Among these many factors, "anxiety" is one of them. Most people do not know that anxiety has been stated as one of the factors which could impede the reading process. In the same time the reader trying to understand the meaning of words, how to pronounce a word and how to deliver the words to the other. Reading anxiety is an anxiety that learners experience while they are reading in their new target language (Zhou, 2017). This can be caused by unfamiliar scripts and writing

systems, or cultural material (Saito, Horwitz & Garza, 1999). Foreign language reading anxiety refers to the feeling of apprehension and worries when students have to read in their non-native language (L2). According to Horwitz (2001) “Reading anxiety is a specific type of anxiety from more general types of foreign language anxiety.

In learning English, students still face many challenges, especially in reading comprehension. Anxiety is one of the many factors that influence reading comprehension. The researcher once asked this to some friends, and they answered that they also experienced it when the first time they entered in the English Department. From here I began to see, that the problem as researcher experienced also experienced by some people. Maybe the only difference here is the level of anxiety experienced by each people is different. Some people may be just a little worried, but some other people feel very worried when certain moments they are asked to do activities, such as those researcher mentioned before or the other activities which triggers anxiety. And some of the things that the researcher mentioned just a little factor that explain anxiety and effect on reading comprehension. Therefore, according background of this research, the researcher will find out about the level of anxiety of EFL students in early years.

Research Methodology

Quantitative Design. This study used a quantitative research design. It to help the researcher to reach aim for the study, which is to find out “Level of EFL reading anxiety among English major students in early years”. The decision to choose quantitative research for this study is appropriate to the researcher’s aim. Quantitative research is a structured way of collecting and analyzing data obtained from different sources. Quantitative research involves the use of computational, statistical, and

mathematical tools to derive results. According to Borrego, Douglas, and Ammelink (2009), quantitative method fits for deductive approaches which hypothesis justifies the variables of the narrowly defined research questions. It is conclusive in its purpose as it tries to quantify the problem and understand how prevalent it is by looking for projectable results to a larger population

Survey Design. The most appropriate design used in this research is survey design method. According to Creswell (2012), survey research designs are the procedures in quantitative research in which the investigators administer a survey to a sample and population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristic of the population. Survey design helps the researcher to identify the important beliefs and attitude of the students about their reading anxiety.

Setting of The Study. The setting of this study done in the classroom at ELED batch 2018 of Private University. Moreover, it makes the researcher easier to access and collect the data from participants of this research. Because the researcher study is about the levels anxiety of EFL students among English major students on the early years, the researcher was finding out the data of student in reading class from the teacher to match the data and the result of my research. Therefore, because the researcher is a student of English Language Education Department and the place support the researcher easier to collect the data and appropriate to the purpose of the study and significances of this research.

Population. The population in this research were students from ELED Private University Batch 2018 that consist of 243 students. The reason why the researcher chose the participants because the researchers assume that students of English

Education Department were familiar with reading activity. The researcher also chose students from batch 2018 because they were still new as students in EED UMY in learning English, and it was supposed to know how actually students reading anxiety level in early years study. The method that used in this research is confidence sampling, that means from sample size confidence levels, confidence interval 5% of 243 are, minimum 151 students. For students available in this research are 170 students at ELED of Private University batch 2018 become participants of this research.

Data collection method. To collect the data from this research, researcher used questionnaire, the questionnaire adapted from previous research that used by Zoghi (2012). Questionnaire by paper sheet distributed to the 170 students from ELED batch 2018. In the questionnaire there are 27 questions that included 5 components can be analyzed. After questionnaire distributed to participants, participants complete the questionnaire on 10 to 15 minutes. To find the average and validity scores of reading anxiety level the researcher used statistical analysis tool.

The Instrument of the Research. To know students reading anxiety level of students' batch 2018 at EED the researcher used a questionnaire to collect the data. Kothari (2004) stated that the questionnaire is a set of questions focused on specific topics or specialized area. The questionnaire is used as an instrument to- gather data from student participants. In addition, the researcher took a questionnaire from previous studies were made from the journal of Asia TEFL that has been used before by Zoghi at 2012 on his research "An Instrument for EFL Reading Anxiety: Inventory Construction and Preliminary Validation". It was use data record students from their teacher about their reading performance and find out anxiety level at once to match result from their answer from questionnaire toward reading anxiety. The researcher prepared a

questionnaire first to collect the data from students. The questionnaire that used before by Zoghi at 2012 consisted of 27 questions that translated from English to Bahasa to avoid any misunderstanding. From the questionnaire, students asks to choose through multiple choice. The multiple choice is the 1-4 scale which has been provided in the questionnaire, the participants were required to answer the questions in 10-15 minutes. Each section contains specific variables that in turn gives rise to the anxiety factor identified.

Findings

The findings in this study is to answer the research question used in this research. As for finding is about to know the level of anxiety in reading comprehension EFL students. In the questionnaire there is specific components that turn give rise to the anxiety factor identified. There are five components of the questionnaire, first is Background and cultural knowledge, the second is General reading ability, third is Vocabulary, and then Grammar, and the last one is Teaching method. The researcher used statistical analyze system with explore command which can be used for test in one group or more one group. The first component was Background and cultural knowledge. The questionnaire was distributed to 170 early years EFL students and all the sample used in this research.

To find about Background and cultural knowledge about students the researcher used the result of questionnaire scores by counting the mean of the score. Based on table above, the mean value of background and cultural knowledge of students is 2.82. According the student's anxiety level, this means students have high level anxiety about background and cultural knowledge. The first question in the component of Background

and cultural knowledge, mean value is 2.61. According to the student's anxiety levels, this means students have a fair level. This question stated "*Saya merasa tidak nyaman ketika judul bacaan tidak familiar untuk saya*" (I do not feel at ease when the title of the text is unfamiliar for me). The second question from the component of Background and cultural knowledge, mean value is 2.85. According to the student's anxiety levels, this means student has a high level. The question stated "*Ketika ide-ide yang diungkapkan dalam teks secara Bahasa tidak jelas, itu membuat saya khawatir*" (It is worrying to me when the ideas expressed in the text are culturally unclear). The last question from the component of Background and cultural knowledge the mean value is the highest, that is 3.02. And according to the student's anxiety levels is means student have high level. The question stated from the question is "*Saya merasa bingung ketika saya tidak memiliki pengetahuan tentang ide-ide yang diungkapkan dalam teks*" (I get upset when I lack the previous knowledge about the ideas expressed in the text. As seen at table 4.1 above from the average score the researcher concluded, that in the component of Background and cultural knowledge, students have a high level of anxiety. EFL students on early years feel worried if they find something that unfamiliar English in text. Unfamiliar English or other foreign language cultures would hinder students' reading comprehension process and cause anxiety as the culture represented in the text is foreign to them (Rajab, 2012). (Gonen 2007) also finds that unknown cultural content made students difficult to understand foreign language script. (Huang 2012) postulated that cultural shock is a common factor which can lead to a higher anxiety level in EFL learners.

Next, the second components of this research questionnaire is General reading ability which is in question number 4-7. The questionnaire also distributed to 170 student participants. Mean value of General reading ability by frequency based on the table is 4.2. According to the student's anxiety level, this means that students have high level of anxiety by frequency component. (Freese 1997) points out that some students encounter problems when reading. They read the paragraphs in the text but are still unaware of what they have read. Students reach the highest score 2.89 at question number 5. The question number 5 at the questionnaire is "*Saya khawatir ketika saya tidak bisa mendapatkan inti dari bacaan meskipun tidak ada kosakata maupun tata Bahasa baru*" (When I cannot get recognize minor ideas/details of the text is worrying to me). The lowest score in this component is the question number 6, with 2.72 as the score. The question number 6 stated "*Saya gugup ketika saya tidak dapat menemukan ide utama dari paragraf tertentu*" (I am nervous when I cannot spot the main idea of a certain paragraph). And can be seen the difference between the highest and lowest scores is not too significant, but both on the high levels scores of students' anxiety level. On the two other question of General reading ability students reach 2.81 at question number 4, and at question number 7 students reach 2.83. From the component of general and reading ability, students feel worries when they can not find and knowing the main idea of texts and paragraph. In the study of Al-Shboul, et al., (2013), the interviewees responded that they would like to read short and easy stories. The EFL learners participating in Kuru-Gonen's (2005) study claimed that the text features, such as length, can also cause their reading anxiety.

Move on the other components, the third components of this research questionnaire is Vocabulary. The component included in question number 8-15 that means there is 8 question in this component. The questionnaire was distributed to 170 students and all the sample used in this research. The result shows that the average scores from table above is 2.68, it means student's anxiety level still on high level, but there is reduce from the two result before and almost close to the fair level. In this component students get the highest score on the question number 10 which stated "*Saya merasa kesal ketika saya tidak tahu arti dari kata yang saya rasa telah saya lihat/temui sebelumnya*" (I get upset when I cannot figure out the meaning of a word that I feel I have seen before). The question number 10 at the questionnaire get the score 2.96 and means student have high level anxiety of Vocabulary on this questionnaire. From the question number 9 students get score 2.91 on the question that stated "*Saya terganggu ketika saya menemukan banyak kata yang artinya tidak jelas*" (It bothers me when I encounter a lot of words whose meanings are unclear). Besides, the lowest score of students base on the result is question number 13, which stated "*Saya kesal ketika saya menemukan idiom/ungkapan yang asing bagi saya*" (I get upset when I come across idioms that are unfamiliar to me). Those question get the 2.46 score and means that students have a fair level of categorization. And, from five other questions at vocabulary component, students get 2.72 on question number 8, 2.63 at question number 11, 2.59 at question number 12 and 14, and 2.65 from question number 15. The result shows that EFL students on early years worries if they find words that they does not know the meaning or the word sound strange to them. According to Rajab (2012) said that unfamiliar vocabulary might impede learner's comprehension and cause difficulty which in turn

leads to anxiousness. Gonen (2007) also stated, unknown vocabulary in reading a foreign language text appeared to be another source of anxiety, 20% of the communication units which related to text category fit to the students' statement of anxiety about new words through reading English language text. In reading, vocabulary is the fundamental element because all information is delivered through words. Learners encountering unknown vocabulary will more likely struggle with reading. In the studies conducted by Huang (2012) and Kuru-Gonen (2005), the majority of the students agreed that unknown vocabulary could lead to reading anxiety. The results indicated that the more unknown vocabulary a student encountered, the higher reading anxiety a student might feel.

Next, the fourth components of the questionnaire are Grammar. Same as question on the other components before, this question also distributed to 170 students. The grammar component included in question number 16-21. Mean value of Grammar by frequency based on the table is 4.4. According to the student's anxiety level, this means that students still have high level of anxiety by frequency component. The result shows same as the result at Vocabulary component that is 2.68. The highest scores from this component students get on question number 21 which stated "*Saya bingung jika tata Bahasa suatu kalimat tidak masuk akal untuk saya*" (I get confused when what I know about grammatical point does not make any sense). The question number 21 at the questionnaire get the score 2.94, that means students have high level anxiety scores at this question. The lowest score in this component is on question number 18. Students get the score of 2.34 and means students' are in categorization of fair level. The question at the questionnaire number 18 is "*Saya merasa terganggu ketika susunan*

kalimat pasif digunakan dalam sebuah kalimat” (It bothers me when a passive voice is used in a sentence). For the remaining four questions students get 2.58 at question number 16, 2.69 at question number 17, 2.79 at question number 19, and 2.74 at question number 20. From the grammar component students feel worries about grammar in sentence, sentence arrangement, and unable to recognize different parts of speech. Saito (1999) observed that students who perceive difficulty in reading tasks experience greater amount of reading anxiety.

The last component at the questionnaire is Teaching Method. The questionnaire was distributed to 170 students. The component included in question number 22-27 that means there is 6 questions at this component. The result shows that the average scores from table above is 2.21, it means student’s anxiety level on fair level, there is reduce of students’ scores and the result was different with four results before. For the four components before, student scores show that the level of scores always on high level. The highest scores from this component students get on question number 25. Students get the score 2.56 and it means that students are on fair level for question that stated *“Saya kesal ketika guru memilih teks yang tidak menarik untuk dibaca dikelas”* (It upsets me when the instructor chooses uninteresting texts to read in class). It means that selection of topics is very important. (Wallace 2001), said that if the topic of a text is not interesting to a learner it is almost impossible for this learner to read for pleasure and consequently to become an effective reader. (Gonen 2007) also stated that uninteresting topic in reading text is considered as a source of foreign language reading anxiety. The two lowest scores from this component is on question number 22 and question number 26. For question number 22 students get score 1.94 for question that

stated “*Saya terganggu ketika guru meminta saya untuk membaca dengan suara keras*” (It bothers me when the instructor calls on me to read out), it means they have no problem if they ask to reading aloud. For question number 26 students get score 1.97 on the question which stated “*Saya merasa tidak nyaman ketika guru mengoreksi kesalahan pengucapan dan terjemahan saya*” (It makes me feel uneasy when the instructor corrects my pronunciation or translation mistakes). For the remaining three questions students get score 2.27 at question number 23, for question number 24 students get 2.41 of scores, and at the question number 27 which stated “*Saya gugup ketika guru menggunakan Bahasa Inggris sebagai media pengajaran dan hampir tidak pernah menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia ketika mengajar*” (I am nervous when the instructor uses English as a media of instruction and hardly ever makes use of our first language), students get score 2.14.

Moreover, the result from five components on the questionnaire show that the average scores is 2.64, it is mean reading anxiety level of students on fair level. And from this last component about teaching method, researcher conclude that students have less problem in the teaching method components, and this also means that teaching method that used by their teacher it is quite appropriate with students.

Discussion

In this part, researcher discusses the analysis of the statistical data that were presented in previous sections. In this research, there is thing to find out about reading anxiety levels among EFL students.

The result from component background and cultural knowledge had been presented in table above. The table 4.1 (*see page*) shows that 2.82 is the mean value of students.

This means that English major students have a high level of reading anxiety at the component of background and cultural knowledge in set of questionnaire. From the result above student have high level in general. The researcher also investigated students background and cultural knowledge based on their preference.

Next, the result from component number 2 about students general reading ability. EFL students at early years generally were 2.81 score of mean. It means that students still have a high level on reading anxiety at this component. Components involved in the set of questionnaire also become the measurement of general reading ability of EFL students. From the component of general reading ability, students get high level on all of the question from this component.

Move the third component, the third component is student vocabulary. The result can be seen on table 4.3. The table 4.3 shows that 2.68 is that mean value of students. This means that EFL students have a high level at reading anxiety level from vocabulary component.

Then, the result of fourth component about grammar. The result of early years EFL students' grammar generally were 2.68 score of mean. It means that the result same as vocabulary component, and students still on high level of anxiety.

The last component from the questionnaire is teaching method. The result from the last component can be seen on table 4.5. The table shows that the result of early years EFL students from teaching method component generally were 2.21 score of mean. It means that students have fair level on the teaching method component.

Recommendation

For the teacher. Teacher should to know and understand more about level anxiety of EFL students, the researcher argues that any lectures of ELED should create and develop their learning activities that prefer to give more encouragement to be more confident in reading activities, post-test, so student reading anxiety can be minimized.

For students. Student also should get more information and additional knowledge about reading anxiety, so they can learn more and understanding that there are levels of reading anxiety in reading process, and post-test. And if they have problem with reading the anxiety, they can know early and immediately consult with their teacher.

For the next researcher. Finding the result of this research, the researcher found that EFL students at early years have fair level of anxiety. From this result, other researcher might be able to do research in more than 1 university, at 2 or more universities. Therefore, may the result will be even more varied.

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