The Correlation between Students' Reading Anxiety and Their Reading Ability

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this present research is to determine whether there is a correlation between students' reading anxiety and their reading ability. This research is a correlational study. The population of this research were the 66 students of the English Teaching Department at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar. The sample was chosen by simple random sampling technique using Slovin's formula. As a result, 55 students were used as a sample. The data were gathered by using questionnaires and reading test. The result of this research indicates that there was a correlation between students' reading anxiety and their reading ability. It is indicated by the data analysis using the "r" product moment formula. The result shows that the calculated correlation coefficient (rxy) was -0.343 which has a negative sign, which means "rxy" has a negative direction. Next, "rxy" (-0.343) with degree of freedom (df)= N-2 (56-2) = 54. It can be stated that the r-table was 0.254 at the level significant 5%. It can be concluded that Ha was accepted because r-calculated (-0.343) was higher than the value of the r-table (0.254).

Introduction

Reading is a fundamental skill in learning English that leads to academic achievement. Reading is the process of obtaining information and increasing the knowledge of the reader. Reading is very much needed, especially for students to easily access information and expand knowledge. The ability to read and comprehend text reading is important to success in educational system. Farrel (2009) postulates that reading is a complex process. Readers should involve conscious and subconscious actions. Readers also associate the coordination of attention, memory, perception, and understanding. In reading activity, readers will use some strategies while they read the book to get the knowledge. In reading there are five components of reading comprehension in general. The components include main idea, factual or details information, vocabulary, referent, and inference. Not many students like to read, however, most of them

becomes worried when they need to comprehend some material especially in English. There are several factors that influence students' reading ability, including language skills, cultural background, motivation, and other factors such as anxiety. Cheng (2004) explains that cognitive anxiety refers to the cognitive aspect of anxiety experience, including negative expectations, preoccupation with performance and concern about other's perception. In addition, Munir et al (2020) claims that academic stress could be a part of students' academic life.

Anxiety affects students' reading ability. Students are afraid that they will make mistakes in understanding the contents of the text. Anxiety that arises when reading texts in English can be caused by lack of vocabulary. Anxiety that arises during the reading process is called reading anxiety. Early studies on anxiety had an apparent focus on reading comprehension. According to Al-Faruq (2019) reading anxiety is more complicated to identify than speaking, instant response is not needed here. Reading anxiety is a cognitive reaction that arises when students read and understand texts in foreign languages. Saito et al. (1999) introduced the concept of foreign language reading anxiety and found that reading anxiety happens have different reactions from foreign language anxiety. Their study observed the effect of the target language (Japanese, French, and Russian) on reading anxiety and disclose that students' reading anxiety levels varied according to the target language. While learners of Japanese were the most anxious group, learners of Russian were the least. Furthermore, they informed that reading anxiety negatively affected student grades and achievement. However, the previous research from Hsu (2004) conducted his research on the relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension of 125 junior military college EFL students he found that anxious students tended to recall less content of the text than less anxious students. Farihah (2017) also claimed that there was a significant influence of reading anxiety to the reading comprehension achievement.

In present times, several researchers have investigated students' reading anxiety in the context of senior high schools. Nevertheless, very little is written in Islamic University. This research as a matter of fact is intended to describe the correlation between students' reading anxiety and their reading ability.

A. Reading

Reading is one of the basic skills in foreign language learning. Reading is the process the reader can get information from the text. Reading is one important skill that should be mastered by English students' learners, because it is a process that can help students in comprehending some text. Reading is an activity to get information from books. This is an important skill for students to learn. There are some opinions by experts about definition of reading. Harmer (2001) states that reading is very useful in language acquisition, the more students read the more they understand. Reading has a positive influence on students' knowledge. Reading is an activity to get

information from books. Wallace (1996) defines reading as interpreting means reacting to a written text as a piece of communication. Reading is an important part of learning in a second or foreign language. Meanwhile, Grabe and Stoller (2011) states that reading is the ability to describe meaning from the printed text and appropriately interpret the meaning. Moreover, Anderson explains that reading is an important skill for students to have a good understanding of a second or foreign language. These ideas can be concluded that reading is the activity to get some ideas and information from written text so, the reader can comprehend and make conclusion to confirm, discard, or filter the ideas itself.

B. Anxiety

Cheng (2004) explains that cognitive anxiety refers to the cognitive aspect of anxiety experience, including negative expectations, preoccupation with performance and concern about other's perception. Huda (2018), further, reports anxiety to be emotional and related to the psychological system of those who experience unpleasant tensions or are worried about what may happen in the future. Anxiety is expected to consume the necessary resources of working memory, and it can hinder students' ability to act well in learning situations. These ideas can be concluded that anxiety is a natural psychological reaction towards what we are worried about or fear about something in particular situation or something that might happen in the future. It may affect positively, such as motivate us to study before exam. Nevertheless, it can cause negative effect, such as becoming careless and absent-minded when doing exam.

C. The Effect of Anxiety to Learning

According to Hanafi (2018) there are two types of fear: debilitating and facilitating. Facilitating anxiety is known as positive anxiety, and debilitating anxiety is known as negative anxiety. In fact, this kind of anxiety helps students improve their knowledge. The fear of debilitation adversely affects the motivation and preparation of students before and during the presentation. Facilitating anxiety, on the other hand, keeps students motivated and makes more efforts to reduce the negative effects of anxiety. On the other hand, Hashempour and Mehrad (2014) mention that academic anxiety can adversely affect the success of students' school activities, as anxious students self-absorb and use most of their energy in the learning process to contribute. In short, anxiety can affect to learning because the students with higher anxiety are ideal to have lower performance in learning, they occasionally turn the discussion of language anxiety and foreign language reading around.

D. Reading Anxiety

Since English in Indonesia is a foreign language, the students who are just starting to learn English may have difficulty understanding reading texts, perhaps, due to incorrect

word identification and recognition, specifically limited comprehension skills or poor oral reading (Khafidhoh & Abdullah, 2022). Saito et al. (1999) introduced the concept of reading anxiety in a foreign language and noted that reading anxiety is a different concept from anxiety in a foreign language. Their study investigated the effects of target languages (Japanese, French, Russian) on reading anxiety and showed that students' reading anxiety varies depending on the target language. Japanese learners were the scariest group, but Russian learners were the few. They also reported that reading anxiety had a negative impact on students' grades. The anxiety of reading a foreign language is the anxiety that learners experience while reading a foreign language. In their study, a new catalog for measuring reading anxiety, the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS), was developed. Reading anxiety is a feeling of worry, nervousness, and apprehension when students try to comprehend the foreign language text. Reading anxiety is a problem and difficulty for students to read and is a problem for the people. Efforts to study reading anxiety and reading problems are crucial to the growth and development of education (Oyeleye Dr, 2020). In short, reading anxiety is students' feelings of worry, fear, and nervousness when they are read and have to comprehend some English text. Anxiety of reading is basically rooted in some kind of fear, such as fear of failure or lack of self-confidence. Fear of reading scientifically affects students' academic performance.

E. Reading Ability

Kusumaningrum (2016) in Mulyaningrum (2019) states that ability (capability, skill, aptitude, talent or competence) is power to do something. From those statements, we can conclude that ability is someone's competence in doing something because of one's skill or training. According to Nusri (2017) reading ability is used to extract information from text using knowledge, skills, and strategies to achieve reading goals. During reading activities, readers use different strategies and skills as they read to acquire knowledge. Reading ability is important for students. It can be defined that reading ability is students' potential or capacity to get information or idea from text. Reading ability is a communication skill between readers and writers to gain knowledge and information. On the other hand, everyone could read to get information and also to expand his knowledge.

Method

This research was quantitative research. It used a correlation design. According to Mills & Gay (2019), correlation research describes in quantitative term the degree to which two variables are related which has a purpose to determine the relationship to make a prediction. This research was designed to describe the correlation between reading anxiety and students' reading ability. This research was conducted at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, especially the sixth semester

students of English Teaching Department at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar in 2021/2022 academic year.

The research population were 66 students from the sixth semester students of the English Teaching Department. The sampling technique used Slovin's formula. It involved 56 respondents using simple random sampling technique.

In answering the research questions, the researchers used a questionnaire and reading test. The questionnaire was used to measure students' anxiety. The questionnaire consisted of 28 items. It contained a positive and negative statement. It was used to get the data on reading anxiety by choosing options based on the Likert-scale: *Selalu* (always), *Sering* (often), *Kadang-kadang* (sometimes), *Jarang* (seldom), and *Tidak pernah* (never). Reading comprehension test however was used to know students' reading ability. Students' reading ability was taken from the TOEFL tests as suggested from validators. The test was an objective test. It consisted of 20 items. In this test, students were asked to read some passages and answer the questions based on the information given in the text they have read. The score was calculated using this formula:

$$\text{Score} = \frac{\text{correct answer}}{\text{number of items}} \times 100$$

To analyze the data, the researchers used descriptive and inferential statistics.

Result and Discussion

A. Result

1. The Data Description Statistics

After getting the data of reading anxiety and students' reading ability, the data was described by measuring the central tendency and variability of the data. The result of descriptive statistics information of both variables can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. Statistical result of the description of reading anxiety and students' reading ability

Statistics		Reading Anxiety	Reading Ability
N	Valid	56	56
	Missing	0	0
Mean		90.23	59.29
Median		87.00	60.00
Mode		3784	75
Std. Deviation		16.586	12.736
Variance		275.091	162.208
Minimum		55	35
Maximum		136	80
Sum		5053	3320

The table above demonstrates that mean for reading anxiety was 90.23 and reading ability was 59.29, the standard deviation for reading anxiety was 16.586 and reading

ability was 12.736, the minimum score for reading anxiety was 55, and reading ability in was 35, the maximum score for reading anxiety was 136 and reading ability was 80.

2. Description Statistics of Reading Anxiety

Table 2. Descriptive statistic of reading anxiety

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
reading anxiety	56	55	136	5053	90.23	16.586
Valid N (listwise)	56					

Table 3. Data distribution of reading anxiety

No	*Interval class*	*Absolute Frequency*	*Relative frequency*	*Category*
1	>107	10	18%	Very high
2	91-106	14	25%	High
3	74-90	21	38%	Low
4	<74	11	20%	Very low
Total		56	100%	

The tables clearly explain that from 56 students, there were 10 (18%) students have very high reading anxiety, 14 (25%) students have high reading anxiety, 21 (38%) students have low reading anxiety, and 11 (20%) students have very low reading anxiety. To give a more detail explanation about the score of students' reading, it can be seen in the histogram below:
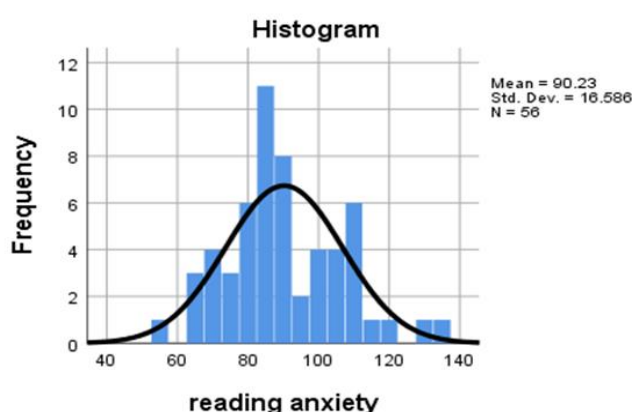

Fig 1: The histogram the data distribution of reading anxiety

The curve above shows that the highest score for reading anxiety was 136 and the lowest score was 55. The mean score of the data was 90.23, the median score was 87, and the standard deviation score was 16.586.

3. **Description Statistics of Reading Anxiety**

Table 4. Descriptive statistic of reading ability

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
reading ability	56	35	80	3320	59.29	12.736
Valid N (listwise)	56					

The data were taken from the test that researchers distributed for the sixth semester of English students of UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar in 2019/2020 academic year. To give a more detailed explanation on students' reading ability, the scores of the data were arranged in the form of the data distribution in the table. From the table, it can be stated that the highest score was 80 and the lowest score was 35.

Table 5. Data distribution of reading ability

No	Interval class	Absolute Frequency	Relative frequency	Category
1	>72	11	20%	Very high
2	60-71	19	34%	High
3	47-59	12	21%	Low
4	<47	14	25%	Very low
	Total	56	100%	

The table indicates that from 56 students, there were 11 (20%) students have very high reading ability, 19 (34%) students have high reading ability, 12 (21%) students have low reading ability, and 14 (25%) students have very low reading ability. To give a more detail explanation on the score of students' reading, it can be seen in the histogram below:
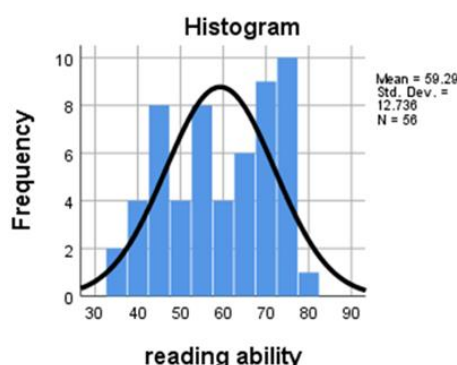

Fig 2: The histogram the data distribution of reading ability

The curve above describes that the highest score of reading ability was 80 and the lowest score was 35. The mean score of the data was 59.25, the median score was 60.00, the standard deviation score was 12.736.

4. Testing Normality

The result of testing normality was obtained by using the aid of a nonparametric test. If the significant score of two variables were higher than 0.05 as the standard significance, it means both data were normal. The result showed that the data distribution is normal because the Sig X (0.200) and Y (0.260) were higher than 0.05. The summary for the result of testing normality of reading anxiety and students' reading ability was presented in the table below:

Table 6. Result of testing normality

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		reading anxiety	reading ability
N		56	56
Uniform Parameters[a,b]	Minimum	55	35
	Maximum	136	80
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.226	.135
	Positive	.226	.093
	Negative	-.108	-.135
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.693	1.010
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200	.260

a. Test distribution is Uniform.
b. Calculated from data.

5. Testing Homogeinity

To know whether the data were homogenous or not, the researchers analyzed by using Computer SPSS version 26. The result showed that both variables are homogenous because the significance the value of X and Y was 0.507 which is higher than 0.05 as the standard significance. The detailed information can be seen in the following table:

Table 7. Result of test homogeneity of variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.978	15	22	.507

The Table 7 clearly confirms that the significance score was higher than the standard significance score (0.507>0.05). Then, it could be concluded that the data was homogeneity.

6. The Correlation between Students' Reading Anxiety and their Reading Ability

To find out the correlation between reading anxiety and students' reading ability, the researchers analyzed it by using Computer SPSS version 26. After getting the data on reading anxiety and students' reading ability, the researchers found that the coefficient of correlation between variables (rxy) was -0.343. It can be explained in the following table:

Table 8. The coefficient correlation between reading anxiety and reading ability

		reading anxiety	reading ability
reading anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	-.343
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010
	N	56	56
reading ability	Pearson Correlation	-.343	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	
	N	56	56
		reading anxiety	reading ability
reading anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	-.343
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010
	N	56	56
reading ability	Pearson Correlation	-.343	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	
	N	56	56

The results of correlation analysis scientifically reveal that there is a correlation between students' reading anxiety and their reading ability. This is shown the significant correlation r-calculated -0,343 > r- table 0,254. The negative sign means that students with high reading anxiety has a low reading ability. It can be regarded as having correlation to students' reading ability at the level of correlation (0.20 – 0.40).

B. Discussion

This part presents the discussion of the research findings. As previously stated, the research finding showed that there is a correlation between students' reading anxiety and their reading ability. This research investigated that reading anxiety has negative direction toward students' reading ability where the negative sign means between students reading anxiety and students reading ability has an opposite relationship, if students have high reading anxiety so they will has low reading ability. Meanwhile, the research finding by Fauziyah (2015) on the relationship between students' anxiety and their reading skill found that there was significant correlation between students' anxiety and reading skill. This research finding is relevant with Anggraini (2016) who investigated the correlation analysis among foreign language anxiety, reading anxiety, and reading achievement of students of public health faculty of Sriwijaya University. She scientifically found that there was a significant correlation between students' reading anxiety and reading achievement.

It is appropriate with the theory of reading anxiety and reading ability which states that reading anxiety affects reading ability. Mardianti (2021) observed that reading anxiety may become a severe obstacle the students faced. Therefore, it is necessary to deepen the understanding of these affective factors, especially reading anxiety and its relationship to other components in EFL or ESL teaching, to facilitate learners. In the same line, Farihah (2017) found that there was a significant influence of reading anxiety to the reading comprehension achievement. The results of this study clearly state that there is a low correlation between students reading anxiety and their reading ability.

This finding is also to strengthen the idea of Fauziyah (2015) who states that the correlation between the students' anxiety and their reading skills at this study is higher than the previous study which only in moderate level. It might be influenced by the different students' background and experience in learning English as the foreign language. This research finding is there is a negative correlation between students reading anxiety and their reading skill. Moreover, this finding confirms the idea of Munir et al (2020) that students' reading anxiety as a part of academic stress is most common source for students.

Conclusion

This research concludes that there was a correlation between students' reading anxiety and their reading ability. It was indicated through the correlation analysis that had done by statistical called Computer SPSS version 26, where r-calculated was - 0.343, the calculated approaches 0.20. This conclusion recommends that lecturers may consider several ways to reduce students' anxiety in teaching reading comprehension. Moreover, this research highlights the need for the lecturers to find several strategies to reduce students' anxiety such as using collaborative strategies in the classroom and to create a positive atmosphere in teaching. Finally, since this research has a limitation on investigating in two variables, further research on some other effects on reading anxiety needs to be done.

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