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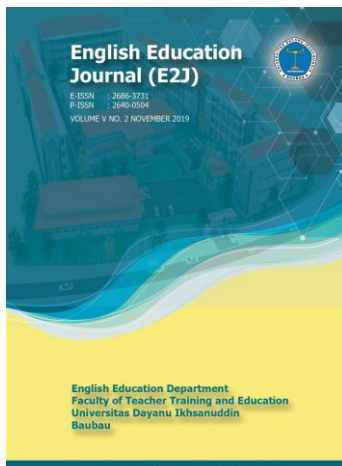
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STUDENTS' READING ANXIETY AND STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract

The objective of the research was to find out the level of students reading anxiety and students reading comprehension. Data collection in this research was carried out using a research instrument in the form of a questionnaire EFL Reading Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI) consisting 23 items and test to determine the level of students reading anxiety and 30 items of reading comprehension test. The data obtained were analyzed by descriptive statistical analysis. Based on the result of the research, it was conclude that students' reading anxiety was in the high category with the mean score 2.72 means in the high anxiety. Sequentially top-down reading anxiety with the mean score 2.77, bottom-up reading anxiety with the mean score 2.74 and classroom reading anxiety with the mean score 2.29. While reading comprehension the mean score 2.72 implies that the students' reading comprehension is in the poor category.

Keywords: reading anxiety, reading, comprehension

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui tingkat kecemasan membaca siswa dan pemahaman membaca siswa. Pengumpulan data dalam penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan instrumen penelitian angket EFL Reading Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI) yang terdiri atas 23 item dan tes untuk mengetahui tingkat kecemasan membaca siswa dan 30 item tes pemahaman membaca. Data yang diperoleh dianalisis dengan analisis statistik deskriptif. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian disimpulkan bahwa kecemasan membaca siswa berada pada kategori tinggi 2.72 yang berarti kecemasan tinggi. Kecemasan membaca secara barurutan top-down dengan skor rata-rata 2.77, kecemasan membaca bottom-up dengan skor rata-rata 2.74 dan

kecemasan membaca dikelas dengan skor rata-rata 2.29. Sedangkan kemampuan membaca siswa dengan skor rata-rata 2.72 menunjukkan kemampuan membaca siswa dalam kategori rendah.

Kata kunci: *kecemasan membaca, membaca, pemahaman.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Students from all over the world have been learning English for many years. Since English is considered an international language, it is essential for anyone interested in international interactions to learn English. Every student experiences a different psychological situation during the process of learning English as a foreign language. Students need to practice more four language skills when learning a second language. Speaking, listening, reading, and writing are the skills that should be acquired when learning English as a foreign language. According to Aydogan [1], receptive skills include listening and reading, while productive skills include speaking and writing. These four skills are found in school learning. Reading is one of the most important skills that everyone should have. The ability to read and understand written English is crucial to a student's academic success.

Reading is a necessary ability for students to have a strong command of a second or foreign language, according to Anderson [2]. He additionally says that reading is the most important to be mastered to have more significant progress and attain greater development in all academic areas. Furthermore, there are various benefits that readers can obtain from reading, including remembering factual knowledge, getting new ideas to provide an argument during a discussion or presentation, receiving entertainment, channeling a hobby, and so on. Readers are supposed to be able to read well so that the author's information can be understood properly.

In learning reading, readers or students must understand that the aim of learning this skill is to help them to comprehend text. According to Behjat, Yamini, and Bagheri [3], the main concept in reading skill is 'comprehension.' The process of recognizing words, sentences, and related text is known as comprehension. Both students and

teachers highly regard it because it helps in language learning and allows students to learn for different purposes. Furthermore, Bernhardt [4] also stated that reading comprehension plays an important role. Reading comprehension requires students to concentrate on understanding what they are reading indeed. Successful readers are those who use cognitive strategies to comprehend the text. However, the ability to comprehend a reading text is also not easy to interpret. Because reading comprehension is not easy, most students are still poor in reading comprehension in this country.

One of the factors influencing students' reading comprehension is their anxiety. Students may experience anxiety as a result of emotional and physical stress. According to Ormrod as cited in Herawati [5] who said that anxiety is someone's feeling of uneasiness and apprehension about a situation since they are not sure what its outcome will be. Anxiety arises when a person is unsure of what may happen in the future. Even intelligent students may feel intimidated in academic contexts, such as when taking an exam. In addition, when students learn to read in a foreign language, they may experience anxiety, which is known as foreign language reading anxiety.

According to Muhlis [6], foreign language reading anxiety is defined as a feeling of worry and apprehension experienced by students when trying to read and understand a foreign language text. Meanwhile, Zbornik as cited in Jalongo & Hirsh [7] explains reading anxiety as a particular, situational phobia of the act of reading, with physical and cognitive responses. He has said that physical reactions to anxiety include the release of adrenaline, and symptoms of anxiety include sweating, feeling shaky or faint, a pounding heart, rapid breathing, "butterflies" in the stomach, a tension headache, a stomachache, or even throwing up. Anxiety-related cognitive responses include an overwhelming sense of fear, low self-esteem, feelings of helplessness, and expectations of public humiliation. As a result of this situation, the individual believes himself unable to complete the task, as well as the individual's anxiety and fear of losing focus. According to Huberty [8], students become anxious in the school setting when they are being examined, taking a test, or performing in front of an audience. As a result, when students take a reading test, they may

feel nervous or anxious when encountering one or more test materials that they do not truly understand. For instance, students are concerned about misinterpreting structures or inferring meaning from context, making them feel uncomfortable and insecure, increasing anxiety as they try to comprehend the reading text.

1.1 Reading

Anderson [2] states that reading is an essential skill for students to have a good command of a second or foreign language. He adds that reading is the most important skill to be mastered to have more significant progress and attain greater development in all academic areas. Through reading, people can gain a lot of knowledge, information, pleasure, and problem solutions. However, Linse as cited in Nasution [9] states that reading is not easy to do because, in the reading process, the reader not only reads the word, sentences, paragraphs, and texts but also should understand the contents of reading.

Pourkalthor and Kohan [10] defined reading as not just a single skill but a combination of many skills and processes in which the reader interacts with printed words and texts for content and pleasure. Alyousef [11] also defines that reading can be seen as an interactive process between a reader and text which leads to automaticity or reading fluency, it means that the reader should understand the text well. It is purposed to make the students get the point of the text and whether the text means.

There are various definitions of reading. In other words, reading is the process of getting, capturing, and understanding the content of a written text, which means extracting as much information as possible from it. Students should practice their reading more and more. They may find it difficult and irritating, but if they keep learning, they will have a strong understanding of English and will be able to grasp the whole meaning of the words.

1.2 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension, according to Brassell and Rasinski [12], is the ability to take information from written text and to demonstrate knowledge or understanding of that information. When a reader understands the information offered in written text, this is known as comprehension. Reading

comprehension is not a passive process, as this statement implies. Reading comprehension needs the reader's activity, which includes utilizing the reader's prior knowledge of the topic of the text as well as the text itself to construct meaning. Pang *et al.*, [13] state that comprehension is defined as the process of constructing meaning from a connected text that includes word knowledge. Readers with this competence may blend their prior knowledge with new information from a text, explain the meaning of words, and connect it to construct meaning.

According to Snow [14], reading comprehension is recognized as the most dominant skill in learning any subject because reading is not only the execution of a passage but also the comprehension of the message from an or text. In line with Snow, Johnson [15] states reading comprehension as the use of strategies in reading in regaining information and constructing the meaning of texts done by the readers. Strategies that the readers use may be different from one another. It depends on the aim of the readers in reading comprehension.

As a result, reading comprehension can be described as the process by which readers create meaning from a text being read with their previous knowledge. Furthermore, the presence of reading comprehension plays an important part in the reading process. It can reveal whether they monitor comprehension during the reading process.

3. Definition of Anxiety

Anxiety is a psychological phenomenon that is often defined as a feeling of fear, apprehension, worry, and tension. Anxiety arises itself in the human body as a reaction to a certain situation. This could begin at a young age or later in life. Horwitz *et al.*[16] define anxiety as the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system. Anxiety develops into the most general emotional dilemma of a person's feelings. Everyone will be truly worried about anything that will occur in their lives, especially if they are needed to participate in various speaking activities. According to Ormrod as cited in Herawati [5] who said that anxiety is someone's feeling of uneasiness and apprehension about a situation since they are not sure what its outcome will be. Anxiety

arises when a person is unsure of whatever may happen soon. Moreover, a feeling of unease and nervousness develops.

In a different perspective, Halgin and Whitbourne as cited in Fauziyah [17] stated anxiety as a cause of people's effort to avoid uncomfortable reactions, which unease people to enjoy many ordinary situations. When people try to avoid unpleasant circumstances in their life, they feel anxious. Connelly *et al.* [18] stated that anxiety is a common feeling of worry and fear is a normal aspect of someone's development, but it can become a problem when he or she increases or interferes with it in everyday activities. Every person has this reaction, and that they should be professional in handling it. Based on the concept of anxiety provided above, it shows people's emotions to learning something new.

Anxiety can harm someone's personality if he or she cannot manage it. Moreover, Griffin and Tyrrell [19] argue that if students can control their anxiety into a positive feeling instead of being controlled by it, they will reach optimal performance. For example, if a student constantly receives a low score in their achievement and feels underachieved, she or he may not feel motivated to put forth an effort. The student becomes concerned about failing her studies or failing her grade. Then her anxiety calms down, and she has the drive to be a good student since she is concerned with passing her grade. Otherwise, anxiety becomes a problem if it creates mental distress and affects students' ability to learn English as a foreign language.

1.3 Reading Anxiety

Horwitz, Saito & Garza, [20] stated that reading anxiety is the anxiety aroused during the process of reading second-language texts. Students struggle to comprehend unfamiliar scripts, writing systems, and cultural materials when they read second language texts. If students struggle to understand the information of the texts, they may become frustrated and anxious while reading. Furthermore, just like speaking, the student will feel anxious when interacting with others. However, the phenomenon of anxiety exists among learners during the reading process, and most of the learners do not realize that during the progress of reading, anxiety has been stated as one of the factors which can impede the reading process. And this anxiety

happens when the learners try to decode or interpret a non-native language text [20].

As Zbornik as cited in Jalongo & Hirsh [7] explains, reading anxiety is a specific, situational phobia toward reading that has physical and cognitive reactions. Physical reactions to anxiety include the release of adrenaline (fight or flight reaction) and physical symptoms, such as sweating, feeling shaky or faint, a pounding heart, rapid breathing, butterflies in the stomach, a tension headache, a stomachache, or even throwing up. Cognitive reactions to anxiety include an overwhelming sense of dread, low self-esteem, feelings of helplessness, and expectations of public humiliation. These physical and cognitive reactions also interact, as when a child thinks, "My hands are shaking." or "I know my face is getting red." As the child becomes overwhelmed by emotions and worries (e.g., "What if the other kids laugh at me?"), it leaves few cognitive reserves to deal with the task of decoding and comprehending print.

Also, Zbornik as cited in Jalongo & Hirsh [7] discusses various symptoms of a student who suffers from reading anxiety. First, students with reading anxiety impede their intellectual curiosity, resulting in a non-introspective or non-reflective attitude. Students are usually raised in social-emotional situations that regard learning and curiosity as threats. Second, students with high reading anxiety show restraint of their intellectual aggression or assertiveness, which normally requires reading skills but refuses to employ them. They are typically impacted by their peer group. The third is inhibition of intellectual independence. Students typically manifest an attitude described as an "I cannot read by myself" nature. These students can be identified because they require continual reinforcement and direction to keep up their reading efforts. Lastly, students who suffer from reading anxiety frequently lack self-confidence in their ability to read. Eventually, those symptoms arise as a psychological sign of reading anxiousness.

1.4 Types of Reading Anxiety

According to Guimba and Alico [21], there are three types of reading anxiety:

1) Top-Down Reading Anxiety

The majority of students are extremely worried, especially when they: (a) are unable

to identify minor ideas (details) in the text, (b) are unable to acquire the gist of the text, and (c) are unable to identify the main idea of a specific paragraph. These findings imply that the students' high reading anxiety is driven by the lack of understanding and combining the details and main ideas of the text.

2) Bottom-Up Reading Anxiety

In bottom-up reading students are generally anxious when they: (a) cannot figure out the meaning of a word they believe they have seen already, (b) find a large number of words whose meanings are unknown, and (c) struggle to pronounce unknown words. At this point, vocabulary is undoubtedly a problem. A basic requirement in reading comprehension is knowledge of word definitions as well as details.

3) Classroom Reading Anxiety

When it comes to classroom reading, students revealed that they become highly anxious when the teacher corrects their pronunciation or translation errors. Clearly, correcting mistakes is the most anxious situation in the classroom for them.

2. METHODS

2.1 Design of The Research

This research used a quantitative research approach with applying descriptive quantitative. This research used two different variables, they were independent and dependent variable. For this study, the independent variable was the reading anxiety and the dependent variable was the reading comprehension of the students.

The research used simple random sampling. The population of the research randomly selected consisting of 50 students from the total population of this research was 345 students in the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 4 Baubau.

2.2 Technique of Data Collection

The instruments used in this research were questionnaire and test. The questionnaire of reading anxiety was adopted Guimba and Alico [21]. The test was multiple choices that consisted of 30 items.

Then the researcher informed the students that the researcher would conduct the research by sending a google form link questionnaire in the students' WhatsApp group. Before the researcher submits the questionnaire link, the researcher would

explain to answer the questionnaire and explained what the questionnaire is about. The test was given to the students in the form of a google form link and sent along with a questionnaire link. Before the researcher submits the test link, the researcher would explain to answer the test and explained what the test is about.

2.3 Technique of Data Analysis

The data analysis techniques applied in this research were descriptive statistics, prerequisite analysis and inferential statistics. The reading anxiety and reading comprehension score for students was measured using SPSS software 21.0.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

3.1.1 Descriptive Statistic

a. Reading Anxiety

The questionnaire was distributed to 50 students to find out their perceptions about reading anxiety. The questionnaire consists of 3 categories which consist of 23 items statements. The explanation of the reading anxiety statistical analysis is as follows:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Reading Anxiety

No.	Items	Score
1	Mean	2.72
2	Median	2.70
3	Mode	2.50
4	Variance	0.173
5	Std. Deviation	0.415
6	Minimum	2.00
7	Maximum	3.70

From the table above, it can be explained that the mean score is 2.72, the median is 2.70, the mode is 2.50, variance is 0.173, the standard deviation is 0.415, the minimum score is 2.00, and the maximum score is 3.70

The score distribution of students' reading anxiety was then presented into the category based on the criteria provided in the previous chapter. The frequency of each category of students' reading anxiety is display in the following table:

Table 2. Criteria of Students' Reading Anxiety

No	Criteria	Scoring Range	Freq	%
1	Low Anxiety	1.00 - 1.74	0	0

2	Moderate Anxiety	1.75 - 2.49	12	24
3	High Anxiety	2.50 - 3.24	33	66
4	Very High Anxiety	3.25 - 4.00	5	10
Total			50	100

It is clear from the table above, it can be described that there is 0 or 0% student out of the total students are in a low category, 12 or 24% students out of the total students are in the moderate category, 33 or 66% students out of the total students are in the high category, and 5 or 10% students out of the total students are in the very high category. Based on the table above, the mean score implies that the students' reading anxiety is in the high anxiety category.

Table 3. Students Reading Anxiety

No	Items	Mean score
1	Top-Down Reading Anxiety	2.77
2	Bottom-Up Reading Anxiety	2.74
3	Classroom Reading Anxiety	2.29

The main causes that affect students reading anxiety are Top-Down Reading Anxiety with a mean score 2,77 and Bottom-Up Reading anxiety with a mean score 2.74, followed by Classroom Reading Anxiety with a mean score 2.29

a. Reading Comprehension

The test was distributed to 50 students to find out their perceptions about Reading comprehension. The test of reading comprehension consists of 30 numbers. The result of statistical analysis for students' reading comprehension is presented in the following table:

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Reading Comprehension

No.	Items	Score
1	Mean	45.86
2	Median	43.33
3	Mode	53.33
4	Variance	403.872
5	Std. Deviation	20.096
6	Minimum	10
7	Maximum	80

From the table above, it can be explained that the mean score is 45.86, the median is

43.30, the mode is 53.33, the variance is 403.872, the standard deviation is 20.096, the minimum score is 10.00, and the maximum score is 80.00.

The score distribution of students' reading comprehension is then presented into the category based on the criteria provided in the previous chapter. The frequency of each category of students' reading comprehension is display in the following table:

Table 4. Criteria of Students' Reading Comprehension

No	Criteria	Scoring Range	Freq	%
1	Very Good	86 - 100	0	0
2	Good	71 - 85	5	10
3	Moderate	56 - 70	13	26
4	Poor	≤ 55	32	64
Total			50	100

From the table above, it can be described that there is 0 or 0% student out of the total students are in the very good category, 5 or 10% students out of the total students are in a good category, 13 or 26% students out of the total students are in the moderate category, and 32 or 64% students out of the total students are in the poor category. Based on the table above, the mean score implies that the students' reading comprehension is in the poor category.

2. Discussions

1. Reading Anxiety

In this research, reading anxiety measured based on the indicators mentioned by [11] which are Top-Down Reading Anxiety, Bottom-Up Reading Anxiety, and Classroom Reading Anxiety. The questionnaire use to investigate the students' reading anxiety. The questionnaire consists of series of question about the students' behavior and feelings that they must answer. There were 23 statements about reading anxiety in this collection. Top-Down Reading Anxiety (1-6), Bottom-Up Reading Anxiety (7-17), and Classroom Reading Anxiety (18-23). Based on the result of the research, it was found that the means score for students' reading anxiety was 2.75. There were 0 students or 0% was in Low Anxiety category, 12 students or 24% were in Moderate Anxiety category, 33 students or 66% were in High Anxiety category, and 5 students or 10% were in Very High. Based on the score above, it can was concluded that the Students' Reading Anxiety was high anxiety since the mean range for high anxiety category was 2.50-3.24.

Furthermore, reading anxiety which has the most effect on students is the Bottom-Up with the mean score 2.77, Top-Down Reading Strategy with a mean score 2.74, the factor of classroom Reading Anxiety is less affecting students reading anxiety with a mean score 2.29.

2. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension measured by using test. The test was used to find out students' reading comprehension of narrative text in the form of multiple-choice consist 30 questions. The result showed that the students reading comprehension was in the poor category by the mean score 45.86.

Regarding to reading anxiety and reading comprehension that many students who have high anxiety are often less interested in reading such as when they find an English text with a long reading, they tend to skip or just read without understanding the meaning of the text. This phenomenon sometimes happens when they are trying to answer the reading comprehension questions, and then they are not read the text carefully. As a result, they chose the wrong answer. As mentioned by some experts, background knowledge of the text, affection, purpose of reading, and vocabulary mastery are identified as several factors that influence students' reading comprehension. Ni as cited in Chen *et al.*[22], clarified that affective factors could significantly affect students' language acquisition process. One of the affective factors contributing to students' language acquisition is anxiety. Krashen as cited in Chen *et al.* [22], has narrowed down the elements based on the frequency of its use in research variables into motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety.

The result above is supported by Dewi [23] with similar results. The finding related to the correlation between students' study anxiety and students' reading comprehension. The finding of this study is there is no significant correlation between students' study anxiety and students' reading comprehension. In addition Pradithan [24] finding related to the relationship between students' anxiety and their English Reading Comprehension at the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Islamiyah Ciputat. The finding of this study is there is a very low correlation between students' anxiety and their English descriptive reading comprehension or it can be stated that there

is no significant relationship between students and their English descriptive reading comprehension. It is assumed that there are certain possible factors that influence their English descriptive reading comprehension. According to Cabansag as cited in Pradhitan [17], motivation, attitudes, anxiety, learning achievement, aptitudes, Intelligence level, age, and personality are recognized as key elements that impact students to learn a foreign language.

The researcher concludes from the preceding description that anxiety is not the only factor influencing students' reading comprehension. However, the feeling of anxiety that arises while reading process in class also cannot be ignored. If the students encounter difficulty understanding the content of the texts, they may get frustrated with reading and experience anxiety even though it is a little anxiety. Saito *et al.*,[20] stated that anxiety exists among the students, so most of the students do not realize that during the progress of reading, anxiety has been stated as one of the factors which can impede the reading process. This anxiety happens when the learners try to decode or interpret a non-native language text. Nevertheless, despite the fact that there is no significant relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension in this research, anxiety is still considered to be a key factor in the classroom. Anxiety has both a bad and a beneficial effect on students, such as making them more aware of the task they are about to confront by studying hard or practicing more.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of the research and the data analysis, it is obtained the score of students' reading anxiety 2.72 means that students' anxiety was in the high level. While, students' reading comprehension was in the poor category by the mean score 45.86.

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