THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING ANXIETY AND READING STRATEGY USED BY EFL STUDENT TEACHERS

Wilta Purnama Sari

State Islamic University of Raden Fatah, Palembang, South Sumatra

wiltapurnamasari94@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between reading anxiety and reading strategies use, and explored the influence of reading anxiety on reading strategies use of undergraduate English major students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. A total of 103 students participated in this study. The two questionnaires were used to collect the data. For this purpose, the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) developed by Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) measured students' reading anxiety, and the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) designed by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) was used to know students' reading strategies use. High Anxiety Readers (HAR), Low Anxiety Readers (LAR), and Medium Anxiety Readers (MAR) were classfied based on the results of the FLRAS. Descriptive stastistics, Pearson product moment correlation and regression anlaysis were employed to analyze the data. Based on the data analysis, it was found that r (.022) < r_{table} (.207) with significant level 0.842 which was higher than 0.05. Thus, it indicated that there was no significant relationship between reading anxiety and overall reading strategies use. It was implied that high anxiety did not cause lower reading strategies use. Because of that finding, there was no need to conduct regression analysis to check the influence of the reading anxiety on reading strategies use. Moreover, several suggestions for students, English foreign langauge (EFL) instructors, and future research are addressed in the present study.

Keywords: reading anxiety, reading strategies, and undergraduate English major students

Introduction

Reading is an essential skill for second or foreign language learners in academic context. It is the most important skill of language among the four major skills. Students' success in academic life depends on the ability to read and understand written English. With regard to this, Anderson (2004) 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 in order to have greater progress and attain greater development in all academic areas. Through reading, students can access to a lot of information concerning the target language and culture (Chen & Intaraprasert, 2014). It is absolutely true for university students because most of their time is spent to read academic material and textbook (Badariah, Noor, Yah, & Adeena, 2011). In Indonesia, curriculum developers of English department emphasize reading course as compulsory subject for students. Students are required to be able to read different texts in literature, science, social studies, etc. in order to transfer the information about modern science or technology from other countries (Habibi et al., 2017; Hamra, 2003 in Hamra & Syatriana, 2012; Mukminin, Rohayati, Putra, Habibi, & Aina, 2017; Yusuf et al., 2017).

Based on the data of UNESCO in 2012, it was reported that the index reading interest in Indonesia reached 0,001 (Kemdikbud; 2016; Kabar 24, 2016). It means that from 1,000 populations, only one resident who was interested in reading. Low reading interest can be explained by the fact that Indonesians prefer to receive information from spoken form to written

form (Pangestuti, Mistianah, Corebima, & Zubaidah, 2015). Furthermore, the Central Bureau of Statistics survey in 2012 showed that more than 91% Indonesians aged above ten years old prefer to watch TV and around 17% of them prefer to read from different sources such as book, newspaper and magazine (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2014; Kompas, 2016; Banjarmasin Post, 2016). In addition, the data from *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA), a worldwide study by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) which survey 15-year-old school students' ability in mathematics, reading, science and problem-solving minor area of assessment, revealed that Indonesian students' literacy skill ranked 61^{fst} from 65 countries participating in PISA 2012 (OECD, 2014).The result of study conducted by Hamra and Syatriana (2012) revealed that low reading ability of Indonesian students was caused by some difficulties resulted from different sources such as poor interpretation of the text, lack of vocabulary, the use of inappropriate reading strategy, and poor grammar competence.

The literature on foreign language reading suggests that individual differences such as anxiety is one of contributing factors in reading. And most studies have recognized that anxiety as one of the main factors can hamper second or foreign language reading process (Saito, Garza & Horwitz, 1999; Jafarigohar & Behrooznia, 2012; Mukminin & McMahon, 2013; Naghadeh, Persa, Naghadeh, & Naghadeh, 2014; Barzegar & Hadidi, 2016). Saito et al. (1999) first revealed the issue of foreign language reading anxiety, the anxiety that learners experience when reading foreign language. A student experiencing reading anxiety will have interfering thoughts that will reduce his or her working memory (Eysenck, Santos, Derakshan, & Calvo, 2007). As a result, a reducing in working memory may restrain student from using reading strategies, drawing on background knowledge, or monitoring comprehension (Hou, 2013; Shoa, 2014; Mohammadpur & Ghafournia, 2015). Anxious students diminish their curiosity which decreases cognitive abilities and capacities like logical thinking, keen observation, and questioning (Naghadeh et al., 2014).

The other essential contributing factor regarding the quality of reading is leaners' usage reading strategies. Reading strategies are very important to help reader comprehend the text in the act of reading (Ghonsooly & Loghmani, 2012; Kuru- Gonen, 2015) and the implementation of special reading strategies enable more efficient use of time (Sen, 2009). Moreover, it is effective way to solve reading problems encountered by students while reading academic material (Lien, 2011). Research studies on second/foreign language have consistently proven the importance of reading strategies on enhancing students' reading comprehension achievement (Medina, 2012; Bolukbas, 2013; Zare & Othman, 2013; Zare, 2013). Since reading anxiety and reading strategies use are two essential variables related to reading achievement, these two variables should be examined. Therefore, this present study aimed to investigate the relationship between reading anxiety and reading strategies use, and explore the influence of reading anxiety on reading strategies use of undergraduate English major students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang?

Literature Review

Foreign language reading anxiety

In its basic terms, anxiety is associated with negative feeling such as apprehension, uneasiness, self-doubt, worry and, its extreme fear (Rachman, 2004; Hu & Wang, 2014; Mukminin, Muazza, Hustarna, & Sari, 2015; Mukminin, Ali, & Fadloan, 2015; Mukminin, Noprival, Masbirorotni, Sutarno, Arif, & Maimunah, 2015; Abrar & Mukminin, 2016). Many researchers had conducted a study to investigate the existence of anxiety in foreign language reading. The result shows that FL reading anxiety really exists and differs from general FL anxiety and varies to the target language (Saito et al., 1999; Kuru- Gonen, 2007; Guimba & Alico, 2014). Foreign language reading anxiety (FLRA) refers to feelings of uneasiness, apprehension or stress one suffers from while one is reading a text in FL (Capan & Pektas, 2013). Moreover, foreign language reading anxiety seems to be related to the perceived difficulty level of reading materials

and reading task types (Brantemeier, 2005; Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006).In early work of Saito et al. (1999) proposed that there are two aspects that can give great potential provoking anxiety; (1) unfamiliar scripts and writing system, (2) unfamiliar cultural material. Furthermore, it is stated that when the scripts, writing system and cultural materials are familiar with the students, they will have less anxiety in the act of reading.

Reading strategies use

In recent years, types of strategies and effects on language learning have been drawn researchers' attention. One of strategies is reading strategies. Anderson (1991) posits that reading strategies are —deliberate, cognitive steps that readers can take to assist in acquiring, storing and retrieving new information. It can be concluded that reading strategies are an actions that readers applied in order to comprehend the text. Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) developed survey of reading strategies (SORS) that was adopted to this current study and they classified reading categories into three broad categories. These categories are: (1) the Global Reading Strategies (GLOB) refers to intentional techniques by which readers monitor their reading, such as previewing the text for its organization, (2) the Problem Solving Reading Strategies (PROB), are localized, focused problem-solving or repair strategies used when problems develop in understanding textual information; example includes guessing the meaning of unknown words and rereading the text to improve comprehension, and (3) the Support Reading Strategies (SUP) are basic support mechanisms intended to aid the readers in comprehending the texts such as using dictionary, taking notes, and underlining (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002).

Methodology

This study was a correlation research in the term explanatory design. A correlational study investigates the possibility of the relationship between two variables or more than two variables (Fraenkel, et al., 2012). The population of this research was all active students of English Education Study Program of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. The sample was fifth semester students selected through purposive sampling. The reasons were fifth semester students had more experience in reading because they had already taken all the reading courses (from Reading I to Reading IV); thus their reading strategies were representative. In addition, it was because the higher the students' education levels more difficult tasks or the level of reading materials. The total samples were 103 students. However, only 88 students participated and fifteen others did not attend when conducting this study.

To collect the data, Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) developed by Saito et al. (1999) was used to assess students' reading anxiety. The FLRAS is composed of 20 items which consists of five- points Likert Scale, ranging from five points "strongly agree" to one point "strongly disagree." To score each item in questionnaire depends on the negative wording or positive wording. The internal consistency of FLRAS was.86 (N = 383). Then, Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) designed by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) was used to investigate learners' applied strategies while reading English. SORS consists of 30 items on five-point Likert Scale, ranging from one point (I never or almost never do this) to five points (I always or almost always do this). The internal consistency of SORS was .89 (N= 147). Moreover, to analyze the data, the statistical analysis used included descriptive statistics, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient, and regression analysis. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was employed to find out the relationship between students' reading anxiety and reading strategies use. Regression analysis was used to see the influence of reading anxiety on reading strategies use.

Findings

Descriptive statistic of students' reading anxiety
     The descriptive statistical analysis of FLRAS reported the maximum score was 85, and the minimum score was 33. The mean of FLRAS score for the participants was 57.26, and the standard deviation was 9.304. The range of FLRAS score in the current study was 33 to 85. According to Kuru- Gonen's formula (2007), 65 students were indicated as medium anxiety reader, 14 students were categorized as low anxiety readers, and 9 students were high anxiety readers.

Table 1. Distribution of students' reading anxiety

Category	Range of Scores	Frequency	Percentage
Low Anxiety Reader (LAR)	1-48	14	15.90%
Medium Anxiety Reader (MAR)	49-66	65	73.86%
High Anxiety Reader (HAR)	>67	9	10.22%
Total		88	100%

Descriptive statistics of students' reading strategies use
     The descriptive statistical analysis of SORS for the participants is indicated that the maximum score of participants' overall reading strategies use was 135, and the minimum score was 82. The range of SORS score in this study was 82 to 135. The mean of the SORS score was 109.64 and the standard deviation was 12.562.For overall category, the result of SORS reported that 56 students were indicated as high strategy user, 32 students were categorized as medium strategy user, and there was no low strategy user. The distribution is presented in the following.

Table 2. Distribution of students' reading strategies use

Category	Range of Mean Scores	Frequency	Percentage
Low	-	-	-
Medium	2.7 – 3.4	32	36.36%
High	3.5 – 4.5	56	63.63%
Total		88	100%

The relationship between reading anxiety and reading strategies use
     In Table 3, the results of correlation analysis between the FLRAS scores and the SORS scores, did not show any significant relationship (r. 022< r_{table}207; p- value .842 > 0.05)It means there was no significant relationship between reading anxiety and reading strategies use of undergraduate English major students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang.

Table 3. Relationship between reading anxiety and the overall reading strategies use

		Reading_anxiety	Reading_strategies_use
Reading_anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	.022
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.842
	N	88	88
Reading_strategies_ use	Pearson Correlation	.022	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.842	
	N	88	88

Discussions

The result of FLRAS indicated that the level of reading anxiety of undergraduate English major students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang was medium anxiety reader. The possible explanation to support this finding is that from the first semester the participants had been engaged in English reading assignments and exercises or explored to English reading materials from printed textbooks or texts on the internet (e.g. online journals and articles) in their reading courses (from Reading I to Reading IV). In addition, they are already accustomed to the types of tasks given by lecturer after nearly two and half years of studying English in UIN. For that reason, they may not feel highly anxious any more when they face various reading texts.

Furthermore, the result of SORS showed that fifth semester students of English Education Study Program at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang were aware of their reading strategies. The majority of participants were high users, which meant that they almost always used reading strategies while reading academic materials. The plausible explanation to support this finding is because they have been trained and exposed to use various reading strategies by lecturers in reading courses (from Reading I to Reading IV). It was because lecturers had a lot of time to give explanation to their students how and when to use effective reading strategies. Also, the participants experienced in learning English make them as effective strategies user.

Based on the result of Pearson product moment correlations, it was found that students' reading anxiety did not relate to their reading strategies use. The result indicated r correlation coefficient was .022 and the level of probability significance (sig.2-tailed) was .842 (p= .842 > .05). It means there was no significant relationship between reading anxiety and reading strategies use of undergraduate English major students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. The conclusion shows that the higher participants' reading anxiety level does not guarantee the lower participants' reading strategies use. It may reveal an assumption that anxiety is not the only factor affecting students' reading strategies use. As mentioned by Zarei (2014), motivation levels have a pervasive influence on students' strategies use. Moreover, the finding of Li (2010) revealed that proficiency level as another factor that caused differences in both the type and frequency of reading strategy use. Similarly, most studies (Bookongsaen, 2014; Chen & Chen, 2015) have confirmed that reading strategy use related to gender. As well, another factor that should not be ignored was the uncontrolled situation in which the questionnaires were completed.

Although, there is not much research on FL reading anxiety and strategy use support this findings of the study. The result of this present study was in accordance with Ghonsooly and Loghmani (2012). The similar result of this present study is because they have the same major and level (i.e. senior English major students). Moreover, Tramizi (2014) also found that there was no correlation between reading anxiety and overall reading strategy use. One possible explanation is the participants' English proficiency may be not much different. On the other hand, this finding was inconsistent with the result of Tsai (2013) and Lien (2011), whose study found that negative relationship between reading anxiety and reading strategy. In other words, the higher reading anxiety is felt, few strategies are chosen by readers, or the more strategies learners use during their reading process, the lower learners' anxiety degree is. Although, the relationship exists, the degree of the relationship is not strong enough. It can be said that the negative relationship obtained from this study is due to the fact that the different learners of various levels. Hence, it is possible that there may be actual differences in their reading ability. Lastly, this study indicated that there was no relationship and influence reading anxiety and reading strategies use of undergraduate English major students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang.

Conclusion

The major findings of this study are summarized as follows. First, there was no significant relationship between reading anxiety and reading strategies use of undergraduate English major

students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang (r .022). The result indicated that the null hypothesis (Ho) was accepted and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was rejected. It means that the higher participants' reading anxiety level does not guarantee the lower participants' reading strategies use. Second, students' reading strategies use did not seem to be influenced by reading anxiety. It is because there are other factors that give a dominant effect.

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