A CORRELATIONAL STUDY BETWEEN READING ANXIETY AND READING ACHIEVEMENT OF THE ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF MA MIFTAHUL KHAIRIYAH BANJARBARU IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR OF 2015/2016

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Abstract: This research aimed to find out the correlation between reading anxiety and reading achievement in senior high school level. The researcher used the correlational study as the type of research. The population of this research was the eleventh-grade students of Madrasah Aliyah Miftahul Khairiyah Banjarbaru in the academic year of 2015/2016. The number of the population was 53 students. To analyze the data, the researcher used Pearson product moment correlation in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21.0. The result showed that the coefficient correlation between both variables was -0.128. It showed that there was no significant correlation between students’ reading anxiety and their reading achievement. It is also found that 18 students belonged to high-level reading anxiety, 33 students had a moderate level of reading anxiety, and 2 students were categorized into a low level. For the level of reading achievement, 2 students were in the very good category, 21 students were in the good category, 23 students had the fair reading achievement, and 6 students had the bad reading achievement. Though the study found no correlation between the two variables, it still found that reading anxiety existed in senior high school level. Accordingly, it is suggested that the students have to encourage themselves to overcome the anxious feeling that they have when they are reading English in order to make reading comprehension easier for them. It is also suggested to the teachers to give the students more reading strategy in order to overcome their problems causing reading anxiety.

Keywords: Reading, Anxiety, Reading Anxiety, Reading Achievement
INTRODUCTION

Learning an additional language demands cognitive and affective efforts. The affective domain that affects language learning is difficult to describe scientifically. Because of that many studies have been conducted to find out about the factors of the affective domain that relate to the language learning. According to Affective Filter Hypothesis which is first proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977 in Huang, 2012: 1522), and latter is incorporated by Krashen as one of his five Hypotheses, affective factors such as anxiety, self-doubt etc. are like a filter which filters language input out learners brains to make the amount of language input increase or decrease. Affective filter is a mental block that prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive for language acquisition (Krashen, 1985: 3). The affective filter functions as a

blockage to language acquisition. People with a high affective filter will decrease their input whereas people with a low affective filter will increase their intake. It means that when the students have a high affective filter, they will tend to decrease the input of the language that the teacher give whereas the students that have low affective filter will increase the input. The filter varies to emotions of acquirers when they concerned with the possibility of the failure in a task, the filter is up. It means that the filter may block the input of the language that the teacher gives to the students. The filter is down when the students temporarily ‘forget’ that they are hearing or reading another language.

As have been mentioned above, anxiety is one of the factors of affective filter that may block the input of the language acquisition. Anxiety is a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process (Horwitz et al. 1986: 128). Anxiety is a situational specific construct, each language context may lead to a specific form of anxiety. Therefore, they can be classified as speaking anxiety, listening anxiety, writing anxiety, and reading anxiety. Nevertheless, the research on language anxiety has mainly studied oral aspects of language anxiety (speaking and listening) and relatively underestimating the other two components of language anxiety (reading and writing). Accordingly, this study tries to examine anxiety associated with foreign language reading situations.

Furthermore, reading in any language is a cognitively demanding process, involving minimally the coordination of attention, memory, perception, and comprehension process. The reading process is further complicated in the foreign language where there are additional factors to consider such as language ability, cultural background and learner motivation among others. Many studies have been conducted to find the relationship between factors that affect reading achievement and reading achievement, yet many of them focused on prior knowledge, language ability, motivation, and not many of them focused on reading anxiety. Whereas Seller (2000: 513) stated that many students learn a foreign language experience some degree of frustration when they attempt to comprehend any but the simplest foreign language texts. These frustrations may lead the students to feel anxious because of their phobic reaction to the reading process. Accordingly, this study tries to examine the relationship between reading anxiety and reading achievement in foreign language reading environment.

Many studies have found the relationship between reading anxiety and reading achievement (Zbornik & Wallbrown, 1991; Saito, et al., 1999; Seller, 2000; Jafarigohar, 2007;
The findings of the studies confirmed that there is a negative correlation between reading anxiety and reading achievement. However, the degree of the correlation is varied among the studies. The level of the participants of the studies also varies, but most of the studies were conducted in university level (Saito, et al., 1999; Seller, 2000; Jafarigohar, 2007; Cabansag, 2013), Zbornik & wallbrown’s study was conducted in intermediate grade students while Guimba & Alico’s study was conducted in junior high level. Less study conducts in senior high level.

Accordingly, the present study attempts to conduct the study in senior high level. The teacher of MA Miftahul Khairiyah Banjarbaru teaches reading more frequently than any other skills. However, the problem lies with the achievement of the students’ reading. The teacher said although reading has been taught three times a week, the students’ reading achievement is still in low level. The scores range mostly from 40 – 50. Based on the interview with the teacher of MA Miftahul Khairiyah Banjarbaru, the researcher found that the students tend to have an upset feeling even before they start reading. The teacher also said that it may have been set up in students’ mindsets that reading in English is difficult. Those kinds of feeling indicated the so-called anxiety. Because this anxiety appears in the reading process, it can be called as reading anxiety. According to those situations, the researcher chose MA Miftahul Khairiyah Banjarbaru as the subjects to conduct the study.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Reading Anxiety

The term reading anxiety in this study can be defined as a phobic reaction in that it results when the contents of reading (letters, words, and sentences) become associated with the feeling of fear (curiosity, aggression, and independence). There are three facets of reading anxiety. Those are fear of curiosity, fear of aggression, and fear of independence. Those three facets were used in this study as the indicators to know the students’ reading anxiety. Each indicator has its own characteristics. There are four characteristics of fear of curiosity, three characteristics of fear of aggression, and two characteristics of fear of independence. All of the characteristics were included in the study.

METHODOLOGY

Approach and Type of Research

The method of the research was correlational research. Correlational studies investigate the possibility of relationships between only two variables, independent variable, and the dependent variable, although investigations of more than two variables are common. In this study, the independent variable is reading anxiety and the dependent variable is reading achievement.
Population

The population of the study was the eleventh-grade students of MA Miftahul Khairiyah Banjarbaru academic year 2015/2016. The eleventh grade of MA Miftahul Khairiyah Banjarbaru is divided into two classes with the total of 53 students, namely:

- XI A = 27 students
- XI B = 26 students

All students were included in the study.

Instruments

Two instruments were used in the study. The questionnaire for reading anxiety as variable X and the list score of reading achievement as variable Y.

The form of the questionnaire was the closed one. The statements were written in the main language instruction in the school, Indonesian language so that the students can understand the questionnaire easily. The questionnaire consists of 38 items. Each item was accompanied by a 5-point Likert scale range from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The Scores of Reading

Achievement was collected from the first semester until the last score in the second semester which was given by the teacher. The scores were gotten from students’ scores of their test on reading comprehension tests. The researcher used the students’ scores as their reading achievement in the assumption that it is valid and reliable on the teacher’s scoring.

Validity and Reliability

Before the questionnaire was used, it was tried out. It was intended to find out the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire has content validity because the content or the items of the questionnaire used by the researcher have been relevant with the objective of the study, in this case, the objective of the study is finding out the students’ reading anxiety. The content of the questionnaire had been moderated and validated by the expert who has the experiences in the reading field.

To test the reliability, the researcher used the internal-consistency coefficient which requires only a single administration of one form of a test. Cronbach Alpha is one of the types in internal-consistency coefficient. The Cronbach alpha from SPSS version 21 was used to examine the reliability of the instrument. In order to examine the reliability of the instrument, the researcher tried out the questionnaire to 30 students that have the same level in general with the population. The instrument is reliable if:

1. Cronbach Alpha > r-table, it means the instrument is reliable.
2. Cronbach Alpha < r-table, it means the instrument is not reliable.

The computation showed that the coefficient reliability of reading anxiety was on 0.922. According to Raharjo (2014) since the total numbers of the students were 30, thus the value of
The first purpose of this research was to find out whether there is a correlation between students’ reading anxiety and their reading comprehension achievement or not. The scores for both variables were various. The scores for the variable (X) were the average score of reading anxiety from the total score resulted from the questionnaire, and the scores for the variable (Y) were the average scores of 6 reading comprehension scores. The lowest score of reading anxiety was 1.89 and the highest score was 3.97. Thus, the students’ average scores were ranged from 1.89 to 3.97. Furthermore, the lowest score for reading achievement was 49 and the highest score was 85. Thus, the students’ average scores were ranged from 49 to 85. In order to find the correlation between the two variables, the researcher used Pearson Product Moment correlation on (Statistical Package for Social Science) SPSS version 21. After processing the data, the result found was -0.128. The result can be seen in the following table:

**TABLE 4.2**
The Result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>reading anxiety</th>
<th>Reading comprehension achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading anxiety</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2tailed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading comprehension achievement</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2tailed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interpretation of the coefficient correlation can be seen in the table below.

**TABLE 4.3**
Pearson Product Moment Coefficient

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient correlation</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.80 – 1.00</td>
<td>Very high correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High correlation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation, it was found that the coefficient correlation ($R$) was $-0.128$ which was in no correlation category. Moreover, the Sig is $0.362$ which was higher than $0.05$. It can be concluded that there was no correlation between students’ reading anxiety and their reading comprehension achievement. It meant that the high score in reading anxiety was not associated with a high score in reading achievement and vice versa.

The next purpose of the research was to find out the level of reading anxiety and reading achievement. The maximum score of reading anxiety was $190$ and the minimum score was $38$. Based on the calculation, it was known that the lowest score of reading anxiety was $72$ ($1.89$) and the highest score was $151$ ($3.97$). Thus, the students’ average scores were ranged from $1.89$ to $3.97$.

The next step is to find the students’ reading anxiety level. The students’ reading anxiety can be categorized into three levels as shown below:

| TABLE 4.5 |
| Reading Anxiety Level |
|---|---|---|
| **Mean Range** | **Number of Students** | **Level** |
| $3.10$ – $4.00$ | $18$ students | High |
| $2.10$ – $3.00$ | $33$ students | Moderate |
| $1.10$ – $2.00$ | $2$ students | Low |

The classifications showed that $18$ out of $53$ students (33.96%) belong to high-level reading anxiety based on their scores on the questionnaire. Most of the students in eleventh class with the total $33$ students or $62.26\%$ had a moderate level of reading anxiety, and there are $2$ students (3.77%) who were categorized into a low level.

Moreover, the students’ reading comprehension scores were also analyzed to know the level of reading achievement that the students had. The researcher calculated the scores to get the mean score for reading achievement. Table 4.6 below is about the students’ reading achievement which was categorized into five categories.
Based on the table above, there were 3 students (5.66%) belong to a very good category which means that they have the very good reading achievement. There were 21 students (39.62%) that had the good reading achievement and 23 students (43.4%) had the fair reading achievement. Then, there were 6 students (11.32%) in the bad category and there was no student who had the excellent reading achievement. The highest score of reading achievement was 85 and the lowest score was 49. The standard minimum score for English subject of the school was 70. Accordingly, there were more than half of the students of the eleventh grade of MA Miftahul Khairiyah Banjarbaru got the score below the standard or to be exact there were 29 students (54.72%) that failed.

**Discussion**

The first finding of the study stated that there was no correlation between reading anxiety and reading achievement. Therefore, the hypothesis was not accepted. The result of data analysis can further be elaborated that the two students that got low reading anxiety level had very good and good reading achievement, and there were 13 students (72.22%) that got high reading anxiety level had bad and fair reading achievement. Nevertheless, of 18 students that got high reading anxiety level, there were 4 students (22.22%) that had the good reading achievement and 1 student (5.56%) that had the very good reading achievement. Moreover, 33 students that got moderate reading anxiety level had the various reading achievement. One student (3.03%) had the very good reading achievement, 16 students (48.48%) had the good reading achievement, 13 students (39.39%) had the fair reading achievement, and 3 students (9.09%) had the bad reading achievement. The inconsistency that happened in the result of these two scores was in line with Mandler and Sarason’s statement (1952) which stated that anxiety is not a stable factor in learning and has a differing effect on different individuals.

Furthermore, the finding of this study contradicted with many studies that found a significant negative correlation between reading anxiety and reading achievement (Seller, 2000, Jafarigohar, 2007; Nazarinasab, et al., 2014, and Guimba and Alico, 2015). This contradiction could be due to different aspects of reading anxiety that were investigated. The students’ feeling when they were reading aloud was investigated (Jafarigohar, 2007 and Nazarinasab, et al., 2014) while in this study, reading aloud were not investigated because the
teacher did not usually have the students to read aloud in the class. Therefore, the students did not have a reason to be afraid or anxious about this activity. Furthermore, the data of reading achievement for this study were taken from the results of the written tests that the students have been taken during the process of learning activities. Therefore, it will be less effective if the researcher included the reading aloud factor in the questionnaire of reading anxiety. However, it is stated that those who are worried about reading aloud activity would create an anxious feeling, but the researcher believed that the anxious feeling has been combined with anxious feeling when the students are doing speaking activity when they are reading aloud. In this regard, it is not in line with this study which the researcher focused on the reading comprehension achievement.

Another could be due to reading passage and the reading strategy used. The reading passage and reading strategy were chosen by the researchers (Seller, 2000 and Guimba, and Alico, 2015), while in this study the researcher simply took the scores from the teacher that has already given the test to the students. The problems that could not be avoided were the reading passage and the comprehension questions that were given to the students based on the teacher. Though the teacher taught the reading passage based on the syllabus, the researcher could not control the comprehension questions that were given to the students. The level of the comprehension questions that were given to the students would affect the achievement they got. Most questions that were given were in the lower level of thinking. It consisted of remembering and understanding questions or in other words it was only in literal comprehension level while in fact, the researcher assumed that the level of reading comprehension in senior high school would be at the beginning of the inferential comprehension. This was because by giving one or two questions in inferential comprehension, it can decide which students understand the text well and which are not because inferential comprehension needs a higher level of thinking. Furthermore, the teacher gave the test to the students after the students have been exposed to many practices. Therefore, the environment when having a reading test also was quite conducive because the students were not really under pressure. Thus, the more anxious students supposed to have lower grades might get good grades after their preparation and the environment for the test. Another thing, the teacher stated that almost all students in one class from the two classes that were used in this study did not care about their scores and did not think too much for the test, and this could also affect the reading anxiety level of the students.

The Level of Reading Anxiety and Reading Achievement

Another finding of the study was the levels of reading anxiety. Most of the students in the eleventh grade of MA Miftahul Khairiyah had moderate reading anxiety. The levels of reading anxiety were decided by students’ answers in the questionnaire. There are three facets of reading anxiety that were used in the questionnaire of this study. Those are fear of curiosity, fear of aggression, and fear of independence. Curiosity as an aspect of the exploratory function is influenced by the interpersonal experiences with all their emotional connotations. If the exploratory function has been traumatized, then curiosity, as an aggressive self-assertion, becomes connected with anxiety. Sylvester and Kunst (1943:69-70) stated that the learning process may become conditioned by anxiety and the reading disability thus become a defense against anxiety which may be stimulated by curiosity, and the most massive and simplest reaction of this is seen in the total reluctant to read. Books are treated as phobia
Nevertheless, the result of data analysis confirmed that this factor did not drive students’ anxiety. It could be because the students thought that it is just a book. Random students of the population that the researcher asked stated they felt that they would not have any harm just seeing a book or they did not feel frustrated just by being asked to look for English books. It was different if the students are asked to read English books. Some students will feel frustrated if they are asked to do that. Therefore, some of the items for that indicator were less effective.

Furthermore, Abrams (1971: 192) stated that the syndrome of fear of curiosity is also characterized by difficulty in the perception of the visual symbol or word recognition. The result of the study showed that most students agreed to the statements for this factor. It was proven by the highest mean score that this factor got of the four factors of fear of curiosity. It proved that the students had problems in word recognition which made them read reluctantly. Though the ability to recognize words is basically a rote task and is not highly correlated with intelligence, but this factor still influenced students’ anxious feeling when they were asked to read. Other factors of fear of curiosity are a bad concept about reading and diffidence of their reading abilities. When people have these factors, their exploratory function or their curiosity towards reading becomes connected with anxiety. Most students agreed with the statements of these two factors. Therefore, the three indicators of fear of curiosity were effective.

Another facet of reading anxiety is fear of aggression. People who are uncomfortable with aggression, the interference are not in the acquisition of skills, but in the use of skills. Thus, the people’s comprehension would suffer. This statement was proven by the result of this study. The result showed that reading comprehension problems became the most influential factor for fear of aggression. It was proven by the highest mean score for the indicator of three factors of fear of aggression. Most importantly, reading comprehension problems highly correlated with intelligence. Therefore, this factor was appropriate.

Another factor of fear of aggression which was stated by Abrams (1971: 194) is the ability to compete successfully in the academic situation is impaired. Nevertheless, it is different in this study. The result of data analysis showed that the feeling of competition or being left out of the group did not contribute to the reading anxiety because most students disagreed with items that indicated that feeling. The students in this study were not competitive in the first place. It has proven when it was asked by the teacher after the data have been analyzed that the students were not really competitive. Therefore, the items in the questionnaire for that indicator that used for this study were less effective and the result may be different if the study conducts in a competitive environment. Furthermore, though it was proven that the students were not competitive, the cooperation between students was seen. Another factor of fear of curiosity is guilty that appears after showing abilities. The result showed that most students felt guilty after they showed their reading abilities. It may be because the students were not competitive, but they were cooperative or had a high teamwork in their classes. This factor supported another result of another facet of reading anxiety, fear of independence. Abrams (1971: 195) stated that the child, who is caught in the dependency bond, might experience severe difficulty in freeing himself sufficiently so that learning can take place optimally. As have been mentioned that the students had a high teamwork, but not competitive. Consequently, the third facet of reading anxiety, fear of independence, which is indicated by the negative feeling when reading alone and the needs for help in reading had the highest mean
score which meant that most students agreed with the statements for those indicators especially the needs for help in reading. This factor was proven as the most affected factor of all factors of reading anxiety. Therefore, the indicators for the fear of independence were appropriate.

Based on the discussion about the facets of reading anxiety, it was found that there were flaws in the questionnaire of this study which could affect the result of the study especially the students’ scores of reading anxiety which continuously affected the reading anxiety level. Nevertheless, the reading anxiety level that the students have may influence by the other factors such as the teacher’s manner in the classroom and teaching procedures that the teacher use, but the researcher did not involve those factors in the questionnaire because of focusing on students’ feeling. Accordingly, the reading anxiety level may be different if those two factors are included. Therefore, it is opened for the next researchers to include those factors in order to investigate the reading anxiety level.

The researcher also analyzed the levels of reading achievement. The finding showed that most students had good and fair reading achievement which meant it ranged from 61-80. In the preliminary study, the teacher said that the range score for students’ reading achievement was 40-50 while the result of this study was higher. This difference may due to different reading text that the teacher gave to the students. In the preliminary study, the range score was gotten mostly for the essay texts such as descriptive, recount, and hortatory.

While in this study, the scores that the researcher got have been combined with the score for short functional text such as advertisement, dairy, and letter. It could be seen from the scores that were given by the teacher. There were two scores of six scores that almost all students got a score above 80. Furthermore, it has been mentioned above that the questions that the teacher gave to the students were still in the lower level of thinking or in literal comprehension. If the teacher includes two or three inference questions, the levels of reading achievement of the students may be different. Another reason may due to the environment. It has been mentioned in the previous point that the scores were taken after the students have been exposed to many practices. Therefore, the environment when having a reading test also was quite conducive.

The analyses that have been mentioned for reading anxiety and reading comprehension could also be the reasons why there was no correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension achievement. However, there are still possibilities that the correlation may happen if the problems that have been mentioned can be minimized. It is better for further researchers to give the questionnaire of reading anxiety after the students have done the comprehension test because the students tend to give the answer that associated with their perception and experience and they might not answer the question based on what they have experienced. Another further researcher can use the larger amount of subjects because the subject of this research is still limited. The school only has 53 students in the eleventh grade. Whereas the larger amount of subject is better to support the result.

**SUGGESTION**

Concerning the result of this research, there are some suggestions the researcher would like to give. They are as follows:
1. Students should encourage themselves to overcome the anxious feeling that they have when reading because it may make the reading comprehension easier for them. They should motivate themselves in lessening their needs for help in reading and solving the reading comprehension problems and word recognition to make them less anxious when they are reading alone.

2. English teachers should help students to overcome their problems in reading comprehension and word recognition by giving them more reading strategy without making them neglected to the teacher’s help. They should create a good environment for reading English that can motivate the students who have diffidence in their abilities and in reading.

3. The next researcher can use any other of reading anxiety indicators to make a good questionnaire in order to know students’ reading anxiety well. They can use only the low scores of students’ scores in reading to make the problems in reading comprehension clearer. Furthermore, they can further investigate the causes of the reading anxiety at the same level or different level of students.

The result of this research hopefully can be used as a reference for a further study on similar problems about reading anxiety and reading achievement at the same level or different level of students. It is hoped it can be used for further investigation about several factors that influence students’ reading achievement which has not been investigated in this research.
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