READING ANXIETY IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Exploring students' anxiety and its sources in a foreign language have highly paid the attention of many researchers in the field of foreign language teaching and learning, especially in English Language Teaching (ELT). On the other hand, the anxiety and its sources of foreign language learning itself affect the achievement of specific language skills such as reading which has infrequently been investigated. Some studies focused only on Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety and/or also Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety in EFL undergraduate students. Thus, this research was intended to investigate students' reading anxiety in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) of the undergraduate student class. There were 37 non-English program undergraduate students participated in this research. The research method was a case study. The data were collected using questionnaires that measured students' anxiety and the sources of students' anxiety in reading context, Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale designed by Saito et al. (1999) and the questionnaire developed by Ahmad et al. (2013). The research found out that most students identified anxiety in medium level. The sources of students' reading anxiety were based on the material features including unknown vocabulary and unfamiliar culture as the most sources. The personal factors found were afraid of making errors which is less than worry about reading effect. The implication is the lecturers can assist foreign language students to reduce foreign language reading anxiety by improving the students' self-confidence to deal with the personal factor.

Keywords : EFL students, language anxiety, reading

INTRODUCTION

Exploring students' anxiety and personal source of foreign language anxiety have highly paid the attention of many researchers in the field of foreign language teaching especially in English (Saito, 1999; Marwan, 2007; Zhao and Kuru-Gonen, 2009; Ahmad et al, 2013 and Akkakoson, 2016). In many cases, the students may have an anxiety reaction which hinders their ability to perform successfully (Horwitz et al, 1986:125). Based on the lecturer's observation, some of the students had a problem with reading in English class. They felt in doubt when they read because many English written words are different from spoken forms.

Reading is a crucial skill to enhance his/her knowledge. However, the foreign language students frequently express feeling stress and anxiety in learning a foreign language

especially in reading class (Horwitz et al, 1986; Saito et al, 1999). Liu (2011) said that foreign language learners face obstacles in developing reading to L2 as the target language. It is because foreign language reading has been affected by many factors, like the unfamiliar script, writing systems, and unfamiliar cultural material. For instance, the students were afraid of reading in the class because they were fearful of making errors in front of the class and then their friend will laugh. According to MacIntyre (1995) in Kuru-Gonen (2007) stated that anxiety in learning foreign language affected negatively on cognitive processing and behavior, it is because both of them are influencing each other.

Zhao (2009) examined reading anxiety among students of Chinese as a foreign language in the United States of America. He found that learners of Chinese had experienced a level of FL reading anxiety lower anxiety than learners of Japanese and similar to learners of French. Kuru-Gonen (2009) found the source of FLRA of students in a Turkish EFL context and the students with higher level of FL anxiety tended to have higher level of reading anxiety and fear of comprehension as a personal factor that created foreign language reading anxiety; Turkish students stated that worrying of not understanding English texts created anxiety situation in reading the target language. Ahmad et al (2013) examined undergraduate students in Jordan that were taking Basic English courses. This researcher aimed to investigate reading anxiety in EFL for Indonesian undergraduate students. Due to different subjects and different attention, it would give a different point of view for the result.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Foreign Language Anxiety

A study has recognized a rare variety of situations with exact anxiety: foreign language anxiety. Foreign Language anxiety is described as 'individual multifaceted of self-insights, faiths, senses, and behaviors linked to classroom language studying' (Horwitz et al., 1986:128). It deals with the individual belief and behavior emerged in learning. More studies are well known for skill-exact anxieties from FLA. It is based on the statement that some students might only experience anxiety when relating certain language skills (Horwitz, 2001). Saito, et al (1999) spotted that reading anxiety level contrast with general FLA, heterogeneous based on the target language (French, Russian and Japanese). So, it was recommended that FLRA was a clear concept linked with the general FLA.

B. Foreign Language Reading Anxiety

Reading anxiety is naturally more complicated to identify, unlike during speaking, instant responses are not needed. Reading anxiety is a factor which 'arises between interpreting of the text and the concrete processing of reading text' (Saito, 1999). Zhornik (2001) in Jalongo and Hirsh (2010) expresses that reading anxiety is a particular, situational fear toward reading that has physical responses such as sweating, feeling shaky or faint, and stomachache and cognitive reactions include an overwhelming sense of dread, low self-esteem, feelings of helpless, and expectations of public humiliation. So, we can conclude that foreign language reading anxiety is a physical and cognitive reaction raised when the students try to read and comprehension foreign language text. The researcher observed the physical responses to strength the result of the research.

C. Types of Anxiety

Spielberger (1966) identified two distinct anxiety factors that were labeled: state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety was defined as a temporary condition of the individual shake over time that occurs because learners are exposed to particular conditions or situations. For example, some students feel anxious if they are invited to speak in front of the class or if they are not familiar with teachers' words during class. Meanwhile, the trait anxiety factor was interpreted as measuring stable individual differences in a unitary, relatively permanent personality characteristic. It is based on a

person's tendency to feel anxious regardless of the situations they are exposed to. Regarding this, trait anxiety is a part of a person's character. Simply, trait anxiety is personality traits and state anxiety is emotions. Spielberger and Sarason (2005:78) added that personality traits are like potential energy in that they refer to latent characters to respond with certain types of reactions under appropriate circumstances.

D. The Sources of Foreign Language Reading Anxiety

Ahmad et al (2013) noted that there are two kinds of aspect influence foreign language reading anxiety, they are personal factors and text features. The personal factors include worrying about reading effects and afraid of making errors. For instance, if a student is asked to read aloud in front of the class, the students concentrate on performance and then the brain produces instant worry and anxiety. Afraid of making errors here means the students who do not often participate in reading tasks usually are caused by a lack of confidence. Text features include unfamiliar culture, unfamiliar topic and unfamiliar vocabulary. Saito et al (1999) unfamiliar culture was a great aspect to be a source of foreign language reading anxiety. It is in line with Kuru-Gonen (2009), unknown cultural content opposed the learners from comprehending foreign language text. Then, topics that are not interesting or complicated for readers can direct reading anxiety. Kuru-Gonen (2009) discovered that uninteresting topics and unknown vocabulary were the sources of foreign language reading anxiety caused by reading text.

E. The Essence of Examining the Cause of Foreign Language Anxieties

As the investigation has emphasized on how different student variables influence FL performance, a recognizing of how student variables influence FL anxieties is restricted. FLA is a complicated multifaceted concept that links with other aspects differently. FL investigation should observe the instant aspects work to know the cause of FLA.

Two studies found have investigated multiple anxiety associated aspects within a particular EFL sample. Khodadady and Khajavy (2013) represented the simultaneous effect of language anxiety and motivation on language accomplishment and told motivation to have implicit correlations to accomplish through FLA. Numerous dissimilar models may explain the correlation among the most individual with various variables in language learning (Gardner et al, 1997). The important correlations are confirmed through the examination of various variables at a similar time.

METHOD

A. Research Design

This research intended to investigate students' reading anxiety in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) of the undergraduate student class. In this research, the researcher used a descriptive case study to answer the research problems proposed. A descriptive case study is in line with the research objectives. Yin (2018) defines a case study is an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context. Ary, et al. (2010:454) noted that the case study focuses on a single unit to produce an in-depth description that is rich and holistic.

B. Setting and Participants

This research focused on undergraduate students that were selected by random sampling who were 37 undergraduate students with a non-English program in Indonesia. They were 9 male students and 28 female students. The participants of this research were 9 different universities with 7 different major programs who were willing to participate in this research voluntarily in the condition they faced reading anxiety in joining English class. They came from Economics, Laws, Social-Politics and Engineering programs.

C. Research Procedures

At the beginning of the research, the researcher negotiated with colleagues for being her participants. Moreover, they informed that the researcher intended to investigate students' reading anxiety in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) of the undergraduate student class.   Then, the researcher instructed each participant to complete their identity. Then, they also filled the questionnaires.   Additionally, they individually interviewed and recorded using voice recorder in ASUS Zenfone Selfie that having external storage up to 32 GB and then transcribed by the researcher. Finally, the result of interview transcribed and questionnaire were analyzed by thematic analysis.

D. Data Collection

The researcher collected the data from questionnaire and interview. There were two questionnaires, they are FLRAS (Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale designed by Saito et al, 1999) to measure reading anxiety in English and the questionnaire developed by Ahmad et al (2013) to describe the sources of students' reading anxiety in English. Meanwhile, the researcher also collected using interview to get data deeper.

E. Data Analysis

The questionnaire and interview were analyzed using thematic analysis adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis covers identifying, analyzing and reporting data. First, the researcher collected the data from questionnaire and interview with separated time. Then, the researcher familiarized the data from interview. Next, the researcher gave code for some unique data like the source of reading anxiety. Then, she named the code into several themes. Finally, she produced report.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
A. Reading Anxiety in EFL Undergraduate Students

This section presents the relevant data which measure whether the anxiety exists in the reading class in EFL undergraduate students or not. It provides the participant's response towards FLRAS questionnaire. The 37 students were classified into three different groups based on Kuru-Gonen (2007) criteria; the levels of reading anxiety were categorized into low, medium and high. There were 7 low, 22 medium and 8 high anxiety students.

In the result of FLRAS questionnaire shown that they were identified medium anxiety in reading class. It was more than half of the participants perceived in medium anxiety level (59%). It was also proven by the result of a questionnaire that the mean of the calculation their anxious is 65,4% that can be inferred they had anxiety; precisely they had medium anxiety level. It was supported by 27 students (72,9%) agreed that they would be happy to learn to speak rather than to read. It means that they were less anxious and mostly interested in speaking English rather than reading. It is in line with Liu's finding (2011) that the student preferred to study speaking English rather than to read English written text. Then, 23 students (62,1%) also agreed that they got upset when they were not sure whether they understood what they were reading in English. This statement means that undergraduate students could easily have anxiety personality while they read English as a foreign language. This is in line with AC (20)'s response that she was easily anxious while reading in front of her friend in the class. In contrast way, 25 students (67,5%) agreed that they enjoy reading English. Moreover, 25 students (67,5%) also agreed that "Once they get used to it, reading English is not so difficult". Reading English is easy if reading English had become a habitual activity. It means that forming reading as a habit can reduce anxious in reading English. All things can be easy if it is a habitual action.

B. Sources of Reading Anxiety in EFL Undergraduate Students

This section presents the relevant data to the second research question which investigated the possible sources of reading anxiety in EFL undergraduate students. It was analyzed from the developed questionnaire by Ahmad et al (2013). The results were tabulated in descriptive statistics with its frequency and percentage of the sources of reading anxiety in EFL undergraduate students.

Based on result, most possible source is an unfamiliar vocabulary (24%). Then, the second possible source is worry about reading effects (22%). Third, the possible source is afraid of making errors (20%). The fourth possible source is an unfamiliar culture (18%). The last possible source is an unfamiliar topic (16%).

Then, there were 28 students agreed that they enjoy reading the text in English when they know its translation. It means that one potential cause can reduce the students' anxiety in reading is to understand the translation. The translation itself related mostly to the vocabulary. It is in line with their response to the statement "I focus on words in reading English texts because if I know the terms, I can understand the text". There were 27 students approved with that statement which could be interpreted that vocabulary is one of the important parts which can avoid the anxiety in reading English as a foreign language. As we know, English and Indonesian are totally different, so the students used to focus on the written text rather than the way they pronounce. Berkemeyer (1989) in Liu (2011) states that unlike in speaking, they focus on recognition in phonemic words, in reading the students should focus on the relationship between and among words. In addition, 21 students has a positive response that they don't like to read an English text that has lots of difficult words. Since they get difficulty in comprehends the written text, they can be anxious easily.

Then, the second source of students' anxiety in reading is worrying about reading effects at 22%. There were 27 approved that they were upset when they were not sure whether they understood what they were reading in English or not. There were 24 students agreed that they focused on word accent rather than understanding while they were reading English aloud in the class. It means that they worry about their performance in reading rather than understanding the text. They worried about negative evaluation from others who listened they pronounced. It was in line that 18 students agreed that when they were reading aloud, they only focused on reading correctly rather than focusing on understanding the text. Moreover, from the questionnaire, they enjoy silent reading because they can easily understand the text. There were 20 students approved with the previous statement. Silent reading itself can decrease students' anxiety in reading in front of the class. As AY (19) responded that he preferred to read silently written English to read English aloud. By reading English silently can reduce students' anxiety in the class and it can cut down a negative evaluation.

The third source of students' anxiety in reading is afraid of making errors by 20%. There were 24 students preferred to prepare too much and search for the phonetic transcript before the class if they were expected to read in the class. Previously, they prepare text that will be ready for the next meeting. As RA told the researcher that, she sometimes reads the text before the class begins because she is afraid of making errors in front of her friends. Then, there were 25 students felt embarrassed in front of others if they pronounce a simple and easy word wrongly. This consequently happened if a pointed student asked to read, but she/he got the wrong pronunciation, they could be laughed by others. Both of those statements can be inferred that most students were afraid of making errors so that they tried to practice pronouncing words in order not to make errors while they were reading English text in front of their friends.

The fourth source of students' anxiety in reading is an unfamiliar culture (18%). There were 20 students approved that "in reading English, they hardly understand the idea if there is more than one meaning for each word". It is in line with the students' respond at the statement "It's frustrating in reading English when one word is connected

with another to change the meaning". English has a different culture from the Indonesian language. Sometimes, we find one or more words that can be interpreted into many meanings. Without reading frequently, the students can't be familiar with target language culture, in case English. So, the students should read many texts to comprehend the English culture. In addition, 14 students approved that knowing about history and culture can understand the text. Then, 18 students rejected that they seem English culture as foreign for them. It can be inferred that English culture was known in students' reading area.

The last possible source is an unfamiliar topic (16%). It is supported by 22 students agreed that they like to read short stories in English because short stories have easy words and the topics are common. It is clear that short stories are most liked by the students as material in reading English class. It is in line with 24 students approved that they can enjoy reading English when they understand some portions of the text. The familiar topics and familiar portion of the text make them enjoy reading English.

From those responses above of sources reading anxiety in EFL undergraduate students, we can summarize that most of the students agree that unknown vocabulary is the first possible source of reading anxiety in EFL undergraduate students because of text features. The anxious students get concerned with various kinds of situation where they have to deal with strange vocabulary, series of strange words, translating word and unknown the meaning of the word. The result of this study related to Saito's finding (1999) shown that students' anxiety in reading is also related to the writing system, including unknown vocabulary. Besides, Kuru-Gonen (2009) supposed that the unfamiliar vocabulary was reflected as an anxiety factor that happened in Turkish students who were reading English as a foreign language. So, here means that not only Indonesian students but Turkish students experienced in English reading anxiety. It is really much possible for EFL students everywhere face reading anxiety.

Ahmad et al (2013) proposed that personal factors are also contributed to students' reading anxiety. There were many students agreed that afraid of making errors and worrying reading effects are possible sources of reading anxiety. It shows that personal factor, confidence in reading is needed because it is a base to perform successfully in reading. The students were felt embarrassed in reading in front of the others and they preferred silent reading. Reading aloud is an activity of public speaking with the performance pressure of on-the-spot and teachers' with evaluation (in Jalongo and Hirsh, 2010). And then, they focused only on performing reading rather than understanding the text. Bernhardt's finding (1986) in Liu (2011) noted that the students experience in misrecognition of words, misinterpreting words with similar forms and pronunciations and neglect of syntactic features that would lead to poor reading comprehension.

The unfamiliar topic is the last possible source of reading anxiety. Without knowing the topic, the students are not interested in reading a written text and they lose their curiosity about the given text because they face difficulty in many words while reading a text. According to Kuru-Gonen (2009), when the students tried to avoid reading English text, anxiety will grow within themselves and make them uncomfortable in the reading process. He further said that, if the topic is not interesting to a learner it is almost impossible for this learner to read for pleasure and to become an actual reader.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research had shown that the students felt anxiety in reading the English language as a result of two aspects, personal factors, and text features. The finding also indicated that students experienced in medium anxiety level of foreign language reading anxiety. The reason was the increased level of difficulty of reading materials in terms unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topic, unfamiliar culture, and worry about reading effects and afraid of making errors. The implication of this research suggested the options for the language teachers/ lecturers. The English teacher/lecturers can assist foreign language

students to reduce foreign language reading anxiety by improving the students' self-confidence to deal with the personal factor. They can prepare the students for the factors that may cause foreign language reading anxiety before asking the students to read in front of the class or they might discuss these factors to help the students reflect their feelings which can help in reducing foreign language reading anxiety and encourage them to read in the foreign language. Besides, there are suggestions to reduce foreign language reading anxiety by; selecting error correction techniques that reduce reactions of students. boosting small group activities, focusing on topics that are interesting for the students, and paying careful attention to the selection of texts to ensure the suitability of material selection with the appropriate difficulty. The lecturers can also create low anxiety situation to decrease foreign language reading anxiety caused by text feature as well. For example, in English classes; they can select topics that are authentic or common to the students' culture and background which construct vocabulary that is standard to the students' needs. In this case, the students set strong self-confidence and could be familiar with others' feelings and know the purpose of reading which should be clear as well. For the next researchers, it is suggested that they should find a technique that can be applied in the English class to reduce anxiety while students are studying English. It is also suggested for the next researcher to conduct the research with larger participant and various major students.

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