

STUDENT READING ANXIETY OF ENGLISH LEARNING CLASS AT XI GRADE

Devi Rianawati¹, Dian Arief Pradana², Saiful Anwar³, Rizki Nurfida Pambayun⁴

Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Banyuwangi, Indonesia.

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history: Received: July 22, 2024 Revised: July 28, 2024 Accepted: August 12, 2024 Published: August 15, 2024</p> <p>Keywords: Anxiety Students Reading Anxiety Learning English English as a foreign language (EFL)</p>	<p>This study investigates the factors contributing to reading anxiety among eleventh-grade students learning English as a foreign language at MA NW Islamic High School. Utilizing a qualitative research approach, the researchers conducted observations and interviews to gather in-depth insights into students' experiences and perceptions of reading anxiety. The data analysis process, guided by the framework established by Matthew B. et al. (2014), involved data reduction, visualization, inference, and validation to identify key themes and patterns. The findings indicate that 60% of the students' exhibited signs of anxiety during reading activities, with significant sources of this anxiety including fear of making mistakes, challenges in understanding complex texts, and difficulties with unfamiliar vocabulary. Emotional responses such as embarrassment and self-consciousness were also prevalent, further exacerbating students' reluctance to engage in reading tasks. The study highlights the critical need for educators to recognize and address these anxiety-inducing factors, thereby fostering a supportive learning environment that enhances students' confidence and competence in reading English texts. Addressing reading anxiety is essential for improving students' learning outcomes in English language education. By implementing tailored interventions and support strategies, educators can help mitigate anxiety levels, promote effective reading practices, and ultimately enhance students' overall academic performance. This research underscores the importance of creating a nurturing educational atmosphere that empowers students to overcome their reading challenges and succeed in their language learning journey.</p> <p><i>This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.</i></p> 
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<p>Corresponding Author: Devi Rianawati, English Education Department, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Banyuwangi, Jl. Adi Sucipto No. 26 Taman Baru, 68416 Banyuwangi, Indonesia. Email: devirianawati3@gmail.com</p>	

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education has received significant attention, particularly in countries such as Indonesia where English language proficiency is considered essential for academic and professional success. Reading

comprehension is a fundamental skill in language learning, but many EFL learners experience anxiety when faced with reading tasks. This phenomenon has been widely observed and researched in a variety of educational contexts, highlighting the need for further investigation into its causes, manifestations, and potential solutions. According to (Arslan et al. 2022) Reading is considered very important among the four basic language skills, because it is considered the main means that helps individuals gain new knowledge and improve themselves. Individuals are active both cognitively and affectively during the reading process. In the current era of globalization, English language skills have an increasingly important role in facing the challenges of an ever-growing world. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language in schools, especially at the secondary school level. According to (Mudra and McKinnon 2022) Mastering reading skills is very important for EFL learners in developing knowledge and understanding. Reading allows EFL learners to dive into unfamiliar topics and deepen their research. According to (Romadlon 2017), reading is a consciousness that is produced as a result of the interaction between the reader and the text. In order for students to learn from the literature they have read, they must be able to comprehend each section in the book. Reading comprehension is one of the most important talents for acquiring current knowledge, and students greatly depend on it for the academic goals of higher education. However, there are other variables involved in reading in other languages, including language proficiency, cultural background, emotional factor, and anxiety.

According to (Aslan et al. 2021), language learning basically creates uncertainty and ambiguity for students during the learning process. Many students experience anxiety when learning to read in English. Reading anxiety is the worry, fear or feeling of unease that students experience when interacting with English texts. This can include anxiety about text comprehension, vocabulary skills, grammar, or even fear of judgment from classmates or teachers. Reading anxiety can be one of the main problems in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia. The reading anxiety that individuals feel when performing reading activities occurs in the affective dimension of this process. Reading anxiety first appears spiritually, but physical symptoms can also be seen. In the context of foreign languages, (Sadighi et al. 2017) define fear as an emotional factor that can influence the formation of one's negative perception when learning a language, and can affect one's learning development. Second, the cognitive or psychological impact is anxiety. Disruption of attention and memory in the learning process, the emergence of anxiety, decreased thinking ability and confusion, and third, social influence. Students tend to compare themselves with their smarter peers, which can cause them to lose enthusiasm and even withdraw from class activities. (Zahro and Faruq 2019) explains that anxiety is a specific fear of certain situations, which can be characterized by physical reactions such as sweating, shaking, stomach pain, or even fainting. Apart from that, cognitive reactions are also included in anxiety, such as feelings of excessive anxiety, low self-esteem, feelings of helplessness, and fear of being humiliated in public. In other words, the higher the level of reading anxiety a student experiences, the more likely they are to experience reading anxiety symptoms.

Reading anxiety can be one of the main problems in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia. The reading anxiety that individuals feel when performing reading activities occurs in the affective dimension of this process. Reading anxiety first appears spiritually, but physical symptoms can also be seen. In the context of foreign languages. According to (Rezaabadi 2017), claimed that students' learning outcomes were negatively impacted by reading anxiety, with highly nervous pupils unable to recall as much as less worried students. Anxiety related to reading causes the learner to lose concentration on the reading technique, slow down this stage, and make bad judgments about language and strategy, all of which led to a poor recall of relevant passage content. Furthermore, (Abubakar 2020) identified five main factors that trigger reading anxiety. The five factors can be divided into two categories: text features and personal factors. Text features refer to characteristics of the text itself that may cause anxiety, such as unfamiliar vocabulary, unfamiliar topics, and unfamiliar cultural elements. Meanwhile, personal factors relate to individual characteristics of readers that can cause reading anxiety, such as fear of making mistakes and concerns about the impact of these mistakes in the reading process.

The phenomenon that occurs in class XI MA NW students. Based on the results of observations on July 19, 2024 to the English teacher said that cases of student reading anxiety in class are often experienced by some students in English lessons but he does not understand what the factors are. many students show anxiety during English lessons, causing avoidance and reduced participation. Students fear making mistakes, being ridiculed, and triggering the teacher's anger, which leads to passive behavior and stuttering when practicing English. Some students, who believe that English is difficult, experience lower self-esteem and high anxiety. Based on the background in the study above, the researcher conducted a study on how students experience reading anxiety when learning English in class. In addition, the researcher also wants to know what factors, according to students' perceptions, contribute to reading anxiety in English learning classes in class XI MA NW.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method using a case study approach. The qualitative method was selected because the research aims to offer an overview of language anxiety cases among eleventh-grade students of MA NW Islamic high School, especially reading anxiety in learning English. The researcher chose qualitative research to cover this case carefully and in detail. Through interviews, researchers also get more specific information. According to (Jack et al 2017), "A case study is a qualitative research approach that examines individual cases, groups, or significant examples to develop interpretations of specific instances or to generate valuable generalizations." Consequently, the case study approach enables the author to focus on specific students to understand instances of EFL language anxiety at MA NW Islamic High School. The study's population was grading XI students of MA NW. Purposive sampling was used in the process of selecting research samples to collect data for this study. This idea has four facets that have already been discussed:

confirmability, credibility, transferability, and dependability (Campbell et al. 2020). Participants were carefully selected by the researcher to fulfil the research objectives. Purposive sampling was used to select 20 eleventh grade students, based on a number of characteristics, including attitude towards English lessons, English reading competence, ability to represent concepts, and accessibility during the learning process. Before conducting data analysis techniques, researchers conducted data collection techniques with observation and interview techniques. Observation is done to find out when students tend to feel anxiety in English classes. Interviews were conducted to gather data on the experiences of sample respondents regarding factors contributing to student reading anxiety. According to (Taherdoost 2022) the interview aims to obtain answers to the interviewee's description of certain questions. In conducting this interview, the researcher listens carefully and writes. Testing observations and interviews is crucial to ensure that the data obtained is valid and reliable. This process helps confirm that the information can effectively address the research questions. After conducting observations and interviews, then analyzing the data. the next step is to carry out three main steps, which consist of the qualitative approach process for data analysis, formulated by (Matthew B, et al 2014) Specifically, data reduction, data visualization, inference, and validation. Additionally, researchers analyzed all pertinent data sources for descriptions and themes to explain the research findings. According to (Matthew B, et al 2014) The process of selecting, focusing, summarizing, abstracting and transforming data from written field notes or interview transcripts is known as “data reduction”.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Student movement reading during English class

Observations showed that 12 out of 20 Grade 11 students experienced anxiety while reading in class and showed symptoms of anxiety. From the observation data that researchers conducted, it can be seen from 5 indicators of student movement when reading during the English learning process in class. 5 indicators quoted from (Zhiping and Shamala 2013). namely: Restlessness or Uneasiness, Avoiding Eye Contact, Difficulty Understanding Text, Long Time to Complete Reading Tasks, Verbal or Non-Verbal Responses when Asked to Read.

Restlessness or Uneasiness

Physical behaviors such as moving hands or feet excessively, appearing fidgety, or showing signs of physical discomfort while reading. Out of 20 students there are 3 students who experience these movements

Avoiding Eye Contact

Students avoid eye contact with the teacher or classmates when reading or when asked to read in front of the class and stammer when reading. Another 3 students out of 20 also experienced this movement.

Difficulty Understanding Text

Students appear to have difficulty in understanding the content of the text, often ask for help, or show signs of frustration when trying to understand the text, there are 2 out of 20 students who experience these movements.

Long Time to Complete Reading Tasks

Students take longer than usual to complete reading tasks, show signs of procrastination, or often do not complete tasks. 2 out of 20 students were seen to experience these movements.

Verbal or Non-Verbal Responses when Asked to Read

Students show rejection, fear, or reluctance verbally or non-verbally when asked to read in front of the class, there are 2 students who experience this movement.

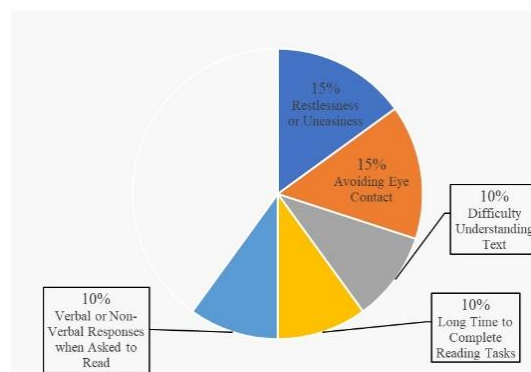


Chart 1. Student movement reading

Sources of reading anxiety

The research revealed varying responses from students. According to interview results, most students experience reading anxiety when learning English. They reported feeling anxious, confused, ashamed, and nervous, particularly when they didn't understand the text, its vocabulary, or its content. Students were also nervous during reading activities and felt embarrassed about making pronunciation errors. Many found vocabulary unfamiliar and considered reading to be more challenging than other skills. The sources "reading anxiety in English learning class" in this study included several sources, such as:

Difficulty in understanding text or instructions

The primary goal of reading activities is for the reader to clearly understand the text's main idea. Most students feel anxious when encountering unfamiliar topics leading to poor academic performance. Students often focus solely on decoding words rather than grasping the overall meaning, resulting in little retention. When asked if they understood the main idea, KI expressed that the text was difficult to understand. GI admitted to feeling confused by the unfamiliar topic, thus hindering their ability to complete the exercise.

"I didn't understand the main idea because I thought it was difficult to understand so I was confused to finish" (Interview KI, June 19, 2024)

"When faced with a topic I don't know well, I find it challenging to understand the main idea, which makes it hard for me to complete the exercises." (Interview GI, June 19, 2024)

Unknown Vocabulary

Vocabulary knowledge plays a crucial role in reading anxiety for English learners. Students experience anxiety due to limited vocabulary, which impairs their ability to interpret and retain words. Observations show that some students seem perplexed when asked to decode a text, often reading softly and seeking assistance from peers or using translation apps. As expressed by AB, Confusion when finding new vocabulary. This illustrates that understanding English texts is very difficult for them without knowing the meaning of the words.

"I get very confused when I encounter unfamiliar or new vocabulary. Sometimes, I ask friends or teachers about the meaning of the words." (Interview AB, June 19, 2024)."

"The limited vocabulary makes reading in English very stressful for me. I get nervous and sometimes avoid reading tasks altogether, or I use translation apps to get it done." (Interview IS, June 19, 2024).

Embarrassment

Embarrassed is an emotional challenge that many students face when asked to read English texts, which suggests that it can be a source of anxiety during classroom activities, particularly reading. These students may feel self-conscious and intimidated when reading in front of the class, the teacher and their peers. SR expressed that she often feels embarrassed if she misreads or makes a mistake and may be afraid of being laughed at by her classmates.

"When asked to read, I feel embarrassed and as if everyone is watching me, which makes me worry about what they think of my reading" (Interview SR, June 19, 2024).

"I get really nervous when I have to read out loud because I'm scared of making mistakes. The thought of everyone listening to me makes me feel very self-conscious and embarrassed." (Interview MA, June 19, 2024)

"Reading in front of the class is stressful for me. I feel embarrassed when I stumble over words or pronounce something wrong, and I'm always worried that my classmates will laugh at me." (Interview AA, June 19, 2024)

Fear of being wrong

Some theories suggest that fear of being wrong is a major barrier to learning, particularly in reading. This fear often arises from a lack of confidence in one's skills. They view errors as undesirable, especially when they occur in front of teachers or peers. RA said that he was afraid of making mistakes because he did not master English and felt panicked because all his friends would see him. These responses indicate that the fear of errors significantly contributes to reading anxiety among students.

"When asked to read, I feel panic because all my friends are watching me, and I fear making mistakes." (Interview RA, June 19, 2024).

"I often worry about making mistakes when reading in class. This fear makes me nervous and less willing to participate because I don't want to be judged by my classmates and teacher." (Interview IN, June 19, 2024).

"I lack confidence in my English skills, and the fear of making errors in front of everyone makes me anxious." (Interview LM, June 19, 2024).

Personality and attitude of the teacher

In addition to factors that contribute to students' anxiety, teacher-related issues also play a role. Some students reported feeling uncomfortable due to the teacher's attitude. They noted that a teacher's negative personality can significantly impact their learning experience, particularly in reading. Students felt pressured and unmotivated, often feeling intimidated when they made mistakes. As said by the DA when the teacher is angry, he cannot focus on reading. This indicates that a teacher's demeanor can exacerbate students' reading anxiety.

"When the teacher is angry, I can't focus on learning. I usually read silently to avoid making mistakes." (Interview DA, June 19, 2024).

"If the teacher is in a bad mood, I become nervous and afraid to participate in reading activities because I don't want to be criticized." (Interview MN, June 19, 2024).

Discussion

Observations show that 60% of grade XI students experience anxiety while reading, which is evident from indicators such as fidgeting, avoiding eye contact, and difficulty understanding the text. The main sources of this anxiety include fear of making mistakes, difficulty understanding the text or instructions, and unfamiliar vocabulary. In addition, teacher attitude has a significant effect; a supportive approach can reduce students' anxiety, while a critical attitude can exacerbate it, so it is important for educators to create a positive and supportive learning atmosphere to increase students' confidence in reading. Based on the data collected through interviews with participants and analyzed above, the researcher identified several sources of reading anxiety experienced by students in class XI at MA NW. To address the second research question, the researcher organized the anxiety factors into three distinct categories based on the identified sources.

Factors from the Text

The results showed that based on observations of students' movements during class, students looked confused by unfamiliar vocabulary and took a long time to complete reading tasks. This study found that one of the factors of reading anxiety is the characteristics of the reading text itself. These factors are categorized into difficulty understanding the text or instructions and unfamiliar vocabulary. The results of this study are consistent with research conducted by (Sun and Luo 2018) who examined CSL elementary school students. researchers found that the main sources of reading anxiety in elementary school students were lack of prior knowledge, difficult and complex vocabulary, and difficulty in comprehension.

Factors from the Student

The interview results show that students find English a challenging subject. They go through the motions of finding it difficult to speak English fluently, fidgeting or being uncomfortable, avoiding eye contact. The factors that influence such students are shyness and fear of making mistakes. The findings of this study are similar to the findings in the previous study conducted by (Laili 2022), that one of the personal factors that students often worry about is the impact of reading and the fear of making mistakes. A total of 51.3% of students agreed that the fear of making mistakes was the main cause of their anxiety when reading and understanding English texts.

Factors from the Teacher

Research indicates that teacher input and attitudes significantly impact students' anxiety. Observations have shown that when teachers ask students to read aloud, the students often exhibit resistance, especially if they struggle to understand the subject matter. For example, in a study by (Hasanah and Ode 2019), it was noted that students faced difficulties when the teacher conducted lessons in English, which they did not fully comprehend. Interviews revealed that the teacher's personality and attitude play a crucial role in influencing students' reading anxiety. This is supported by (Manipuspika 2018), which found that teacher characteristics such as a non-confrontational approach to correcting mistakes, and maintaining a positive, friendly, and relaxed demeanor, can help alleviate student anxiety in foreign language classrooms.

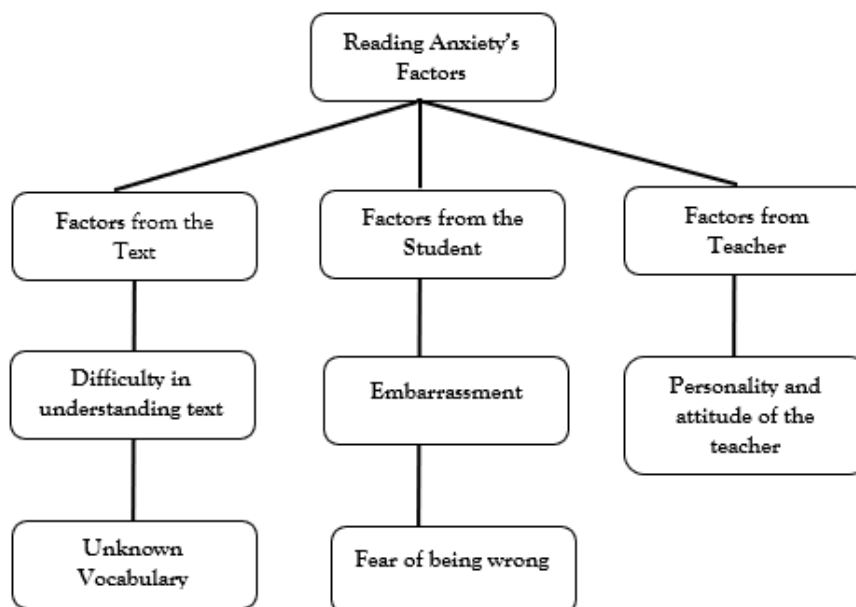


Chart 2. Factors

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that a significant number of eleventh-grade students in English classes grapple with reading anxiety, which impedes their engagement and participation in reading activities. This anxiety is influenced by both textual and personal factors, such as

unfamiliar vocabulary, complex text structures, and a general perception of English as a challenging subject, compounded by the fear of making mistakes in front of peers. The demeanor of the teacher is also crucial; a supportive and non-confrontational approach can mitigate anxiety, whereas a critical attitude may exacerbate it. Therefore, it is essential to implement tailored interventions that address these specific triggers by fostering a safe and supportive learning environment, using engaging materials, and offering constructive feedback. Addressing reading anxiety is not only crucial for enhancing students' reading comprehension and academic performance but also for building their confidence in language use. Future research should explore the long-term effects of reading anxiety on language acquisition and evaluate the effectiveness of various intervention strategies across different educational settings.

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