

FLRA AND ITS INFLUENCE ON EFL STUDENTS' READING ACHIEVEMENT AMID THE PANDEMIC COVID-19

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Abstract

Foreign Language Reading Anxiety (FLRA) is a symptom of anxiety in reading which becomes increasingly challenging for EFL learners. FLRA is an influential interruption that might prevent EFL learners to derive a reading grasp. The pandemic situation borders teachers' and students' activities in the learning process. In this condition, numbers of students in Indonesian schools perform different reading comprehension achievements, including low, middle, and high levels. The researcher noted that several Indonesian students feel anxious in the second language (L2) reading with certain reading troubles. The purpose of this study was to examine FLRA and its influence on the students' reading achievement amid the pandemic COVID-19 schooling including identifying potential factors which affect their anxieties in reading and investigating their influence on their reading achievement. This study used a quantitative research method. The research was carried out in the Eagle Class students of LinkAge education, in Lombok, Indonesia. The sample of this study was 20 students selected using the purposive sampling method. The data were collected using a questionnaire namely the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) which was developed by Saito et al (1999) with a five-point Likert scale. The researcher analyzed the data using descriptive statistics. The results demonstrate that the students' anxiety level is 58.25 which indicates that they experience a high level of anxiety although the value is a little bit lower than the limit of moderate level. There are some symptoms of reading anxieties commonly recognized by the students.

Keywords—FLRA; English Reading; Reading Achievement; Learning Interest; Learning Strategy.

Introduction

Foreign Language Reading Anxiety (FLRA) is a symptom of anxiety in reading which becomes increasingly challenging for EFL learners. The FLRA symptom has been worrying factors on demands of reading instruction perceived by the numbers of EFL students in the education fields (Tsai & Lee, 2018). This unwilling syndrome puts stress on the students on negative feelings such as extreme fear, insecurity, and forgetfulness in the learning process. Anxious students in reading activities might suffer such troubles which influence their cognitive output (Mohammadpur & Ghafournia, 2015; Piccolo et al., 2017; Badara et al., 2019; Olusegun Oyeleye & Oluwasunmisola Odunayo, 2020). However, there are pieces of research discussing the symptoms of anxiety which are very essential to pay attention to its influence on the students' academic achievements, particularly investigating FLRA and its impacts on reading



comprehension among the students amid the pandemic Covid-19 schooling. FLRA (Foreign Language Reading Anxiety) is different from general anxieties (Sari & Sumatra, 2018). FLRA is an influential interruption that might prevent EFL learners to derive a reading grasp.

Reading is one of the sources of all language learning. Today, reading activities are addressed online where the teachers and students employ online reading to replace FTF meetings in the classroom since the government's agreement regarding pandemic conflicts. In this situation, English teachers struggle to maximize the learning activities to create great academic performance among students against the pandemic challenges. The pandemic situation borders teachers' and students' activities in the learning process. In this condition, students rarely engage the learning process due to limited access, poor motivation, and other factors such as having other activities during Lockdown. In this limited situation, it is very challenging for teachers to lead their online instructions. Particularly, reading instruction is one of the complex activities experienced by several teachers and students where they need to decode words, understand the meaning, and interpret the writers' intention. As it is a very complicated process, the students also feel anxious about their reading abilities in reading instruction. According to Pekrun (2019), One of the most common disruptions among students in casual contexts is the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety (FLRA).

Over several last decades, students are repeatedly deal with anxiety issues in reading. Numbers of students in Indonesian schools perform different reading comprehension achievements, including low, middle, and high levels. Several studies reveal these diversities appear as the impact of varied anxiety disorders experienced by the students in reading instruction based on the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) (Abubakar & Hairuddin, 2020; Limeranto & Subekti, 2021; Mardianti et al., 2021). Based on the review of studies, the researcher noted that several Indonesian students feel anxious in L2 reading with certain reading troubles, including avoiding reading activities in the classroom, being unmotivated in reading, and being uninterested in reading materials (Muhlis, 2017). On the other sites, the students prefer to learn speaking than reading due to speaking is much easier rather than reading which is a very complicated activity (Faruq, 2019). This study attempts to examine FLRA and its influence on the students' reading achievement amid the pandemic COVID-19 schooling. The purpose of the study intends to examine several reading anxieties among recent students, identify potential factors which affect their anxieties in reading, and investigate their influence on their reading achievement.

Research Method

This research examines (Foreign Language Reading Anxiety) perceived by the students and its influence on their reading achievement amid the pandemic schooling at Indonesian schools. The study will be conducted at LinkAge Education, Lombok, Indonesia, which covers 30 students. The sample of the study will be selected using purposive sampling which intentionally recruits certain samples to be participants. The sample of this study will require 20 selective respondents from the Eagle class in LinkAge Education. This study requires FLRAS (Foreign Language Reading Scale) questionnaire to examine the level and kinds of Reading anxiety among students and its influence on their reading achievement. Data of this study will be analyzed using SPSS as well as its validity and reliability. According to the consent of the participating students to be involved in this study, the reading grades of the Eagle students were received from their English tutor. This value was obtained from the beginning of learning starting down to the middle of the semester in the academic year 2021/2022.

The findings of the surveys, as well as the grades of the participants, were entered into SPSS and processed. This study uses descriptive analysis to answer the research question, furthermore to identify the mean, median, and modus of the data. besides, to answer the other research question about the influence of FLRAS on their reading achievement use correlation two tails, The internal reliability of the



20 FLRA questionnaire items was 0.752 Cronbach's alpha coefficient in the current study, indicating that it was near to one (1)

Result And Discussion

Table 1 shows the mean of the participant's responses to each questionnaire item, while the Appendix shows the complete results of the participants' responses.

Table. 1 Descriptive statistics of FLRA

	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic						
FLRA Valid N (Listwise)	20	41.00	33.00	74.00	58.2500	2.41800	10.81361

Table 1 showed FLRA by the students. The mean score of the data was 58.25. Based on the mean score, it can be concluded that the students FLRA “high” level of anxiety under study although the value is a little bit lower than the limit of moderate level which is 60,0.

The detailed result of the questionnaire is elaborated to find out the symptoms of anxiety and what students feel when they experience reading anxiety. The questionnaire was analyzed based on the percentage of each answer.

Symptoms of FLRA

Table 2. Symptoms of FLRA

ITEM	SD	D	N	A	SA
(R1) I get upset when I am not sure whether I understand what I am reading in English	1%	4%	8%	4%	3%
(R2) When reading English, I often understand the words but still can't quite understand what the author is saying	2%	3%	4%	8%	3%
(R3) When I am reading English, I get so confused I can't remember what I am reading.	4%	5%	2%	6%	3%
(R4) I feel intimidated whenever I see a whole page of English in front of me.	3%	2%	3%	7%	5%
(R5) I am nervous when I am reading a passage in English when I am not familiar with the topic	3%	6%	5%	3%	3%
(R6) I get upset whenever I encounter unknown grammar when reading English.	4%	4%	5%	5%	2%
(R7) When reading English, I get nervous and confused when I don't understand every word.	3%	3%	3%	4%	7%
(R8) It bothers me to encounter words I can't pronounce while reading English.	4%	3%	6%	3%	4%
(R9) I usually end up translating word by word when I am reading English	4%	3%	3%	6%	4%
(R10) By the time you get past the funny letters and symbols in English, it's hard to remember what you are reading about	3%	5%	5%	6%	1%



(R11) I am worried about all the new symbols I have to learn in order to read in English. 5% 5% 6% 0% 4%

Table 2 describes the symptoms of reading anxiety experienced by young students. Whole, students experience some symptoms of reading anxiety even though they don't very dominant. This is evidenced by the results of student questionnaires tend to choose “agree” and “neutral” over “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree”. Formerly also found that many students did not decide on their argument and chose only "disagree".

Based on the data from Table 2, there are several symptoms of reading anxiety experienced by the Eagle Class as referred to in points R5, R7, R8, R9, R10, and R11. First, item R5 shows that students feel nervous when they read unfamiliar reading topics. Second, item R7 implies that when they are faced with not understanding every word in reading English, they are often confused and nervous. Third, item R8 states that students feel disturbed by their inability to pronounce words in English when they read a passage in English. Fourth, item R9 shows that students have reading difficulties because of the word-for-word translation process. Fifth, items R10 and R11 finally imply that students are easily distracted and make them forget about reading with funny symbols and punctuation terms that exist in English reading.

On the other hand, some questionnaire items are not experienced by some students even though the numbers were not many when they were anxious, namely R1, R2, R3, R4, and R6. First, item R1 indicates students' disagreement with the statement and implies that when they read English, they are not worried when they read. In addition, item R2 implies their disagreement with the statement and implies that apart from understanding what they are saying, they can understand how it is written in English. Furthermore, item R3 states their disagreement with the statement and implies that English reading does not make students confused or even dizzy. Even though they find the grammar unknown, they still find it comfortable to read. Besides that, item R4 indicates their disagreement and implies that they do not feel intimidated by the English readings but are normal. Finally, item R6 shows that they are not worried about the grammar arrangement in English that can trigger reading anxiety.

Students’ Perception on Reading English

Table 3. Students’ Perception on Reading English

ITEM	SD	D	N	A	SA
(R12) I enjoy reading English	7%	4%	7%	1%	1%
(R13) I don’t mind reading to myself, but I feel very uncomfortable when I have to read English	2%	5%	4%	2%	7%
(R14) Once I get used to it, reading English is not so difficult.	10%	7%	1%	1%	1%
(R15) The hardest part of learning English is learning to read.	6%	2%	7%	4%	1%
(R16) I would be happy just to learn to speak English rather than having to learn to read as well	0%	0%	3%	8%	9%
(R17) English culture and ideas seem very foreign to me.	5%	10%	3%	2%	0%
(R18) I have to know so much about English history and culture in order to read English	5%	3%	5%	4%	3%

Table 3 describes the results of the questionnaire in terms of students' perceptions of reading English. Overall, the students had negative perceptions about reading English. They did not enjoy reading to themselves; however, they like reading when they use silent ways and they did not feel that the good related to English was foreign. Besides, compared to other skills in language learning, they prefer to learn



about speaking than reading. They further consider that reading is the most difficult part of language learning.

Students who have a negative perception of reading are shown in items R14 and R16 which indicate that even though students make reading English habituation they still feel reading English is difficult and they prefer speaking material, so a preferred strategy is needed so that they have more interest in reading English. Furthermore, items R15 and R18 reveal that reading English is the most difficult part for students compared to other parts. This creates a feeling that they cannot enjoy reading English and feel comfortable when learning as contained in items R12 and R13.

However, when compared with item R17 which revealed that students had a fairly positive response in terms of learning reading when reading English was related to culture and the like. In the end, students' perception of reading English is more dominant in a negative direction, thereby reducing their interest in learning, but it can still be raised by using a cultural approach and the like through reading English learning strategies.

Students' Perception on Their Ability in Reading English

Table 4. Students' Perception on Their Ability in Reading English

ITEM	SD	D	N	A	SA
(R19) I am satisfied with the level of reading ability in English that I have achieved so far	5%	3%	3%	3%	6%
(R20) I feel confident when I am reading in English.	5%	10%	3%	1%	1%

Overall, students feel dissatisfied with their ability to read English. This is evidenced by their responses to the questionnaire on items R19 and R20. Item R19 shows that students feel dissatisfied with the level of reading ability they have achieved so far; item R20 implies that they feel insecure when they read in English. perception Their ability is believed to be closely related to their perception of reading English itself.

Based on the results of the analysis, not all symptoms are generally experienced by people are also perceived by the Eagle Class EFL in the Indonesian context. There are many features that students experience when they are anxious, such as when they are reading In English, they need to translate word for word, which then makes them have less interest in reading English. This is related also to what Mohammadpur & Ghafournia (2015) said. Anxiety that occurs in students when reading English is also much influenced by the lack of strategies in learning reading English which seems monotonous so it makes them feel bored, so it is better to get a more relevant approach such as cultural material or things that are more attractive to students. Furthermore, they have a tendency to learn speaking instead of reading, because with speaking they are not too bound by grammar rules, so they feel freer in expression. This is related to what Muhlis, (2017) said before. It is also supported by Faruq (2019) that students prefer to learn speaking than reading due to speaking is much easier rather than reading which is a very complicated activity.

But on the one hand, grammar is not a barrier that makes them feel anxious in doing reading English, but they feel familiar with the terms in grammar and symbols in reading English, because Indonesian and English have similar punctuation marks and symbols, so even reading English is a more complicated activity, the student did not feel disturbed.



Conclusion

It can be concluded that students experience high levels of anxiety while studying although the number is slightly higher than the average level limit. There are some symptoms of reading anxiety that are commonly recognized by students: students feel irritated when they are not sure if they understand what they read when they read English, they often understand the meaning of the words but they still unable to understand what the writer wanted to say, the students felt nervous when they reading passages in English where the topic is unfamiliar to them, students feel nervous when they don't understand the reading, students always translate word by word words when they read English and when they pass funny letters and symbols, it is difficult to remember what they read. They tend to perceive reading in English as an activity that is very interesting and they are satisfied with their ability to read. The findings of this study can be used as input for teachers and students to create an effective classroom environment.

Acknowledgment

Novelty:

1. Proceeding research investigates the levels of FLRAS (foreign Language Anxiety Scale)
2. Many Journals are discussing the relationships among these terms, but none talks about impacts
3. A journal conveys an impact of the anxiety, but it tends speaking performance
4. There are little journal arises a topic about FLRA for specific impacts
5. Rare research about reading Anxiety symptoms
6. To find a strategy to solve FLRA among students

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