



## **READING ANXIETY, READING SELF-EFFICACY AND VOCABULARY AS PREDICTORS OF STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION**

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**Hasriati**

**Dosen Lakidende University**

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### ***Abstract***

*The present study endeavored to examine whether reading anxiety, reading self-efficacy and vocabulary contribute towards students' reading comprehension and which one of these factors that serves as the better predictor of students' reading comprehension among 82 the second semester students of English department at Halu Oleo University. Questionnaires are employed for measuring students' reading anxiety and reading self-efficacy, vocabulary test for measuring students' vocabulary. Whereas, reading comprehension test for measuring students' reading comprehension. The result revealed reading anxiety contributes towards students' reading comprehension, reading self-efficacy contributes towards students' reading comprehension and vocabulary contributes towards students' reading comprehension. Vocabulary is higher than reading anxiety and reading self-efficacy in predicting students' reading comprehension when these factors are examined simultaneously. Importantly, this study leads to the conclusion that vocabulary is better and stronger predictor of students' reading comprehension than students' reading anxiety and students' reading self-efficacy. Taking importance of vocabulary into consideration, therefore language teachers should put more emphasize on students' vocabulary, particularly endeavor to make their vocabulary knowledge wider and deeper.*

**Keywords:** *Reading Anxiety, Reading Self-Efficacy, Vocabulary, Reading.*

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini berusaha untuk menguji apakah kecemasan membaca, kemandirian membaca diri, dan kosakata berkontribusi terhadap pemahaman membaca siswa dan mana salah satu faktor ini yang berfungsi sebagai prediktor yang lebih baik dari pemahaman membaca siswa di antara 82 siswa semester kedua jurusan bahasa Inggris di Universitas Halu Oleo. Angket digunakan untuk mengukur kecemasan membaca siswa dan membaca self-efficacy, tes kosakata untuk mengukur kosakata siswa. Sedangkan, tes kemampuan membaca untuk mengukur kemampuan membaca siswa. Hasilnya mengungkapkan kecemasan membaca berkontribusi terhadap pemahaman membaca siswa, kontribusi self-efficacy berkontribusi terhadap pemahaman membaca siswa dan kontribusi kosa kata terhadap pemahaman membaca siswa. Kosakata lebih tinggi daripada kecemasan membaca dan kemandirian membaca dalam memprediksi pemahaman membaca siswa ketika faktor-faktor ini diperiksa secara bersamaan. Yang penting, penelitian ini mengarah pada kesimpulan bahwa kosakata adalah prediktor yang lebih baik dan lebih kuat dari

pemahaman membaca siswa daripada kecemasan membaca siswa dan kemandirian membaca siswa. Mempertimbangkan pentingnya kosakata, oleh karena itu guru bahasa harus lebih menekankan pada kosakata siswa, terutama berusaha untuk membuat pengetahuan kosakata mereka lebih luas dan lebih dalam.

**Kata kunci:** Kegelisahan Membaca, Efikasi Diri Membaca, Kosakata, Membaca.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

**A**chievement in foreign language learning has been an important problem for a long time (Capan & Karaca, 2013), even though much has been conducted to improve achievement, nevertheless, it is barely possible to insist that reasonable results have been reached (Moghamad et al, 2012). Obviously, the result may be caused by affective factor that may reduce it (Singh & Thukral, 2009). In language learning, affective factors play a prominent role. It has been a long time, researchers have considered one of affective factors such anxiety may aggravate negative potential of learning a foreign language (Al-Shboul et al., 2013). It is extremely important because according to Affective Filter Hypothesis, affective factor such anxiety has function as a filter that reduces the amount of language input that learners are able to recognize. In this regard, when language learners have low level of anxiety, it means that they have low filter, consequently they

will obtain and take in plenty of language input. Differently, when language learners have high level of anxiety, it means that they have high filter, therefore they acquire little language input (Krashen, 1985). In brief, it is one of factors that may either endorse or obstruct language acquisition and language learning in general.

Besides, anxiety, another psychological factor effects students' achievement in language learning is self-efficacy. It is possible to become a significant part in the language learning process by serving or blocking students' language progress (Bandura, 1982). In addition, self-efficacy or one's perception of his/her ability (Bandura, 1994) it is also significant to the educational process (Hedges & Gable, 2016) and it is recognized as one of effective variables for academic achievement not only in second language but also in foreign language (Yogurtcu, 2012). It is crucial for language teachers in that students who have high level of self-efficacy actually take part in doing a task, therefore they

achieve higher score than those students with low level of self-efficacy in fact try to escape difficult task, so they get lower score (Raoofi et al., 2012).

Meanwhile, in terms of reading comprehension, self-efficacy is considered as important factor. It causes of the students who comprehend the reading texts and construct the meaning successfully, it means that they are increasing their reading comprehension (Epçagan & Demirel, 2011, in Yogurtcu, 2013). While the previous language researchers have been discovered relationship between self-efficacy and students' achievement. Nevertheless, the association of self-efficacy to specific skill especially reading comprehension begins to be significantly argued. A few studies has documented and indicated there was an important association between these variables (Shang, 2010; Zare & Mobarakeh, 2011; Ghonsooly & Elahi, 2012). Zare & Mobarakeh (2011) have carried out a research to examine association between reading strategies use and self-efficacy. The result of the research stated that there was significantly positive relationship between overall reading strategies use and self-efficacy.

Additionally, vocabulary knowledge is assumed as a better predictor of reading comprehension (Chall 1987; Stahl 2003 as cites in Zhang & Anual, 2008). The significance of vocabulary knowledge has been highlighted and vocabulary has been recognized as one of the most crucial component of language learning. To understand text meaning, student must be able to interpret the reading passage. In addition, the presence of high unknown words in a text may seriously hinder comprehension (Alderson 2000; Day & Bamford 1998 as cite in Baleghizadeh & Goblin, 2010). Moghamad et al (2012) state that when a reader does not understand a number of vocabularies in a reading text, it may obstruct the effectiveness of text processing, which leads to obstacles in the reader comprehending the text. Due to word recognition and lexical access often avoid comprehension, providing vocabulary knowledge may help improve students' reading comprehension (Curtis & Longo, 2001 as cite in Sidek & Rahim, 2015).

Briefly, anxiety, self-efficacy, and vocabulary are important factors in language learning; in this case anxiety is functioned as affective filter to the extent that theory is concerned. Similarly, self-efficacy serves as

cognitive factor as far as theory of social cognitive learning is concerned. Also, vocabulary is considered as better predictor as far as readers may not understand any text without have enough vocabulary. Obviously, student who has low anxiety, high self-efficacy, and has good vocabulary knowledge is more possible to succeed in language learning. Meanwhile, student who has high anxiety, low self-efficacy, and does not have good vocabulary knowledge are more possible to fail.

While research into the correlation between anxiety to reading comprehension, the relationship between self-efficacy and reading comprehension, and the relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension have carried out, those researches tend to focus almost entirely on correlating one of these factors to reading comprehension partially and little research, if any, has been conducted a research to investigate the relationship both of these factors to reading comprehension simultaneously. In other words, even though anxiety, self-efficacy, and vocabulary are considered vital to reading comprehension, the importance of these three variables is yet to be analyzed. In this case, we are yet to decide which of these factors

function as the better predictor of students' reading comprehension. Thus, a research to examine the importance of these factors in predicting students' reading comprehension is considered crucial. Thus, a research to examine the importance of these factors in predicting students' reading comprehension is considered crucial. Therefore, the researcher intends to conduct a research entitled "Reading Anxiety, Reading Self-Efficacy, and Vocabulary as Predictors of Students' Reading Comprehension".

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Reading Anxiety**

Reading anxiety is a feeling which is related to worry when engaging in reading tasks and difficulty in concentrating and comprehending academic reading text because academic texts are too long and complex, dense with information. Dealing with such texts may emerge dreadful and uncomfortable feeling among the students, in which it may stimulate anxiety reactions each time they are required to read and grasp the English texts. Du (2009) says that basically, reading is a process that not only involves objective factors, but also affective factors. He also adds that there are some affective variables in language learning that are like a filter which

sort out the amount of input in students' brains. Principally, when language learners have low level of anxiety, it means that they have low filter, consequently they will obtain and take in plenty of language input. Differently, when language learners have high level of anxiety, it means that they have high filter, therefore they acquire little language input (Krashen, 1985).

## **2.2 Reading Self-Efficacy**

Reading self-efficacy is individuals' perceptions of their own capacities to comprehend a reading text and to accomplish reading tasks that are given by the teacher. Self-efficacy is an element of social cognitive theory that is introduced by Bandura. Theory of Social Cognitive recommends reciprocal collaborations among these influences: environment, behavior, and individual factors including psychological, cognitive, and affective variables (Bandura, 1982). In this theory, students have the competence to influence and form their atmosphere rather than inactively react to it. He also adds that behavior variables refer to what actually people do, environmental variables refer to the setting in which the behavior occurs, and personal/cognitive variables refer to how the person thinks about, perceives, or expect

events to occur.

## **2.3 Vocabulary**

Vocabulary knowledge is knowledge of words structures which it involves meaning. Accordingly, the significance of vocabulary knowledge has been highlighted and vocabulary has been deliberated as one of crucial component of language learning. There are essentially a number of aspects that should be considered. Additionally, for types of reading text, one of important considerations is the size of vocabulary knowledge that a learner needs to require. Nation (2001) states that size of vocabulary knowledge are the amount of words that language learners recognize. It is supported by Gallego & Llach (2009) who explains vocabulary knowledge refers to the number of words a learner knows and uses.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

The proposed study used correlational research design, specifically prediction design which attempt to determine the extent of a relationship between two or more variables using statistical data. The study conducted in second semester of English Department of Halu Oleo University who enrolled in academic year 2017. The total numbers of the population are 82 university students. The

study applied Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS), adopted by Saito et al. (1999) to assess students' reading anxiety, student's self-efficacy in reading comprehension adopted by Epçaçan & Demirel, The Vocabulary Levels Tests (VLT) Version 2 (Schmitt, Schmitt, & Clapham 2001) to assess students' vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension test and open-ended questions.

#### IV. RESULT OF RESEARCH

##### 4.1 Reading Anxiety Explains Total

###### Variance of Reading Comprehension

Based on the result of simple regression analysis on SPSS 16, reading anxiety explained total variance of reading comprehension as much as 3.5 % as can be seen on table below:

##### 4.1 Reading Anxiety Explains Total

###### Variance of Reading Comprehension

There were two essential pieces of information in the Model Summary table above, they were R and R<sup>2</sup> (R Square). The multiple correlation coefficients (R) was a measure of the strength of the relationship between dependent variable (Y—reading comprehension) and the one of the predictor variables selected for inclusion in the equation (reading anxiety). In this case, R= 0.187 which informed us there was a relationship between reading anxiety and reading compre-

hension. Then R square was the statistic that

Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.187 <sup>a</sup>	.035	.023	7.719

In this case, R<sup>2</sup> was 3.5%. It means that the reading anxiety explains total variance of reading comprehension as much as 3.5% and the rest as much as 96.5% were explained by another factor.

##### 4.2 Reading Self-Efficacy Explains Total

###### Variance of Reading Comprehension

Based on the result of simple regression analysis on SPSS 16, reading self-efficacy explained total variance of reading comprehension was 4.3 % as can be seen on next table:

Table 4.2 Reading Self-Efficacy Explains Total Variance of Reading Comprehension  
Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.208 <sup>a</sup>	.043	.031	7.687

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reading Self Efficacy

b. Dependent Variable: Reading Comprehension

There were two essential pieces of information in the Model Summary table above, they were R and R<sup>2</sup> (R Square). The multiple correlation coefficients (R) was a measure of the strength of the relationship between dependent variable (Y - students' reading comprehension) and the one of the predictor variables selected for inclusion in the equation (students' reading self-efficacy). In this case,  $R = 0.208$  which informed us there was a relationship between students' reading self efficacy and students' reading comprehension. Then R square was the statistic that enabled us to determine the amount of explained variation (variance) in Y. In this case,  $R^2$  was 4.3%. It means that the reading self-efficacy explained total variance of students' reading comprehension as much as 4.3 % and the rest as much as 95.7 % are explained by another factor.

#### **4.3 Vocabulary Explains Total Variance of Reading Comprehension**

Based on the result of simple regression analysis on SPSS 16, vocabulary explained total variance of reading comprehension as much as 4.3% as can be seen on table below:

**Table 4.3 The Contribution of Vocabulary towards Reading Comprehension**

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.549 <sup>a</sup>	.301	.293	6.568

a. Predictors: (Constant), Vocabulary

b. Dependent Variable: Reading Comprehension

There are two essential pieces of information in the Model Summary table above, they are R and R<sup>2</sup> (R Square). The multiple correlation coefficients (R) is a measure of the strength of the relationship between dependent variable (Y- students' reading comprehension) and the one of the predictor variables selected for inclusion in the equation (vocabulary). In this case,  $R = 0.549$  which tells us there is a relationship between students' vocabulary and students' reading comprehension. Then R square is the statistic that enables us to determine the amount of explained variation (variance) in Y. in this case,  $R^2$  is 30.1%. It means that the vocabulary explains total variance of students' reading comprehension as much as 30.1% and the rest as much as 68.6% is explained by other factors.

#### **4.4 Students' Reading Anxiety, Reading Self-Efficacy, and Vocabulary Explain Total Variance of Students' Reading Comprehension**

A multiple regression procedure was conducted to examine reading anxiety, reading self-efficacy and vocabulary explain total variance of students' reading comprehension. The multiple regression analysis revealed that the students' reading anxiety, reading self-efficacy, and vocabulary are strongly associated with their reading comprehension since the R is 0.560.

**Table 4.4 Reading Anxiety, Reading Self-Efficacy, and Vocabulary Explain Total Variance of Students' Reading Comprehension Simultaneously Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.560 <sup>a</sup>	.314	.288	6.592

a. Predictors: (Constant), Vocabulary, Reading Anxiety, Reading Self Efficacy

b. Dependent Variable: Reading Comprehension

As can be seen on the table above, the coefficient determination (R Square) was 0.314. It indicated that reading anxiety, reading self-efficacy and vocabulary explained total variance of students' reading comprehension simultaneously as much as 31.4% and

the rest 68.6% was accounted for by other factors not included in the model.

## V. CONCLUSION

The present study was attempted to investigate how much reading anxiety, reading self-efficacy, and vocabulary knowledge explained total variance of students' reading comprehension. In addition, this study also investigated which one of reading anxiety, reading self-efficacy, and vocabulary served as better predictor of students' reading comprehension. Based on the findings, data analysis, and discussion of this research, it could be drawn that vocabulary serves as a better predictor of students' reading comprehension.

Vocabulary explained around 30.1% of the total variance of students' reading comprehension, whereas reading anxiety only accounted for 3.5% of the total variance of students' reading and reading self-efficacy only accounted for 4.3% of the total variance of students' reading comprehension. As such, adequate vocabulary knowledge appeared to be one of the basics for successful reading comprehension (Ma & Lin, 2015). It is in line with Meara (1996, p.37) notes that "learners with big vocabularies are more proficient in a wide range of language skills than learners



with smaller vocabularies”.

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