COMPARING LOW AND HIGH LEVEL OF ANXIETY STUDENTS AND THEIR READING PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan perbedaan signifikan antara siswa dengan tingkat rendah kekhawatiran dan tingkat tinggi kekhawatiran terhadap prestasi membaca siswa. Sejumlah 24 siswa dari kelas XI MIA 3 dipilih sebagai kelas sampel. Metode dalam penelitian ini adalah *ex-post-facto* perihal penelitian komparasi. Alat pengumpulan datanya adalah tes *Reading Anxiety* dan *Reading Performance*. Hasil penelitian menunjukan bahwa nilai perbandingan *t-value* lebih tinggi dibandingkan dengan nilai kritis dari *t-table* (7.136>2.074). Pengujian dua arah signifikan untuk varian yang sama menunjukkan 0.000<0.05. Oleh karena itu, dapat disimpulkan bahwa ada perbedaan yang signifikan dari prestasi membaca siswa antara tingkat tinggi dan tingkat rendah kekhawatiran.Hal itu berarti bahwa siswa dengan tingkat tinggi kekhawatiran dapat berpengaruh negatif terhadap prestasi kemampuan membaca.

The objective of this study was to find out whether there was a significant difference of reading performance between the students of lower level of anxiety and those of higher level of anxiety. Twenty four students of XI MIA 3 were selected as the sample class of this research. An ex-post-facto design was used in terms of comparative study. The instruments were Foreign Language Reading Anxiety questionnaire test (FLRA) and Reading Performance test. The results of calculation showed that *t*-ratio was higher than *t*-table (7.136>2.074). The two tail significance for equal variances showed that 0.000<0.05. It can be concluded that there was a significant difference of reading performance between higher level students and lower level students based on anxiety. It implies that higher students' level of anxiety can impact negatively on their reading performance ability.

Keywords: reading anxiety, reading performance, reading

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is associated with feelings of being uneasy, frustrated, apprehensive, orworried, plays an important affective role in language learning (Brown, 2000).Without paying attention to the causes and the level of anxiety, it is believed that anxiety may affect students' performance. According to Saito & Samimy (1996), learning other language could be hard for some students. Chastain (1988) also believes that anxiety seems to be a key determiner of learner achievement and success in language learning classrooms. When students have high anxiety levels, they cannot concentrate on learning and as a result, they might fail in performing a task in classrooms.

Reading is one of the difficult activities for some students because it involves combination of abilities, such as linguistic and cognitive ability. Reading is also essential for students, they can develop their knowledge and get more information that is related to their studies through book. Reading is also subject to variability within the affective domain. More precisely, anxiety counted within an affective domain may have a relationship to the learning of reading. Nevertheless, to date, little attention has been paid to this aspect of language learning.

Many students will experience some form of anxiety or panic during their time and it is more likely to occur at specific times when studying. Anxiety is likely to be higher when students have assignments that they did not understand. Anxiety leads to worry and rumination. Students may have repetitive and intrusive thoughts that prevent thinking clearly or have physical symptoms such as heart palpitations which make students less their motivation. Many causes of students'

anxiety to learn English, it's important for students' to reduce their anxiety to learn English. Bailey, in Zhang (2001) believes a contributing factor to learners' success or failure to master second/foreign language is the manner that learners for their worries, apprehension, and even dread when faced with a certain language. In the second grade of senior high school, some students had high score in reading test but on the other hand another had low score. The teacher said that students still get difficulties in learning reading skill, because reading has a very complex process in which the students (the reader) have to find information in the written a form. On the other hand, while reading the students also have to guess, predict, check and ask about what they are looking for. Thus, many students still get low score in English reading performance.

Based on the statements above, the researcher intends to investigate the reading performance achievement between higher level students of anxiety and those of lower level ones. Beside it was a new thing to observe, this research also could be useful for teacher to teach reading properly and the students can enjoy their reading. In this study, the researcher decides to design a problem to be researched with the title: A Comparative Study between Students' with High and Low Level of Anxiety toward Their Reading Performance.

METHOD

This research was a quantitative design in which it was focused on the product (result of the test) not the process of teaching learning. In this research, the researcher used ex-post facto design related to the comparative study. Ex-post facto design is a non experimental research technique in which preexisting groups

are compared on some dependent variables (reading anxiety and reading performance). The population of this research was students of the second grade of science at SMA N 15 Bandar Lampung. The sample was class XI MIA 3. There were 6 classes of the second grade of science contained of 25-30 students in each class. Because this research was a comparative research, the researcher used only one class as the sample test using the two data collecting instruments (T1 and T2). But the researcher needed one more class for try outing the instruments. The samples were selected by using lottery. The data instruments of this research were reading anxiety questionnaire and reading performance tests. The students were categorized into higher level of anxiety and lower level of anxiety based on the scores of the FLRA questionnaire. By using frequencies of SPSS, students who scored >100 were classified as high-anxious and <100 were classified as low-anxious. The collected data was tabulated and analyzed by using t-test of SPSS 17 program to see the difference between two groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

RESULTS

The result from the calculation showed that the level of significant (p value) was 0.133, t value was 7.136 which the data significant based on t-table was 2.074 (t-ratio was higher than t-table) at the significant level 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted. The sig. 2-tailed was 0.000 (< 0.05) which was lower than 0.05. It means that there was a significant difference of reading performance achieve between higher level students and lower level students of anxiety.

The result of data analysis using t-test of SPSS 17 program showed that t-value is 7.136, which meant that the two groups are proceed using *Independent Sample T-test* and was showing certain numeric result with *t-table* or critical value table as the guidance to see whether the two groups were difference or not. If the result is more than the *t-table*, so it means that positive difference has proven. Then if the result is lower, it meant that there is no difference between two groups. The position of *t-table* for this research analysis was 2.074, and 7.136 is higher than 2.074.

The significance difference of reading performance between students' with higher level and lower level of anxiety means that anxiety can give negative impact to students reading ability. For example, students with names BAN, RFS, MRF, NIS, MP, got score between 120 up to 130 in reading anxiety test and got score between 40 up to 56 in reading performance test. These students were gained lower scores in reading test and higher score in reading anxiety test. On the other hand, students with names GBJ, YP, MFR, ADSG, got score between 65 up to 67 in reading anxiety test which was lower level of anxiety and these students also got the higher score of reading performance test between 82 up to 86. The example above showed that the higher level students' of anxiety scores, the lower their reading performance scores. In line with that, the second example showed the lower level students' of anxiety scores, the higher their reading performance scores.

DISCUSSIONS

Based on the result of the test, the researcher analyzed the score then grouped the sample into high and low anxiety groups by using frequencies of Spss. Among 24

students who followed the test, 12 students were classified into higher level reading anxiety group and 12 students were classified into lower level of reading anxiety group. The result showed that the highest reading anxiety score was 130 and the lowest score was 65 with the average score was 98.5. The highest reading anxiety score shows a bad or low result in reading performance test in comprehending text with the score was 44, while the low reading anxiety score shows a good or highest result in reading performance test with the score was 86. Thus, this result has answered the research problem.

Another test that has been done is reading test. There were 24 students of XI MIA 3 who had done 50 items of reading test. In the result of the test revealed that the average score is 61.5, while the highest score is 86 and the lowest score is 44. The items were contained of reading aspects such as determining main idea, finding specific information, reference, inference and vocabulary.

From the result of reading test, the items represent main idea were 68% true answered by the students. It showed that students were clearly understood on how to find out the main idea of texts in the test. Segretto (2002) states that main idea reading selection is what the passage is mostly about. In line with that, the ability of students choosing the right answer of main idea obviously was shown the ability of understanding the overall idea of the text which is very important in reading to comprehending a text.

On the other hands, it can be seen from the students' answer for finding specific information was about 68% students could answer correctly. In this part, students are able to differentiate between ideas essential to understanding the meaning of

the text and supporting details. Finding specific information in type of question will help the students to understand better what the author wants them to know and it enables the students to distinguish between the most and least important information.

Some questions which are standing for inference of the reading tests were about 49% students could answer it correctly. In this part, students need to bring out their understanding of the specific part inside of the text such as their opinion about the characters or the topics. By definition, inference requires that each reader construct a meaning that makes the text a reflection of her/his experience (Moreillon, 2007).

Some of the items stands for vocabulary part also prove the different ability of each student to understand another name of a word or the word that has same meaning as the one they were faced with. In these items, 56% students answered correctly. Linan (2007) states that the role of vocabulary in reading is clearly understood: vocabulary knowledge, the understanding of word meanings and their use, contributes to reading comprehension and knowledge building. Based on the statement, can be concluded students with high understanding of words meaning can answer the items correctly.

The researcher divided the students into two groups (high and low level of anxiety). The researcher found that those two groups have the highest score in finding specific information aspects while the lowest score was in reference. Reference is the words or phrase that is used either before or after the reference in the reading material. They are used to avoid unnecessary repetition of words or

phrases. It means that students still feel difficult in finding a meaning of a word elsewhere in the text.

Although the sample for the research was not as big as Horwitz (1986), the result still support Horwitz's study as in his study he found that anxiety was really affecting English achievement. In relation with the result of reading test, the questionnaire of reading anxiety showed that item number 17 was getting the highest score among all items. And all members of students with higher level of anxiety scored it high while only some of members of lower level anxiety students scored it high. This particular item belongs to behavioral aspect. It means the most students agree they felt nervous when they read a passage in English and they were not familiar with the topic. The other behavioral aspect items (items number 16, 18, 19) were also getting high score from the students compared to other items in other aspects. On the other hand, items of emotional aspects of anxiety were getting lower score than the other aspects even though most of the questionnaire items were part of it. It might be suggested that though members of higher level anxiety students scored it high, most of the students in class XI MIA 3 were having quite medium and low anxiety of how intriguing English could be for them.

It is also found that students with high and low anxiety level has the most score in somatic aspects It means that most of the students have psychological symptom (somatic anxiety) when they were doing the reading test such as sweating and nervousness. Students' with high anxiety level has the lowest score in behavioral aspects. This result shows that some students did not have behavior symptom when they were doing the test like stress and feared of the situation and they can

avoid the tension and apprehension. The students also did not demand themselves to get good score because the score of reading test does not affect their English score. This assumption may cause in low number of behavior anxiety.

Students' with low level anxiety has the lowest score in emotional aspects. The level of emotional anxiety was at the positive point. According to Pekrun (2014), positive emotions are emotions that are experienced as pleasant. Positive emotions can vary in terms of the physiological and cognitive activation (also called arousal) that is part of the emotion. Enjoyment, excitement, hope and pride are activating positive emotions. From this explanation, it could be assumed that the low level students enjoyed and felt excitement when they were doing the test.

In his study, Yamashita (2004) pointed out that anxiety in L2 is greater than L1. It is because in order to learn L2, they need to learn new rules, remembering new vocabularies, or learn how to make new sounds. In short, familiarity of a language is essential. Students feel more relax when they read in their own language. However, when they are asked to read in other language, they will feel anxious and make some mistakes. Krashen (1981) had stated in his book, that there appears to be a consistent relationship between various forms of anxiety and language profiency. The more they anxious, the more they mistakes they will make. Therefore, in order to maximize their achievement, students need to lessen their anxiety.

A good teacher is not only pushing students to do the work but also wondering why they seem reluctant to do the work. Anxiety, which sometimes regarded as the being behind their reluctance should not take all blame. It is just one of it, it

might be good to say that anxiety is not as annoying as it seems. As a matter of fact, knowing your own level of anxiety might be useful for yourself. Scovel (1978) also pointed out that has quite facilitative effect on language learning. Some certain level of discomfort and unpleasant feeling would keep the students alert. Thus, we could say that anxiety could be radar for someone to act more careful, paying more attention to anything that could trigger their anxiety. If anxiety arises repeatedly around a certain problem, it is a sign that we need to take a closer look. Students that could overcome their anxiety will surely be able to learn anything as he has nothing to block his comprehensible input from being used for acquisition (Krashen, 1981).

However, since the result of the research showed a negative influence of anxiety to the students' reading performance, the researcher thinks that anxiety could be a hindrance if particular student do not know how to handle it. In the other hand, if he could cope with it and making it less than it should be, the student will find it easy to answer the question or to understand the content of a text when they read it.

There are several ways that could be applied by teacher to lessen students' reading anxiety. One method that has successfully proved to lessen reading anxiety is by implementing a supportive classroom environment where students conduct choral repeated reading and taught by using audio-lingual method. This method was used by Chastain (in Krashen, 1981) to teach French in American school.

Actually, there are also other factors besides anxiety that could be counted on students' performance of what they read. Among those factors, affective variables

such as motivation and self-confidence play their role too on students' comprehension. Actually, these factors might be the first that need to be paid more attention than other factors like cognitive factors or surrounding factors. It is based on the consideration that a student could not learn how to do something at its full if they do not have any will to do that, or they are lacking of self-confidence.

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher could assume that the more anxious a student is, the less they could concentrate on what they read. It will likely affect their ability to judge or analyze a presented problem because they unable to overcome their anxiety.

CONCLUSION

There is a significant difference on reading performance between students with high level of anxiety and low level of anxiety at second grade students. The hypothesis testing shows that p value was 0.133 at the level significant of 0.05, t value was 7.136 which the data significant based on t-table was 2.074 (t-ratio was higher than t-table). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the researcher hypothesis was accepted. The two tail significance for equal variances showed that 0.000 which was lower than 0.05. It means that there was a significant difference of reading performance achieve between higher level students and lower level students of anxiety.

The highest students' reading anxiety score was 130 and the lowest score was 65 with the average score was 98.5. The highest students' reading anxiety score shows a bad or lowest result in reading performance test in comprehending text

with the score was 44, while the lowest students' reading anxiety score shows a good or highest result in reading performance test with the score was 86. It means the students with lower level of anxiety gave a better result with their reading test than those who have higher level of anxiety.

SUGGESTION

Since anxiety could affect students' reading performance, it might be good for the teacher to make their students feel relieved in order to lessen their anxiety such as by using familiar attitude or fun teaching. It might be a good idea for the teacher to make students practice reading regularly in order to boost their confidence.

It might be preferable for further researchers who attempt to conduct their own research about anxiety and reading performance in the bigger population as it could gain more generalization than the researcher did in smaller population. It is better to use interview and observation instruments in order to gather more data about their anxiety since these two instruments provide deeper and more accurate data.

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