Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter presents the introduction of the study. Several important points are mentioned in this chapter. This introduction discusses the background of the research, identification of the problem, delimitation of the research, research question, objectives of the research, and significance of the research, as well as the organization of the chapter. The background of the research includes the reason why the researcher is interested in researching the topic. Identification and delimitation of the problem identify and limit the problem investigated clearly. Besides, the research questions and objectives describe the specific aims of the research being conducted. Finally, the significance of the research is also explained in this research and the organization of the chapter.

Research Background

Learning English, especially reading skills, is not easy for everyone. Students need to know the meaning of the text when reading. Reading is an activity carried out by students to increase knowledge, critical thinking skills or vocabulary. According to Celik and Altun (2023), reading is an essential part of both education and personal development. Learners use reading to gain knowledge and improve their critical thinking skills. Furthermore, reading allows students to get insights into various cultures and develop new perspectives on a variety of topics.

However, some students still have difficulty in reading. Liu (2011) said that foreign language learners face challenges when developing reading comprehension of L2 as a target language. Reading comprehension has four components. Students must be able to identify the main concepts of a text, understand vocabulary, make inferences, and provide specific information. These components are considered challenges students experience when reading texts (Huang et al. 2008; Suandi, Anggraini, & Lume, 2020). The challenges faced by students can certainly hinder the learning process.

Another problem that hinders students from reading English texts is reading anxiety. According to Ahmad et al. (2013), two factors influence foreign language reading anxiety, namely personal characteristics and text features. Personal characteristics include worry about the reading effect and fear of making mistakes. For example, if a student gets asked to read aloud in front of the class, their attention is focused on their performance, and the brain produces uncomfortable emotions. Additionally, Ahmad et al. (2013) stated that students who are afraid of making mistakes do not commonly participate in reading tasks due to a lack of confidence. Therefore, it can increase anxiety in reading a foreign language. This interferes with students' reading comprehension and performance. Al Faruq (2019) mentioned that personal factors such as reading confidence are necessary since they serve as the basis for excellent reading performance. Students felt embarrassed to read in front of others and selected silent reading.

The text features can also cause students' reading anxiety. According to Ahmad et al. (2013), reading anxiety caused by text features is divided into three

concepts: unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topics, and unfamiliar culture. The first is unknown vocabulary, which is considered a cause of reading anxiety. Students feel anxious when encountering new words and translations of texts that they find strange. The second is unfamiliar topics, which can be a source of reading anxiety. Students are anxious about uncommon topics that they have no prior knowledge about. The third source of their reading anxiety is unfamiliar culture. Students are concerned about the translation of words connoted by their language and about being unable to discern the correct meaning.

Students who find it difficult to read a foreign language will easily feel anxious. Students will think they do not need to learn it further because it is not their language. Students who learn a language that is very different from their own culture tend to experience lower reading comprehension levels and increased anxiety (Bensalem, 2020). Reading anxiety can be caused by unfamiliar cultural content as well as topics that look uninteresting to students. According to Kuru-Gonen (2009), students' comprehension of foreign language materials is hindered by unfamiliar cultural content. Then, uninteresting or difficult topics for readers can cause reading anxiety.

Student reading anxiety levels can be measured by the way students understand English vocabulary. Students who have high anxiety tend to have great difficulty understanding what they read. In contrast, students who have moderate anxiety tend to have a little difficulty understanding what they read, depending on how the vocabulary is formed. Muhlis (2017) investigated foreign language reading anxiety and identified the underlying factors in senior high school EFL

students in Indonesia. The results showed that more than half of the students suffered from reading anxiety, with the majority at moderate levels of anxiety and a small number experiencing high levels of anxiety. Unfamiliar vocabulary was found to be the most common cause of reading anxiety.

There are some studies that focus on reading anxiety factors, namely Aisyah (2017), Muhlis (2017), and Al-Shboul et al (2013). There are two factors of reading anxiety such as text features and personal factors. Text features can be divided into three categories: unfamiliar vocabulary, unfamiliar topics, and unfamiliar culture. Furthermore, based on personal factors, it is divided into two categories: fear of making mistakes and worry about the impact of reading. Then, there are some studies that focus on the level of reading anxiety, such as Mudra & Mckinnon (2022), Fitrawati et al. (2023), and Al-faruq (2019). Based on the results of several studies, it show that there are differences in the level of reading anxiety among students. Some students have moderate, low, to high levels of reading anxiety. Students' reading anxiety levels can be viewed from the differences in class, gender, and facilities in schools. In addition, some studies focus on strategies to reduce reading anxiety, namely Mohammadpur & Ghafournia (2015) and Wahyu (2023). Based on the findings of several studies, the most important way to reduce reading anxiety is to expose language learners to easily comprehensible reading sources and culturally familiar texts, which helps learners develop feelings of calm and confidence while also allowing them to prepare, relax, and ignore the audience.

This is one of the studies that analyzed the correlation between students' reading anxiety and reading comprehension. According to Salmiah (2017), the study examined the correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension of second-grade students at the state Islamic Junior High School of Siak Sri Indrapura. The result shows a significant correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension in the second grade at the State Islamic Junior High School of Siak Sri Indrapura.

This research must be conducted because the topic is relevant to the problems faced by foreign language learners, especially in one of the universities. This research can help learners solve the problem of foreign language reading anxiety. This research is also important to find out the impact of reading anxiety on reading comprehension while providing solutions to relevant problems. In addition, this research can determine the students' reading anxiety level. Therefore, teachers can reduce reading anxiety by choosing optimal teaching methods and encouraging them to improve reading comprehension. Therefore, the researcher wants to know more about students' reading anxiety to examine the correlation between students' reading anxiety and students' reading comprehension.

Problem Identification

Students face several kinds of problems when learning a foreign language. One of them is experiencing anxiety when reading English. Based on the observations of the researcher in previous studies, students who experience reading anxiety will have difficulty understanding the meaning of a text. Students

must translate word by word to understand the text, especially when they are reading English literature. Students are often distracted by stories they do not understand correctly, causing them to get stuck and lost.

In addition, based on the researcher's observation of students, most students find it difficult to understand a text due to a lack of vocabulary. Then, each student has a different understanding of a new text. In addition, the difference in grammar rules between Indonesian and English makes students misinterpret and understand the reading text. Therefore, the researcher wants to see the level of students' reading anxiety, as well as the level of students' reading comprehension. Finally, the researcher wanted to see the correlation between EFL students' reading anxiety and their reading comprehension. However, the correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension cannot be confirmed because reading comprehension does not only focus on reading anxiety but can be related to vocabulary and grammar skills.

Problem Delimitation

The researcher focused on three areas for this investigation. The initial focus was the students' level of reading anxiety. The second focus was how well the students mastered reading comprehension, which was something the researcher wanted to know. In addition, the researcher also examined the correlation between EFL students' reading anxiety and reading comprehension. As a result, the researcher investigated the English Language Education Department class of 2021.

Research Questions

The focus of this study is on students in the English Language Education Department at a private university in Yogyakarta. Based on the problem identification, the researcher has developed three research questions. The research questions are as follows:

1. What is the English Language Education Department students' reading anxiety level?

2. What is the English Language Education Department students' reading comprehension level?

3. What is the correlation between the English Language Education Department students' reading anxiety and their reading comprehension?

Research Objectives

After formulating the problem in the form of a research question, the researcher starts this research, which aims to:

1. To find out the English Language Education Department students' reading anxiety level.

2. To find out the English Language Education Department students' reading comprehension level.

3. To find out the correlation between the English Language Education Department students' reading anxiety and their reading comprehension.

Significance of the Research

A few significant can get through this study for the students, teachers, and future researchers.

For students

Letting students know that reading anxiety can have an impact on students' reading comprehension levels. They will be more aware that they are anxious or not in reading class. Students can find out the cause of their anxiety when reading English. Students who experience anxiety after reading this research will be more aware to always practice to lessen their uneasiness.

For the teachers

Provide essential details on how students can improve their reading skills. Teachers can improve creative learning methods to create effective learning. Teachers can find out what causes anxiety in students with reading. Therefore, teachers have a significant role in the continuity of learning. Teachers can also offer techniques to reduce anxiety among students.

For the future researchers

This study investigated the correlation between EFL students' reading anxiety and their reading comprehension. As a result, this study can be an inspiration or resource for future researchers who are interested in English reading anxiety or students' achievement in comprehending English reading. Therefore, future researchers can use different methods to research this topic.

Organization of the Chapters

This study has five chapters, each discussing different topics. The first chapter introduces the research, which consists of the research background, problem identification, problem delimitation, research question, research objective, the significance of the study, and the chapter's organization.

The researcher describes the literature review, conceptual framework, and hypothesis in chapter two. Chapter two explains theories related to students' reading anxiety, students' reading comprehension, and the correlation between EFL students' reading anxiety and their comprehension. Then, chapter two describes related theories that are appropriate for research.

In chapter three, it discusses the methodology of research. This chapter clearly describes how the research is conducted and the data collected. Furthermore, chapter three consists of five methodology components: research design, research setting, research participants, data gathering technique, and data analysis. The method used in this study is quantitative, and the researcher used a correlational design. The participants of this study are students majoring in English Language Education Department batch 2021. The researcher used questionnaires and reading tests to collect participants' data. The researcher used a simple random sampling strategy in this study. This study used two data analyses, which are descriptive statistics and interferential statistics. In addition, this study used SPSS and Pearson Product Moment to investigate the two variables.

In chapter four, examine the findings and discussion. In this section, important findings are described and how they answer the research question.

Apart from that, it also makes comparisons with previous research and discusses the relevance of the researcher's findings to the field of study.

Chapter five contains conclusions and suggestions. In this section, the researcher presents conclusions from research findings and suggestions regarding the correlation between EFL students' reading anxiety and their reading comprehension.