

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, the research problem, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, and the definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Recently, Investigating students' reading anxiety has been concentrated by many studies since it brought a harmful effect on foreign language reading. This is evidenced by the result of research from Abdulhusan, which indicates a negative correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension. The higher the students' reading anxiety level, the lower the reading comprehension level they acquire.¹

Despite the fact that reading is seen as an individual act, the research finding of Isler and Yildirim shows that reading anxiety does occur, and it has a significant impact on the learner.² The finding dispels the assumption that readers are always spared feelings of anxiety and embarrassment from revealing one's incompetence to others. From these findings, it is clear that students' reading anxiety might interfere with their ability to comprehend English text.

Many factors can cause reading anxiety, such as being afraid of having low academic performance³, a fear of making mistakes⁴ or it might be due to a lack of grammatical understanding, an unfamiliar word, an unusual topic, an unfamiliar culture, an ineffective teaching method, and top-down reading anxiety.⁵

¹ Fatima Raheem Abdulhusan, "Investigating the Relationship between the Anxiety and Reading Comprehension and Its Impact on Preparatory Schools Students' Performance in Misan," *Journal of Basic Education College* 15, No. 4 (2019): 3301.

Comprehension and Its Impact on Preparatory School Students' Performance in Misan," *Journal of Basic Education College* 15, No.4 (2019): 3301.

² Cemre Isler & Ozgur Yildirim, "Sources of Turkish EFL Learners' Foreign Language Reading Anxiety," *JEELS* 4, No.1 (2017):1.

³ Jing Zhou, "Foreign Language Reading Anxiety in a Chinese as a Foreign Language Context," *The Journal of Asia TEFL* 9, No.1 (2017): 155.

⁴ Azhari Muhlis, "Foreign Language Reading Anxiety among Indonesian EFL Senior High School Students," *English Franca* 5, No.1 (2017): 19.

⁵ Ashfaque Soomro, Imran Khan, & Muhammad Younus, "Top Down, Bottom Up and Classroom Reading Anxiety and Their Effect on Reading Performance of Undergraduate Engineering Students in Pakistan," *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education* 11, No.3 (2019): 590.

Reading is an essential skill for acquiring knowledge, and reading comprehension is used to think and respond to what students read. According to Miao & Vibulphol, reading skills are extremely important, especially for university students to retrieve relevant information and enhance their knowledge.⁶ Therefore, it is very important to reduce reading anxiety which is one of the barriers to students' reading comprehension.

Considering the importance of knowing the level of reading anxiety experienced by students, which has been discovered as the primary issue that hinder successful foreign language teaching and learning, Kruk has attempted to comprehend the construct and has been looking for solutions to reduce foreign language reading anxiety levels.⁷ Furthermore, Valizadeh mentions that one way to overcome students' difficulties in foreign language reading is to utilize reading strategies.⁸ It is in line with Liao & Wang, who indicates that reading comprehension strategies can assist learners in decreasing their levels of reading anxiety.⁹

Recently, Ghaith researched the direct and indirect roles of foreign language reading anxiety (FLRA) and metacognitive reading strategies (global, problem-solving, support) in reading comprehension. There were 103 college EFL of undergraduate English from a private university in Lebanon who participated in that study. The result showed that EFL reading comprehension was positively related to global and problem-solving strategies, although FLRA did not mediate this. Contrastingly, FLRA negatively influenced the understanding and mediated support strategies.¹⁰

⁶ Qing Qing Miao & Jutarat Vibulphol, "English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety of Chinese University Students," *International Education Studies* 14, No.3 (2021): 64.

⁷ Mariusz Kruk, "Changes in Foreign Language Anxiety: A Classroom Perspective," *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 28, No.1 (2018): 31-57.

⁸ Mohammadreza Valizadeh, "The Effect of Reading Comprehension Strategies Instruction on EFL Learners' Reading Anxiety Level," *International Journal of Education* 9, No.1 (2021): 56.

⁹ Hung Chang Liao & Ya Huei Wang, "Using Comprehension Strategies for Students' Self-Efficacy, Anxiety, and Proficiency in Reading English as a Foreign Language," *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal* 46, No.3 (2018): 447.

¹⁰ Ghazi Ghaith, "Foreign Language Reading Anxiety and Metacognitive Strategies in Undergraduates' Reading Comprehension," *Issues in Educational Research* 30, No.4 (2020): 1310.

A study on reading anxiety and reading comprehension is still an important topic to be researched. An example was noticed by Wilany & Dewi. They revealed that the students with lower reading anxiety have better reading comprehension than those with higher reading anxiety.¹¹

Moreover, Fathi & Shirazidadeh researched the effect of a second language reading strategy instruction on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension and reading anxiety. Forty-eight young Iranian EFL students participated in this study. The finding showed that reading strategy instruction significantly impacts young Iranian EFL students' reading comprehension.¹²

In brief, since numerous studies indicate that students with a high level of reading anxiety may experience a low level of reading comprehension, many researchers have focused on the reading anxiety sources and the reading strategies. In addition, the issues of possible sources of reading anxiety experienced by high achievers (the students who get high reading test scores) and low achievers (the students who get low reading test scores) and the reading strategies they use have not been investigated. As a result, the present researcher examines not only the sources of reading anxiety, but also examines what reading strategies are used by high and low achievers.

Even various reading strategies have been taught in intensive reading classes; the lecturers need to know more about the reading strategies that students frequently employ. Lecturers must recognize how the students learn. According to Wenden, the learning process examines what the students are learning and how they are learning.¹³ The lecturers may assist the students in implementing the strategies commonly used in different text types if they are aware of the reading strategies that students often use. The students also experiment with different reading strategies. Knowing the reading strategies used by students can reduce the

¹¹Eka Wilany & Desi Dewi, "The Effect of Academic Self Management and Reading Anxiety to Students' Reading Comprehension in EFL Classroom," *Dimensi* 6, No.3 (2017): 431.

¹²Jalil Fathi & Mohsen Shirazizadeh, "The Effect of a Second Language Reading Strategy Instruction on Iranian EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension and Reading Anxiety," *Language Related Research* 11, No.4 (2020): 267-269.

¹³Anita Wenden, *Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy* (Hemel Hempsted: Prentice-Hall, 1991).

reading anxiety they experience and increase the level of their reading comprehension.

Thus, the results of this study can later contribute both theoretically and practically to the world of learning. Theoretically, the results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of learning strategies in reading English. Practically, it is hoped that students can improve their skills in reading English texts and they are no longer confused to applying reading strategies while reading, so they can comprehend the texts well and decrease their anxiety related to the reading.

In this study, the researcher uses the think-aloud method to collect the data on students reading strategies. Students can think aloud to verbalize their thoughts as they read. Consequently, this method is advantageous since students voice all of their ideas to increase their comprehension of the text they are reading.¹⁴

Considering the importance of knowing the sources of reading anxiety and reading strategies used by the students, as mentioned in the previous studies, the researcher is interested in analyzing the sources of reading anxiety experienced by the students and the reading strategies they use to comprehend English text. Thus this research is entitled 'Students' Reading Anxiety and Reading Strategies in Comprehending Introduction Section of Journal Article. This text is chosen because it can be purposed as a source of knowledge for students and related to the material they study in their academic reading course.

B. The Research Problem

Related to the description in the background of the study above, the researcher formulated the problems as follows:

1. Do high achievers and low achievers experience reading anxiety? If any, what are the sources?
2. Do high achievers and low achievers employ different reading strategies in comprehending the introduction section of journal article? If any, what are the differences?

¹⁴Ellin Keene & Zimmerman, *Mosaic of Thought: Teaching Comprehension in a Reader's Workshop* (Portsmouth, Nh: Heineman, 1997).

C. The Objectives of the Study

Based on the statements of the research problem above, the objectives of the study are:

1. To investigate and describe the sources of reading anxiety experienced by high achievers and low achievers.
2. To investigate and describe the difference in reading strategies used by high achievers and low achievers in comprehending the introduction section of journal article.

D. The Significance of the Study

Both theoretical and practical aspects can be seen in the significance of this study. Theoretically, the result of this study is expected to contribute to the development of learning strategies in reading English and the advancement of knowledge about the effective causes of reading anxiety.

Practically, it is hoped that students can improve their skills in reading English texts and they are no longer confused to applying reading strategies while reading, so they can comprehend the texts well and decrease their anxiety related to the reading.

E. The Scope and Limitation of the Study

To make the study not too boarded, the researcher limits the scope of this study. This study focuses on the possible causes of students' reading anxiety and the reading strategies used by high achievers and low achievers. Considering many reading strategies and specifying the study, the researcher only uses the classification of language learning strategies proposed by O'Malley & Chamot, cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies.¹⁵ Due to the think-aloud session taking a long time, this study only involves 8 students. The participants are categorized into two, 4 students whose reading test scores are standard

¹⁵ Jerome O'Malley & Anna Chamot, *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 44-45.

deviation above the mean (high achievers) and 4 students whose reading test scores are standard deviation below the mean (low achievers). The researcher uses the introduction section of a journal article because it can be purposed as a source of knowledge for students and related to the material they study in their academic reading course.

F. The Definition of Key Terms

To avoid the readers' misunderstanding, the researcher defines some key terms used in this study as follows:

1. **Reading comprehension:** the ability to understand the text and relate it to what the reader already knows
2. **Reading anxiety:** anxiety due to various factors that occur when the reader is reading and understanding a text
3. **Reading strategy:** the way the reader uses in comprehending the content of the text
4. **Think aloud method:** the way to vocalize an individual's thoughts
5. **Introduction text:** a section of the journal article which provides the readers the needed background to understand the article.