

Students' Anxiety in Reading Aloud at MTs Negeri 3 Bolaang Mongondow Timur-Sulawesi Utara

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Abstract

Students' Anxiety in Reading Aloud at MTs Negeri 3 Bolaang Mongondow Timur was a study that aimed to find out what factors influence students anxiety in reading aloud. This study employed descriptive qualitative method with a qualitative approach. The participants were 15 students in VIII-1 class of MTs Negeri 3 Bolaang Mongondow Timur-Sulawesi Utara. Furthermore, the data was analysed and portrayed into charts, then discussed with existed theories. The result of the research revealed some factors that make students feel anxious in reading aloud. First, personal factors caused students felt anxious such as worry about reading effects and afraid of making an error. Second, the text features also influenced the anxiety in reading aloud such as unfamiliar culture, unfamiliar topic, and unknown vocabulary. By understanding the result, it suggested to the teacher to implement several ways to minimize the students' anxiety such as determining the times of reading aloud, encouraging the students to learn while reading and providing feedback in illustrating language learnt, using text talk, print referencing, and previewing. As a result, this study contributes to the improvement of techniques that the teacher used in conducting reading aloud activity to reduce the students' anxiety.

Keywords: Anxiety, Reading Aloud

Introduction

Studying English requires students to develop four basic skills. There are: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. For both first-language (L1) and second-language (L2) learners, reading is a crucial ability, say Burns and Richards (2018), especially in the internet age where texts are readily available in both print and virtual media.

There are several strategies in reading. For example, knowing the title of a text, learning some basic vocabularies of a text, learning to understand the meaning of a text are all important to apply in reading. In addition, students learn a variety of general knowledge from the textbook as they complete reading activities, (Handayani & Widijantie, 2021)

In the performance of reading activities, students are influenced by a number of factors. According to (McNamara, 2015), the reader's prior knowledge was included, the reader's skill or ability, their level of fear, motivation and internal attitudes. On the contrary, it can also influence their reading process when they have a bad mood. As a result, feelings of shame or anxiety will arise in the reading process because it can increase their lack of seriousness when they read, particularly if they have been to class and are seen by many classmates.

Reading anxiety is the worry of making mistakes. Due to this interaction between texts and personal circumstances, reading is becoming more difficult for English Foreign Language students. Reading anxiety must be overcome by students or teachers as soon as possible, particularly when it has an impact on pupils' ability to read (Jalongo & Hirsh, 2010) and (Zemni & Alrefae, 2020) Reading aloud is a significant source of anxiety since students are required to have good pronunciation and a loud voice when reading aloud, but it can reduce communication anxiety. It can help students to speak for a while until they can speak spontaneously. Furthermore, According to (Jufri, 2019) and (Zemni & Alrefae, 2020), reading aloud, as defined by Franzese is when students read aloud or listen to various types and genres of material and then engage in discourse about the textbook. Additionally, by finding well-known stories and characters in textbooks and observing typical student reactions to texts read, reading aloud fosters a two-way communication between teacher and students.

Studies on the student's anxiety in reading aloud have been conducted and revealed the vary results. First, a study from Ahmad et al. (2013) that focuses on theoretical framework that represents the sources of foreign language reading anxiety in order to examine the extent of the source in the Jordanian EFL context. This research uses the questionnaire to collect the data. The participants this research is the undergraduate students who were taking Basic English course. The results show there were two aspects of foreign language reading anxiety: personal factors and text features.

Unlike the previous research, the participants in this study were the VIII-1 class of MTs Negeri 3 Bolaang Mongondow Timur-Sulawesi Utara. The instrument

used was also different because the researcher employed observation sheet and interview guideline to collect the data in the field.

The second is a study from Ahmad (2018) that focuses on Reading Anxiety at the second year of MA Pondok Pesantren Sultan Hasanuddin and the object on MA Pondok Pesantren Sultan Hasanuddin. This research uses the qualitative method and observation and interview as instruments. The distinction is that is research location and the second research questions. The subject of this research is the second year of MA pondok pesantren Sultan Hasanuddin which consisted 20 students. Meanwhile, the research subject in this study is the VIII-1 class of MTs Negeri 3 Bolaang Mongondow Timur-Sulawesi Utara. The second previous research showed that students' anxiety in reading was from learners' beliefs about language learning as well as personal and interpersonal anxiety. Students' ways to overcome their anxiety were preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, and resignation.

Moreover, (Putra, 2018) analyzed the factors causing students' anxiety in English-speaking classrooms. This research used the qualitative method with a case study approach and questionnaire and classroom observations as an instrument. This research discussed an analysis of students' anxiety in English-speaking classrooms. The subject of this research is the Third Semester Students Of the English Department At Makassar Muhammadiyah University. However, the research subject in this study is the VIII-1 class of MTs Negeri 3 Bolaang Mongondow Timur-Sulawesi Utara. The result from the third previous research showed that the most influencing factor of students in speaking English in class 3E at the third-semester student English Education Department of Muhammadiyah University of Makassar was a factor of motivation, shyness, limited vocabulary, lack of self-confidence, lack of preparation, grammatical error, and friend/classmate. In contrast, the fear of mistake factor is the lowest factor experienced by students in class 3E in the third-semester student English Education Department of Muhammadiyah University of Makassar.

Another study from (Darmawati, 2021) focused on the causes of students' speaking anxiety during classroom interaction and the strategies to reduce their anxiety in speaking English, as perceived by students in 12th grade of SMA Pergis Yapki Maros. This research used the descriptive qualitative method and observation, recording, and interview as an instrument. The distinction is that this research discussed the strategies for reducing the students' anxiety about speaking English. The subject of this research is one class at the XII IPA grade in 2020/2021 Academic year. Meanwhile, the research subject in this study is the VIII-1 class of MTs Negeri 3 Bolaang Mongondow Timur-Sulawesi Utara. The result from the fourth previous

research showed there were four aspects of anxiety (1) worried because their capabilities could not satisfy, (2) nervous because stage fright factor, (3) fear because they are afraid to make a mistake, and (4) shame because afraid of being ridiculed or embarrassed with their appearance. Further, the effects of anxiety were (1) Lack of confidence, (2) Lack of Mastery of the Material, (3) Forgetting the material or blank, (4) Lack of concentration, (5) Unsatisfactory Result. Furthermore, the researcher classified the strategies used by the students to reduce their anxiety in speaking English performance into several categories as follows: (1) Preparation, (2) Relax, (3) Self-confidence, (4) Peer seeking.

Lastly, a study from (Ariyanti, 2020) that investigated the writing anxiety types that students feel when writing English academic articles and the anticipation of the writing anxiety students face in writing English academic articles. This research used the descriptive qualitative method and questionnaire of Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) and interview as an instrument. This research discussed students' anxiety in writing an academic English article. The subject of this research is students in six semesters in the Writing Academic Article class at State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya, which consist of twenty students as the representative. However, the research subject in this study is the VIII-1 class of MTs Negeri 3 Bolaang Mongondow Timur-Sulawesi Utara. The fifth previous research showed the highest avoidance behavior anxiety type. However, the most common anxiety type that occurs in writing activity is cognitive anxiety. Students mentioned three anticipations but "asking friends or experts about writing" was the most chosen way to anticipate.

The researcher discovered the similarities between this study and the previous study above; these are about students' anxiety in performing English Skills. The novelty of this study was on the investigation on factors affect students' anxiety in reading aloud. Moreover, this study used a qualitative descriptive research method by using a qualitative approach. The research instruments are the observation sheets, interview sheets, and documentation.

Based on the preliminary interview to the English teacher in VIII-1 class MTs Negeri 3 Bolaang Mongondow Timur-Sulawesi Utara, it found that during the process of reading aloud in class, there were students who experienced anxiety when reading aloud in class. Some of the students have difficulties and felt worried about pronunciation and articulation when reading aloud. This present study aimed at investigating what factors influenced students' anxiety in reading aloud performed by students of VIII-1 class MTs Negeri 3 Bolaang Mongondow Timur-

Sulawesi Utara, and reviewed them under the theory of personal Factors and text features.

Methodology

This research utilizes a descriptive qualitative method with a qualitative approach. The researcher used this method because the researcher wanted to dig deeper information about what factors affect students' anxiety in reading aloud. The participants in this research were eight-grade students of MTs Negeri 3 Bolaang Mongondow Timur-Sulawesi Utara, consisting of 15 students. The research's primary data was collected by observation during reading aloud activity conducted by the participants. Interview sheet was administered to the participants to get the information of factors caused the anxiety. And documentation was employed to collect the findings and the related theories elaborated in the discussion section. The secondary data of this research are taken from e-books, journals, articles, and previous studies on anxiety in performing English skills. Then, the data were analyzed by three techniques; data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification.

Findings

Based on the research that was conducted in the VIII-1 class of MTs Negeri 3 Bolaang Mongondow Timur-Sulawesi Utara in the academic year 2022/2023 on February 2023, the researchers found the results of the factors that caused students to feel anxious in reading aloud through the observation sheet and interview

Factors Effects of Students Anxiety in Reading Aloud

Based on the observation, the students experienced anxiety in reading aloud when they are asked to read several paragraphs in front of the class. These include various factors. First, caused by personal factors; worry about reading effects and afraid of making an error. Second, caused by text features; unfamiliar culture, unfamiliar topic and unknown vocabulary.

Figure 1 showed 13 of 15 students have worried about reading effects. The researcher observed students who experienced worried about reading effects in 3 items. First, students feel embarrassed. Based on results of observation there were 7 students felt embarrassed in reading aloud. It can be proven by some of the students statements based on the results of interview to students. "Because I'm afraid of misreading.". Second, students feel the reading class is not interesting. The researcher found 6 students were not interested in

reading class. As stated by some of students answered based on results of interview “I asked permission to going out because I don’t know how to read in English.”. Third, students are not confident to read in front of the class. There were 6 students felt not confident to read in front of the class. It can be seen by students’ statement “I feel nervous because I don’t have confidence in myself”.

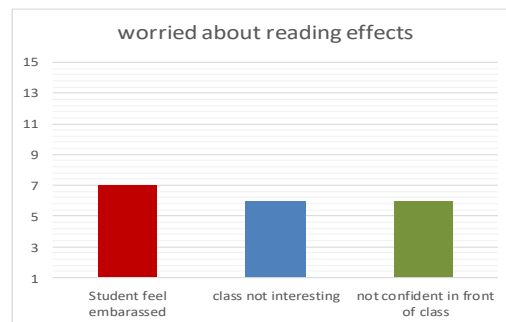


Figure 1. Worried about reading effects

Figure 2 revealed observed students who have feeling afraid of making an error while they have opportunities to read a few of paragraphs in front of the class. There were 10 of 15 students felt the same thing. Moreover, there were 2 items used by the researcher to observed students in afraid of making an error. First, students are hesitated to pronounce the new word in the text. Based on results of observation there were 5 students who felt hesitated to pronounce the new word. It can be proven by some of students’ statement “I feel afraid of making mistakes”. Second, students were shy to ask question to their teacher about how to pronounce correctly. There were 5 students felt embarrassed to ask to pronounce new words correctly. As stated by some of students in interview “I feel scared” “I feel confused”.

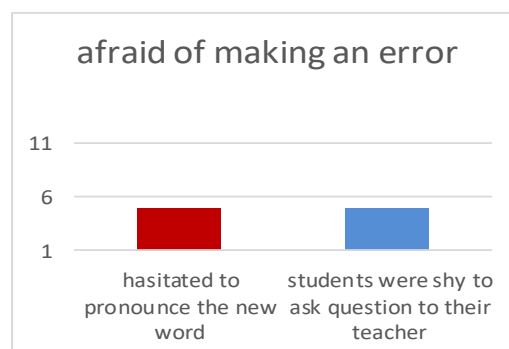


Figure 2. Afraid of making an error

Furthermore, in figure 3, based on the observation there were 10 students who still did not understand the text that they has read in front of class. The researcher observed students who experienced unfamiliar culture in item students do not understand what they read. The students answered based on results of interview “Because in English the writing and reading are different” “After I finished reading I don’t know how to combine the meaning of the word I read” “It was read word by word so I don’t know what it mean”.

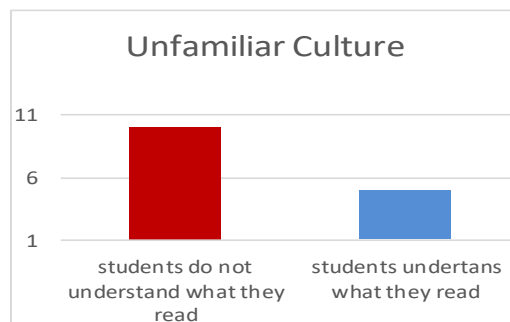


Figure 3. Unfamiliar Culture

Next, the researchers observed students who have difficulty in reading unfamiliar topics in item students are less of comprehension and make students confuse. There were 8 of 15 students who had difficult to understanding the topics that they read in front of class. This can be proven by some of students statement based on results of interview “I feel confused because I usually read the topic about anime” “I want the title in Indonesian language” “The title changes frequently”.

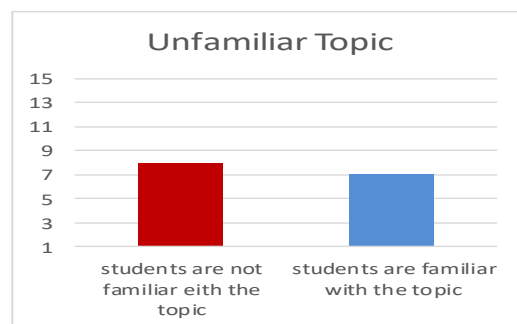


Figure 4. Unfamiliar Topic

Figure 5 showed there where 15 of 15 students who experienced unknown vocabulary in reading aloud when they finding some of vocabulary that they did not know before. Moreover, there were 2 items used by the researcher to observed students in unknown vocabulary. First, students are lack

of vocabulary consequently they feel anxious and shy. Based on results of observation there were 13 students felt anxious and shy when lacking of vocabulary. As stated by some of students' statement "I have forgotten the word" "I feel difficulty" "Because I do not understand". Second, students are difficult to concentrate. There were 5 students felt difficulty to concentrate in reading aloud. It can be proven by some of students statement based on result of interview "I feel nervous and scared" "Difficult to read" "Because I'm afraid of being wrong".

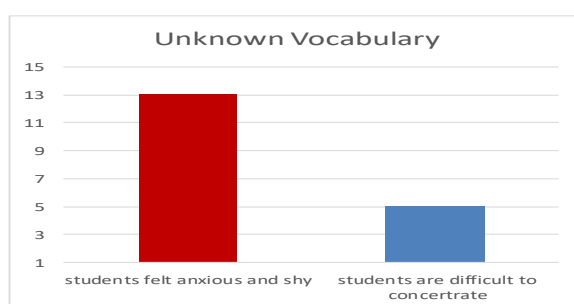


Figure 5. Unknown Vocabulary

Discussion

Factors Effects of Students Anxiety in Reading Aloud

a. Worry about Reading Effects

Reading in a foreign language is a common challenge for students studying English as a second language, according to Zbornik in (Jalongo & Hirsh, 2010) Reading aloud is a frequent stimulant of speech that is combined with pressure performance decoding accuracy of location, as well as evaluation by teacher and peers. Based on the findings the reading effects caused students to felt worried in reading aloud. It can be conclude worry about reading effects is one of the factors that caused students to feel anxious in reading aloud. In addition, this statement also supported by Ismail Sheikh Ahmad et al. the result of their study show that the second highest percentage of students identified worrying about reading effects as a source of English language reading anxiety caused by personal factor. Students are concerned about the impact of reading. Even when the text is simple, they concentrate on the act of reading rather that the content. Moreover, (Hanafi, 2019) stated worry can be seen of physiological reactions that included heart rate increased, sweaty palms, and numbness.

b. Afraid of Making an Error

Learning is a process that includes making mistakes (Brown, 2007). Errors, miscalculations, and incorrect assumptions are essential for learning

practically any skill or obtain knowledge. In line with the statement above the error happened in reading aloud in the class. Therefore, the fear of making errors in reading aloud strongly influenced. It can be seen on findings that afraid of making an error caused students of VIII-1 class MTs Negeri 3 Bolaang Mongondow Timur felt anxious when they read a few paragraphs in front of the class. The researcher accomplish that afraid of making an error is one of the factors that caused students to feel anxious in reading aloud. In line with previous studies from (Ahmad et al., 2013) it found students are nervous about reading aloud because they don't want to make mistakes. They are concerned about their pronunciation if they are required to read in front of their peers and teacher.

c. Unfamiliar Culture

The reading task is divided into two interactions: the first is between the reader and the writer's thoughts, and the second is an incidental connection between the reader and knowledge of the culture in printed books (Ahmad et al., 2013). The result of interviews, some of the students felt anxious in reading aloud caused by they didn't understand what the meaning of the text that they was read in front of the class. In addition, the students who have difficulty understanding what is in the text are one of the factors of student anxiety. Furthermore, some students experience confusion when they read a text, and then they understand the meaning of the sentence they read but do not understand the intent or purpose of the written text. Moreover, this statement was also supported by (Hanafi, 2019). His study showed learners tend to felt anxious and concerned if they understand the meaning of the words in the text but do not understand the overall meaning. Unfamiliar culture has been identified as a source of foreign language reading anxiety.

d. Unfamiliar Topic

Uninteresting or undesired reading topics might contribute to learners' anxiety about reading in a foreign language. According to Kuru-Gonen, as stated in (Ahmad et al., 2013) one of the causes of worry in reading a foreign language is reading topics that learners do not find interesting or dislike. Based on interview, the researcher found students had anxious when they didn't understand the topics that they was read. Furthermore, topics that are not familiar to some students are disturbing because students are not used to them or have never even read or encountered the topic, causing anxiety to students when reading a text whose topic is not familiar to them. It means by reading some topics that the students never had before caused students to feel anxious in reading aloud. In addition, based on previous study that was conducted by (Hanafi, 2019), the result

obtained is one student stated that he enjoys reading English text about Islamic studies, which is his major because the new topics are difficult to grasp and to read. It appears that unfamiliar topics are one of the causes of reading anxiety for all students.

e. Unknown Vocabulary

Unknown vocabulary is one of the causes contributing to students' nervousness when reading a foreign language. Learners who lack understanding of foreign language vocabulary would struggle to understand the meaning of reading and will be unable to equate their reading skills in L1 to L2. Furthermore, students' pronunciation in reading aloud is not enough in this case because some students have good pronunciation in reading foreign languages but do not understand the meaning of the word they read. The result of interview, all of the students had difficulty in reading aloud when finding vocabulary that they did not face before. It can be concluded unknown vocabulary is the most common factor that found in students VIII-1 class which caused them to feel anxious in reading aloud. In line with (Ahmad et al., 2013). it showed students complained about the difficult terms they come across, the sheer volume of new vocabulary they encounter, the meanings of the individual vocabulary they come across, and the translation of the text. They also worried about the context in which these unfamiliar vocabularies are used, especially if it is unexpected.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the researcher discovered some factors that make students feel anxious in reading aloud caused by personal factors: worry about reading effects, afraid of making an error and also caused by text features: unfamiliar culture, unfamiliar topic and unknown vocabulary. In addition, recommendations addressed to the teacher to maximize the anxiety level of the students so they can perform better in reading aloud activity, as follow: 1) maximizing the effectiveness of reading aloud (determining the times of reading aloud), 2) dialogic reading (encouraging the students to learn while reading books actively and providing feedback in illustrating more advanced language), 3) using text talk, print referencing, and previewing. By knowing the causes of anxiety, the researcher hopes that the next researchers can study the teacher's ways to overcome students' anxiety in reading aloud and then it can be applied to the classes that experience anxiety, especially in reading aloud.

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