

## THE EFFECT OF ACADEMIC SELF MANAGEMENT AND READING ANXIETY TO STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION IN EFL CLASSROOM

Eka Wilany<sup>1</sup>, Desi Surlitasari Dewi<sup>2</sup>

English Department, FKIP, Riau Kepulauan University, Indonesia  
ekawilany3@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>, belldaisy46@gmail.com

### Abstract

*The objectives of this research were to find out the interaction of academic self management and reading anxiety in English reading comprehension, the difference of students high and low reading anxiety in reading comprehension, the difference of reading comprehension students having higher academic self management have high and low reading anxiety and the difference between low academic self management that have high and low reading anxiety in reading comprehension. Expost facto was employed as the design of the study with Riau Kepulauan University as the population. To measure students reading anxiety and academic self management, it was used questionnaires. Furthermore, reading test was used for measuring the students' reading comprehension. Data analysis used Two –Way ANAVA, then Tuckey Test. It was found that there was difference between high and low reading anxiety students in which  $Q_{count}(3.47) > Q_{table}(2.89)$ . Then the interaction showed students academic self management and reading anxiety in reading comprehension, the score of  $Q_{count}$  bigger than  $Q_{table}(12,22 > 3,07)$ . Next, high academic self management between high and low reading anxiety was found different. It was counted that  $Q_{count}(9.00) > Q_{table}(3.01)$ . In contrast, there was no difference of reading comprehension between students low academic self management having and low reading anxiety. It was calculated that  $Q_{count}(-0.08) < Q_{table}(3.01)$ .*

**Keywords:** Academic Self Management, Anxiety, Reading Comprehension

### INTRODUCTION

Reading is a compulsory subject for college level L2 Learners in Indonesia. Meanwhile mostly students do not comprehend reading well, even though they have learned English for years. A lot of new invention of techniques, methods, and tools or media to teach L2 reading has been discovered, but it seems that the problem of L2 reading literacy in Indonesia remains the same. The other aspects of English learning, the affective factor driven from the student's own mind, needs to be evaluated. As stated by Dembo (2004: 1) that teachers should understand how their pupil learn and what factors drive their motivation in learning. Learning and motivation can not be separated each other, they have been linked for ages as parts of successful teaching and learning. Dembo (2004: 4) states that the one who can control the factors influencing the learning success is the learner itself. It is called academic self management. It is a learning strategy used by learners to control the factors that influence their learning and influenced by several components such as motivational control, learning

method, time management, physical and social environment, and appearance (Zimmerman and Rosemberg, 1997 in Dembo, 2004: 1).

The other affective factor evaluated in this research is reading anxiety. According to Horwitz (1999: 202), reading anxiety is a threat to someone's self-concept caused by limited knowledge and imperfect mastery of L2. Several studies have investigated possible relationship between reading anxiety and language skills to identify the effects of reading anxiety on language ability and reading comprehension (Saito, 1999). Students usually show better results in reading comprehension when there is no standard value to be achieved or when they are not facing an exam. Students with high reading anxiety levels also tend to have more difficulties in reading comprehension. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether those affective factors had effects toward student's reading comprehension.

Grabe (2009: 13) said that reading is an understanding process and linguistic processes. The reader read to comprehend what the author wants to convey in his/her writing. We read to understand what the author wants to convey in his writings. While Nunan (1991: 63) also argues that reading has two different strategies: bottom-up and top-down strategy. In a bottom-up strategy, reading is viewed as a process of decoding written symbols, starting with letters, then words, clauses and sentences. In this strategy, the readers interpret the written forms to gain understanding. Meanwhile, a top-down strategy emphasizes the interaction between the reader and the text that as the core activity of reading. The reader will utilize his linguistic knowledge, motivations, interests, and attitudes towards the content of the text. The terms decoding and encoding will be easier to understand if we can understand that the language is the code planned to bring meaning. When we listen to the speaker's speech, we basically code the meaning. When we speak, we basically encode language sounds to express meaning.

Based on these explanations, it can be concluded that the aspects assessed in reading comprehension include the meaning of words, main ideas, detailed information, implicit information, and references. To make the learners able to comprehend a text in L2, a lot of strategies have been implemented. In previous research, various method to teach, learning environment, and measuring the learner's intelligence has been investigated to improve student's literacy. It is believed that those factors are important to determine the learner's success. Yet, there has been a shift in the research nowadays. Several studies have found that students are able to learn how to become successful learners in using appropriate strategies to

control their motivations, behaviours and learning styles. The academic self-management is controlling learning strategies for learners who are successful in understanding the lesson. They control the factors that influence their learning (Dembo, 2004: 4). A teacher who emphasizes the importance of self-management considers that his students are able to do many things to show how they learn by using different strategies and motivations. Zimmerman (1998) in Dembo (2004: 7) says that students who have academic self-management are more likely to see academic learning as something they do themselves. They do not see themselves as a passive object. It means that students who have academic self-management are trying to become a student who is more successful than ever. Thus, it can be concluded that the academic self-management is controlling the factors that affect the learning process, including behavioural strategies, motivation strategies, and teaching and learning strategies. To make it more understandable, Dembo (2004: 12) mentions some characteristics of academic self management as follows.

1. Setting goals

Goal setting can be used to develop and maintain important assumptions.

2. Talk to yourself

In this process, the students can talk to themselves in various ways, such as "Good!", "I made it!" Or "I did well". At first the students felt that this was a strange way. But if they have become accustomed to this way, they will know that this way will make them able to control themselves.

3. Imagine a reward or punishment

4. Learning methods or strategies

5. Time management

Time management can help students to manage their time more effectively. Dembo (2004: 145) also time management strategies as stated below:

1. Setting up a habit for studying in a certain time.
2. Finding a comfortable place to study
3. Scheduling a task
4. Taking a break
5. Identifying specific plans for time management
6. Changing the subject.

7. Estimating time
8. Priority task
9. Doing the undesirable task earlier than others
10. Finishing the task on time
11. Physical and social environment
12. Appearance

Even though the learners has prepared well for the upcoming task, sometimes there is an affective filter from their own mind who prevent them to do well. Reading anxiety could come in their way. Reading anxiety is a cognitive aspect with symptoms such as chaotic and disorganized thoughts, emotional disturbances, too much thinking about the things that are afraid of, and fearing the judgement from others. Zbornik and Walbrown (1991: 31) state that the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety is a feeling of discomfort and fear that accompanies students when reading texts in L2 during the learning process in the classroom. In addition, Horwitz (2001: 112) adds that reading anxiety is a threat to one's self-concept caused by the limited knowledge and mastery of imperfect foreign languages. Thus, it can be concluded that the anxiety of reading is an anxiety caused by fear of failure that can be caused by the limited understanding of L2. It threaten the learner's self-concept when they read an L2 text. There are two aspects in the reading of foreign language texts that are assumed to have a potential effect to cause reading anxiety, (a) Unfamiliar text and writing systems, and (b) Unfamiliar text material and different cultures and habits in reading material.

When students are not familiar with the system of writing in a text, then the possibility to experience reading anxiety will be greater. In such an event, students as readers will experience anxiety to read appropriately when trying to understand the symbols (words) in the text because their brains have difficulties in processing the text as well as understanding the information provided. Students should not rely on a particular text writing system when reading to reduce the threat of reading anxiety in reading texts in L2.

Meanwhile, different cultural concepts or unfamiliar culture will also have influence under certain circumstances in shaping the anxiety of reading. Although in this case, the process is not immediately apparent as soon as they are unfamiliar with the alien writing system. In the early stages, the reader will deal with the words in the text, find the meaning in those words and relate them to other words to get the meaning of the sentence, and then try to get the full information from the text. At this stage, when the reader realizes that the meaning

of the words in the text do not form a logical and understandable message, then the reading anxiety will emerge. In other words, reading anxiety is assumed to occur when the reader can understand the meaning of words in a foreign language text, but the meaning understood to be unreasonable is due to a lack of cultural knowledge of the native language of the text.

Based on this point of view, reading anxiety is different from anxiety in general. Specifically, foreign language learners who experience reading anxiety with varying levels are required to state their ideas by using a less familiar phonological, syntactic, and lexical system.

Psychological factors including reading anxiety may explain the variety of results or reading abilities of a person in a foreign language as mentioned by Bernhardt (2003). The theory recognizes the importance of psychological factors in addition to two other important factors: literacy skills in the source language and knowledge of the target language including vocabulary, syntactic, and discourse knowledge. According to Brantmeier (2005: 67), the model proposed by Bernhardt is the first foreign language reading model that directly tries to explain transient variables such as psychological factors in the process of reading a foreign language. Reading anxiety, as one of the most important psychological factors, may be found in the process of reading foreign texts and having an influence on the reading process and the ability to read foreign languages.

To measure the anxiety of reading Saito et al (1999) has developed Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) scale that can determine the level of student's reading anxiety. The instrument also shows that reading anxiety is related but differs from foreign language anxiety in general. Scores in this instrument range from 20-100.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research was employed by an ex post facto design. There are 664 EFL students of English Department students in Riau Kepulauan University and 120 respondents as sample of the study. Academic self management and reading anxiety was measured by using questionnaire as the instrument; while reading test was taken for measuring the students reading comprehension.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The students' scores are distributed into 8 categories: (1) The scores of high academic self management students ( $A_1$ ); (2) The scores of low academic self management students ( $A_2$ ); (3) The scores of low reading anxiety students ( $B_1$ ); (4) The scores of high reading anxiety students ( $B_2$ ); (5) The scores of the students having high academic self management who have low reading anxiety ( $A_1B_1$ ); (6) The scores of students having low academic self management who have high reading anxiety ( $A_1B_2$ ); (7) The scores of students having low academic self management who have low reading anxiety ( $A_2B_1$ ); (8) The scores of students having low academic self management who have high reading anxiety ( $A_2B_2$ ).

Tabel 1. Summary of Students Reading Comprehension Scores

Data Bentuk Perlakuan	N Sample	Lowest Score	Highest Score	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rentang	Mode	Median
High academic self management	60	20	90	61.5	18.395	70	75	65
Low academic self management	600	20	95	51	16.97	75	50	50
Low Reading Anxiety	60	25	85	59.5	16.042	60	75	60
High Reading Anxiety	60	20	90	54.41	17.73	70	65	55
High academic self management, low reading anxiety	30	30	90	68.66	15.53	60	85	72.5
High academic self management, high reading anxiety	30	30	80	57	13.80	50	50	57.5

self  
management,  
high reading  
anxiety

Low academic  
self  
management,  
low reading  
comprehension

Low academic  
self  
management,  
high reading  
anxiety

30	25	75	50	15.48	50	65	50
30	20	90	58.83	18.97	70	50	62.5

The data were analyzed by using ANAVA 2 x 2. The result is shown as the table below.

Tabel 2. Result of Two Way ANAVA.

Source of Varians	SS	Df	MS	F <sub>0</sub>	F <sub>t able</sub>	
					(α = 0,05)	Meaning
Academic Self Management (A)	60.21	1	60.21	0.23	3,07	Not Sig
Reading Anxiety (B)	2125.21	1	2125.21	8.24	3,07	Sig
Interaction A X B	3151.88	1	3151.88	12.22	3,07	Sig
Within Groups	29910.83	116	257.85	-	-	

Between groups	5337.29	3	1779.10	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35248.13</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>296.20</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

It was continued to tukey test between pairs. The result of the analysis was shown the following table.

Table 3. Tuckey Test

Pair	N	Q <sub>0</sub>	Q <sub>table</sub> (α = 0,05)	Meaning
A <sub>1</sub> – A <sub>2</sub>	60	7,16	2,89	Significant
B <sub>1</sub> – B <sub>2</sub>	60	3,47	2,89	Significant
A <sub>1</sub> B <sub>1</sub> – A <sub>1</sub> B <sub>2</sub>	30	9,00	3,01	Significant
A <sub>2</sub> B <sub>1</sub> – A <sub>2</sub> B <sub>2</sub>	30	-0,88	3,01	Not Significant

- (1) Q<sub>0</sub> (7,16) is higher than Q<sub>table</sub> (2,89), means that there found differences between students who have high and low academic self management.
- (2) There found that there was differences between high and low reading anxiety. It was seen from the data data in which Q<sub>0</sub>(3,47) higher than Q<sub>table</sub>(2,89).
- (3) Q<sub>0</sub> (9,00) was higher than Q<sub>table</sub> (3,01). It means that there found differences between students who have high self management with high and low reading anxiety.
- (4) There was no difference between students who have low academic self management with high and low reading anxiety. It was found that Q<sub>0</sub>(-0,88) is lower than Q<sub>table</sub>(3,01)

**The difference in reading comprehension of students having high and low reading anxiety.**

Based on the two-way Anava, it was found that  $F_{count} = 8.24 > F_{table} = 3.07$ . It means that H<sub>0</sub> was rejected and H<sub>1</sub> was accepted. The mean score of the students' reading comprehension having low reading anxiety was 59.5 was higher than high reading anxiety students(54.4). The result of hypotheses stated that there was difference of students' reading comprehension between low reading anxiety and high reading anxiety students. It can be



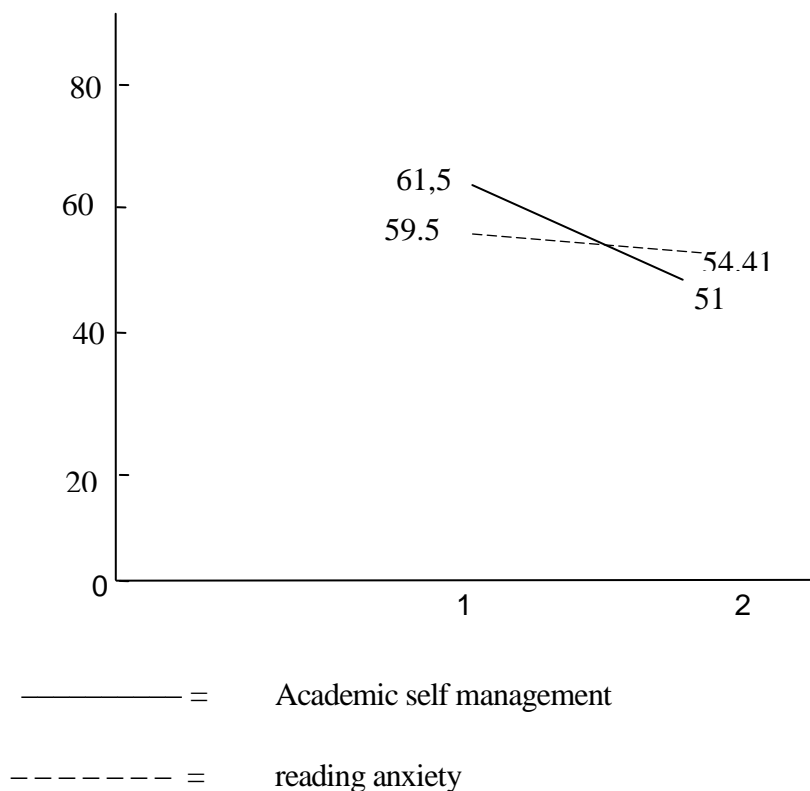
concluded that reading comprehension of having low reading anxiety students was higher than high reading anxiety students.

The data analysis showed that there is a significant difference between students having higher and lower anxiety in their reading comprehension. The mean scores showed that students having lower anxiety performed better in their reading comprehension than those having higher anxiety. The students who have low level of reading anxiety have better attitudes in joining the teaching and learning process. As the characteristics of foreign language reading anxiety that may hinder student's working memory to connect into the task, the students with high levels of anxiety experienced worry that made their mind wanders on some irrelevant distracting thought than the task itself. This worry, apprehension, and nervousness, that distracted their working memory, resulted on their failure to process information in the text in their short term memory. It caused a time consuming in doing task because they would look at the text repeatedly without being able to recall the information. Time consuming was the other problem that they faced. Once they realized that they have run out of time, their anxiety increased and the working memory failed miserably.

The other characteristic of higher anxiety students is that they have negative self-perception. When they thought about having failure, a negative cognitive process would take place in their mind. Thus, it made them difficult to connect to the text. Lower anxiety students in the other hand, were able to manage their cognitive process positively, and composed themselves in performing the reading task. Even though they had a quite similar difficulties as those having higher anxiety in terms of facing some unfamiliar vocabulary, for instance, they would be able to connect the words with the context and their background knowledge so they could successfully retrieving the information and comprehending the text.

### **Interaction between academic self management and reading anxiety to the students reading comprehension**

The result of interaction, it was found that  $F_{count} = 12.22 > F_{table} = 3.07$  means that  $H_1$  was accepted, so the hypotheses stated that there was interaction between academic self management and reading anxiety was resulted significant.



From the figure above, there were four points connected by two intersecting lines. The points were mean score of each group: high and low academic self management; high and low reading anxiety. The interaction was collaboration between academic self management and reading anxiety. In this research, the interaction means as effect of academic self management to reading comprehension depends on reading anxiety and conversely.

In data analysis, there was found that there was interaction between academic self management and reading anxiety. Students were able to learn how to be a successful student in using appropriate strategy to manage their motivation, attitude and way of learning. For high self academic students, they can control their learning strategy. A teacher emphasized to academic self management think that the students were able to do many things to show their learning way by using different strategy and motivation. Furthermore, reading anxiety is caused by limited knowledge and foreign language. Reading anxiety is cognitive aspect like emotional disturbance, distracted mind, and fear of judgement given by teacher when reading in a foreign language class.

Moreover, when the students had academic self management they will try to be a successful student then. She will also try to refuse the reading anxiety of reading comprehension in her mind by reducing it through controlling themselves from factors affecting in learning process, motivation strategy and teaching and learning process.

**The difference in reading comprehension between the higher academic self management having high and low reading anxiety.**

From the tuckey test between the higher academic self management having low reading anxiety got mean scores 68,66 and high reading anxiety students got score 50. So it was showed that  $A_1B_1 > A_1B_2$ . While from Tuckey Test showed that  $Q_{count} = 9,00 > Q_{table} = 3,01$ . It means that  $H_0$  was refused and  $H_1$  was accepted, so it can be concluded that there was significantly different. It can be concluded that students' reading comprehension of the higher academic self management having low reading anxiety was higher than the high academic self management having high reading anxiety.

In analysis the data, there was found that high academic self management having low reading anxiety was different to high reading anxiety students in reading comprehension. In reading comprehension, higher self academic students were able to control influencing factors of learning process, it was included anxiety. It is because reading anxiety can threat the self concept caused by limited knowledge and foreign language mastery. High self academic students having low reading anxiety will reduce the anxiety and manage their strategy to learn the material in reading comprehension so the anxiety to fail in reading comprehension solved by understanding vocabulary in a reading text, therefore they can comprehend the meaning or the purpose of a writer in reading text. They usually have prepared themselves to get more information and knowledge.

However, high academic self management having high reading anxiety usually get problems in their internal psychological factors. Even though they have better self management, they still had limited information and knowledge about the material they got in reading comprehension.

**The difference in reading comprehension between the lower academic self management students having high and low academic reading anxiety**

Based on the result of tuckey test, reading comprehension of lower academic self management having low reading anxiety had mean scores 57; however high reading anxiety

students had 58,83. It means that  $A_2B_1 < A_2B_2$ . Moreover, it was gotten  $Q_{count} = -0,88 < Q_{table} = 3,01$ . It can be concluded that  $H_1$  was accepted and  $H_0$  was rejected. It means that there was no difference of reading comprehension between lower academic self management students having high and low reading anxiety.

The students have low academic self management was difficult to control their learning strategy in reading comprehension. They are lack of motivation to be a successful students because they cannot control internal factors influenced their learning process, included reading anxiety. When they have lower academic self management there was no different between their high or low reading anxiety.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the description of the data analysis, it can be concluded that:

1. The students who have low reading anxiety have better reading skill than the students who have high reading anxiety.
2. There is an interaction between academic self management and reading anxiety of the students' reading comprehension.
3. Higher academic self management students having low reading anxiety has better result than high reading anxiety in reading comprehension
4. Students have lower academic self management having low reading anxiety did not have any difference to students having high reading anxiety in reading comprehension.

Based on the conclusion above, it was suggested that the researcher to consider psychological aspects of students, for example academic self management and reading anxiety when choosing reading strategy especially in English. It effected to the effectiveness or not of a learning process and it must influence the students' achievement.

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