

The Correlation between EFL Students' Reading Interest and Difficulty Level in  
Reading English Texts

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**Abstract**

Reading interest is crucial for EFL students in language learning. Even, some students still have low interest in reading. In addition, some students have difficulties in reading English texts especially for EFL students. This research aims to investigate the correlation between EFL students' reading interest and difficulty in reading English texts. This research used quantitative method and the research design is correlational design. This research used questionnaire for research instrument. The participant of the research is students of English Language Education Department batch 2016 in a private university in Yogyakarta. The first result of research showed that students' reading interest classified into intermediate level. The second result showed that students' reading difficulty classified into intermediate level. The third result of research is there is no correlation between EFL students' reading interest and difficulties in reading English text. The alternative hypothesis of this research was not accepted.

*Keywords:* reading, reading interest, reading difficulty.

## Introduction

Language learning consists of four skills which are listening, reading, writing and speaking.

Reading is an important part to success in school and life. Reading is a skill that must be learned for students in learning process. Reading is one of the basic source of language input for EFL students (Kheirzadeh & Tavakoli, 2012). Reading is easy and fun for those who love to read.

However, reading becomes a very boring activity and complicated thing for those having no interest in reading. Reading influences the achievement of the learning process.

According to Dawkins (2017) reading is one of important skill in learning process and have influence toward achievement of learning process. In addition, reading will make someone get and know various

information about the current situation. By reading, the reader can expand experience and knowledge. Safiah (2004) argued that those who are good readers are able to expand their views, experiences, and thoughts. Reading is the window of the world. Some students do not have interest in reading English material.

In a second language learning, some students not adopt reading as a reading habit. Two things related to reading interest in reading English texts are vocabulary development and comprehension to the text.

Therefore, reading interest is related to students' academic success; love to read increase students' creativity; and students can write well (Stansberry, 2009). Some students do not have interest in reading English material.

In a second language learning, some students not adopt reading as a

reading habit. According to Wallace (2007), some student find difficult in reading and they struggle at it. Thus, Students' reading interest is low (Ley, Schaer, & Dismukes, 2001).

In the learning process, the teacher asked students to read the book. The book is related learning material. The problem usually occurs is the students read, because students must read; it is not because students like and want to read. Some students assume that reading is task that must be done to achieve success in academic; it is not because students want to add and know new things from reading. In addition, some students face many difficulties in reading especially in English learning. Students at English Language Education Department of one private university in Yogyakarta join several subjects in which the

lecturers require students to read the material from the textbooks in every meeting.

Based on the researcher's experience during her study time at English Language Education Department of one private university in Yogyakarta, the researcher figured out that many students sometimes did not follow instruction given by the lecturer to read the book. The lecturer asked students to read the material or upcoming meeting of textbook.

However, not all of students have interest in reading the English book in learning English. In addition, they do not have more knowledge, and they do not know the material discussed in the class. Besides that, the students who do not read books will ask their friends who have read the material from the book to explain the content of the material.

Sometimes, the lecturer has a quiz or daily journal of the material, and some of students are reluctant to read. The students will read, because they want to get maximal score; it is not because they want to read. Some students consider reading is requirement not a desire (Wallace, 2007). For students who have bad experience in learning second language may feel unhappy or face difficulty reading English texts. They might end up become less interested in reading English texts. The students less interested in reading caused the students faced difficulty in reading English texts. These statement can be conclude that if the level of difficulty students high, students' reading interest low.

To make this discussion more focused, the researcher limits the problem. First, the researcher wants

to know the level of EFL students' reading interest in reading English texts. Second, the researcher wants to find out the level of difficulty in reading English texts by EFL students. Finally, the researcher investigates the correlation between EFL students' reading interest and the difficulty faced by students in reading English text.

### **Research Methodology**

This research used qualitative research and the design is correlational design. The researcher used descriptive statistics to answers the first and second research questions. The first research questions investigate about EFL students' reading interest in reading English texts. The second research question investigate about EFL students' reading difficulty level in

reading English texts. In addition, the researcher used inferential statistics to answer the third research question. The third research question finds out the correlation between EFL students' reading interest and difficulty level in reading English texts. The research was conducted at the English Language Education Department in one private university in Yogyakarta. The participants of this research are students of the Language Education Department, batch 2016. The researcher chose these students as participants because most of them have read a lot of books in the learning process. The books are related to learning material. The researcher used a questionnaire for the research instrument. The questionnaire consists of two sections. The first questionnaire is about EFL students'

reading interest level. The first questionnaire was adopted from Al-Nafisah and Al-Shorman (2011). The second questionnaire is about the level of students' difficulty level in reading English texts. The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher. The researcher constructed the second questionnaire based on the existing literature. The researcher distributed questionnaires to respondents through Google Forms via social media such as WhatsApp and Line. The validity test of this research was done by expert judgment. The researcher asked three lecturers as experts. Then, the expert judgment gave scores to each item of the questionnaire. The results of the expert judgment were processed using Aiken's test. The Aiken test is used to measure the data accuracy of this research. In

addition, the researcher used PSS program (Cronbach's Alpha analysis) to identify the reliability of instrument in this research. The reliability used to check consistency and reliability of instruments' items that used in the research.

There is some steps to analyse the data by researcher. The first step, the researcher moves the data from google form to Ms. Excel. The, the researcher doing Aiken test to validity check of questionnaire. The second step, the researcher doing reliability test to check reliability of questionnaire. The researcher used Cronbach's' Alpha statistics in SPSS to analysed the reliability questionnaire. The third step, the researcher used SPSS to find out descriptive statistics to answer the level of EFL students' reading interest as a first research question.

Besides, the researcher also used SPSS to answers the level of EFL students' difficulty level as a second research questions. The last step, the researcher used inferential statistic in SPSS to analyse the last research question about the correlation between EFL students' reading interest and difficulty level in reading English text. In addition, the inferential statistic also discussed about normality test. The normality test used One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test in SPSS.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **The level of EFL students' reading interest in reading English texts.**

The first research question is to investigate the level of EFL students' reading interest in reading English texts. There were thirty-three students (35.1%) having high level of reading interest in reading English

text. Then, there were sixty-one students (64.9%) having intermediate difficulty level in reading English texts. The result showed that the score of students' reading interest is 2.96 out of 4 which belong to intermediate level in categories of students' reading interest level. It shows that many students have interest in reading. Sandjaja (2015) argued that reading interest as a positive attitude and there is a connection in themselves to reading activities and are interested in reading. Reading activities is one of activities that can give advantages to the reader. According to Sinaga, Sutarsyaha and Susanto (2015) reading interest contributed to students' reading comprehension. Sinaga, et al. also argued that students who have high reading interest, the reading comprehension

also high. In addition, it will be easier for students to achieve reading achievement. Students who can reach reading achievement easily means that the students may not have difficulty in reading.

**The level of difficulty faced by EFL students in reading English**

**texts.** The second research question is to identify the level of difficulties faced by EFL students in reading English texts. There were thirty-six students (38.3%) having high level of reading interest in reading English text. Then, there were fifty-eight students (61.7%) having intermediate difficulty level in reading English texts. The result of the research showed that the level of students' reading difficulty in reading English text is in intermediate level. It was concluded from the score of the result of this research. The score 2.9

was categorized as intermediate level of categories in students' reading difficulty level. It shows that students sometimes still faced difficulty in reading English texts. The difficulty in reading can be caused by several things, for example background knowledge of the students.

According to Chawwang (2008) the problem faced by EFL students in reading is students' background knowledge. The students' background knowledge can be used to understand the new information from the text into students' prior information. Boardman, Klinger, and Vaughn (2007) one of the difficulties caused by students do not have background knowledge about the text. In addition, mother tongue also caused in reading difficulty.

According to Mohamed and Qrquez (2017) mother tongue one of cause

students' difficulty to comprehend the text.

### **The correlation between students' reading interest and difficulty in reading English text.**

The third research questions is to find out the correlation between students' reading interest and difficulty in reading English text. The result showed that the score of correlation between students' reading interest and difficulties in reading English text is .614. The criteria score of correlation is score of sig (2-tailed)  $<0.05$ . The score of sig. (2-tailed)  $>0.05$  there is no correlation between two variables. Based on the result of the research, the score sig (2-tailed)  $.614 > 0.05$ . It can be concluded that there is no correlation between students' reading interest and difficulties in reading English text. According to Rahman (2015) the lack of students' reading



interest is another major caused of students' reading difficulties. According to Dechant (1982) the achievement in reading depends on students' motivation or poor reading skill is caused by less interested in reading. The hypothesis of this research is not accepted. In addition, the effects of students' less interested in reading is not only about reading difficulty. There is other factor caused students' reading interest low. One of the factor is students' culture, a culture which always consider the ability to owned low. Some students often said difficult on doing something but actually the case is students can master it well.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the result of the correlation between EFL students' reading interest and difficulty in

reading English texts, this study have some significant recommendations.

**The researcher.** The researcher know that there is no correlation between EFL students' reading interest and difficulty level in reading English texts. The result of the research could be taken into continued by studying other factors related to difficulty level and reading interest level in reading English texts.

**The teacher.** The researcher expects that the lecturer can get information about the level of reading interest and challenge of EFL students' in reading English texts. Besides, the researcher hopes that the results of this study can provide ideas for the teachers in terms of teaching method which will be used in the teaching and learning process. By reading this study, the researcher hopes that the

teacher can implement teaching method which can increase students' reading interest much better.

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**The other researcher.** The research discuss about the correlation between EFL students' reading interest and difficulty in reading English texts. The other researcher can research using similar topic in different tittle. Thus, the next researcher also ought to use different method or different instrument of the research. For example, the other researcher can investigate this research use qualitative method and interview in research instrument.

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