



EFL Learners' Self Efficacy and Its Relation to Reading Comprehension in Online Learning

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received October 25, 2021

Revised December 24, 2021

Accepted January 20, 2022

Keywords:

Self-Efficacy,
Reading Comprehension,
Online learning

Conflict of Interest:

None

Funding:

None

ABSTRACT

Self-efficacy plays an influential role in initiating any action including reading especially in online learning. Reading comprehension, along with all other language skills, has become a big concern in ELT, while self-efficacy is a psychological aspect that affects the learners' success in mastering the skill. In this regard, this study attempts to find out whether EFL learners' self-efficacy affects the learners' reading comprehension in Universitas Pembinaan Masyarakat Indonesia. The study applied correlational study with quantitative design. Participants in this study were 50 learners of English Education Department. A self-efficacy questionnaire (SEQ) and reading comprehension test were applied to the participants as parts of the correlational research model. The collected quantitative data were analyzed by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The finding shows that the result of r -calculation for learners' self-efficacy and their reading score is .765. The score of significance level is < 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$) which means that H_a was accepted and H_0 was rejected. This score indicates that there is a positive correlation between the two variables.

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1. Introduction

The growth of academic self-efficacy in language skills is widely recognized. Self-efficacy provides the basis for human motivation and personal achievement especially in the academic context. Tilfarlioglu and Cinkara (2009) expressed that self-efficacy as a significant element of effort and motivation since one's who has a high self-efficacy believes in his/her educational performance will be motivated to work harder. Thus, once learners see progress in a second language, the level of self-efficacy gradually develops and motivates them to learn. In addition, self-efficacy is potential in the learning process by helping or hindering learner's progress (Bandura, 1984). Simply put, self-efficacy mediates the relationship between knowledge and behavior.

Learners with high levels of self-efficacy tend to experience lower levels of stress and their energy toward improving their cultural adjustment (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). In line with it, Tarigan's study (2021) found that during pandemic covid-19 learners who have high academic resilience (in which self-efficacy is one of aspects of resilience) were able to get out of the academic pressures that existed during the virtual learning. The more a person has high self-efficacy, the more the individual has high self-confidence in his ability to be able to complete tasks well and vice versa (Tarigan and Hasibuan, 2021). Though it has many concerns, still many learners lack the skills that contribute to increase their self-efficacy (Leclair, Doll, Osborn, & Jones, 2009). One of them is self-efficacy in learning language, notably reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension plays a vital role in the academic context. Its existence is useful for all aspects.

Without the ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfillment and job success will inevitably be lost (Anderson et al, 1985). In Indonesian education system, reading is one of the skills that tested in Indonesia's national examination. However, many people consider reading to be a passive activity since reading activity has no interaction. Due to the low reading of Indonesia makes reading comprehension for the EFL learner is not as easy as that for the native speakers. Learners must first input before producing an output of language. Therefore, to gain productive knowledge, learners need to get as much exposure to the target language as possible by listening and reading as much as possible.

In learning language, language skills are related to self-efficacy. A learner does not only master the language skills but also should have confidence in reading or known as self efficacy. If the learner has only an average reading ability and little experience in making summaries, but he is confidence that he can work hard to make a good quality summary of his reading task, he will improve his achievement. It is necessary that a learner has a high motivation that pushed him to collect the task. Due to that issue, this study is aimed at examining EFL learners' self efficacy in university setting.

There have been quite a few studies which have paid attention to the relationship between self efficacy and reading. Salehi and Khalaji's study (2014) covers the relationship between reading self-efficacy beliefs and reading comprehension in Iranian EFL upper-intermediate learners. With total subjects were 48 Iranian EFL upper-intermediate learners, the results showed that there was a significant strong positive correlation between reading self-efficacy beliefs and reading comprehension. Another study by Hadomi (2012) covers an issue of the correlation between the learners' reading self-efficacy and final grades in academic reading class of language and art department Satya Wacana Christian University with 43 learners were as participants. The result showed that there was a positive significant correlation between learners' reading self efficacy and final grades. This motivated the researchers to focus on examining efl learners' self efficacy and its relation to reading comprehension in online learning.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Reading Skills

Reading becomes one of obligatory skills required in this modern life. Not only to gain the knowledge, reading is also useful for the learners' language acquisition. Based on Macceca (2014) in order to be able to read, the readers must connect the words they read from their own experience and their knowledge to get what the writer wants to deliver to the reader. The more material they read, the better understanding they get to grasp the new material. However nowadays, EFL learners tend to read without connecting what they have read with their knowledge. They read only what they want to know, so the learners do not really comprehend the text that they have read..

Reading comprehension is defined as a way of understanding a text which takes the concentration of many different cognitive competences and capabilities (Oakhill, Cain, & Elbro, 2015). Grabe & Stoller (2013) pointed out that reading as an interactive process involved various processes simultaneously. While reading text, the readers recognize the vocabularies very fast and keep them in their mind. In addition, the readers also analyze the composition of the text so that readers can build main ideas and understand the meaning. The main objective of reading comprehension is to help the learners to collect information from the text optimally. It is a way of building the meaning in the written text and the reader experiences.

Reading comprehension means grasping what has been read deeper by connecting the readers' experiences and the ideas from the passage. Reading comprehension from one student to another is different since each student may read different kinds of text and interpret the meaning of text by their own experience. Moreover, vocabulary is the key in reading comprehension. Readers cannot comprehend the whole text if they could not understand the terms or vocabulary in the text. A good reading comprehension depends on how good the language understanding generally (Oakhill et al., 2015).

One of benefits of reading for the readers is the improvement on their spelling and on their writing skills (Harmer, 2010). Today, written texts are also supportive material to show the learners the way how to develop sentences, paragraphs and the whole text into a good text. Reading the texts provides an appropriate example on how to write English writing in a good way. At the same time, readers also learn to focus on the use of vocabulary, grammar and punctuation when writing. Reading as a receptive skill is more complicated than it seems. Understanding the meaning while reading a text, especially in reading comprehension needs more focus from the reader. To read, learners must understand the meaning of the word. It needs the readers to integrate the value of the words and the sentence, so that readers can build new understanding.

2.2 Self Efficacy

Self-efficacy consists of self and efficacy. Self is person's identity while efficacy is defined as the power to produce an effect (Zulkosky, 2009 in Nurjannah, 2015). Efficacy includes effectiveness, efficaciousness, and productiveness. Self-efficacy is commonly defined as learners' beliefs in their capability to succeed in

executing a task (Bandura, 1986; Bernhardt, 1997). Baron & Byrne (2000) suggested that self-efficacy is an individual's judgment of his or her own ability or competence to perform a task, achieve a goal and produce something. In addition, Feist & Feist (2002) stated that self-efficacy is the belief of individuals that they have the ability to hold control over their own work in a particular situation. (in Astrid, 2009) Based on the explanations above, it can be concluded that self-efficacy is someone's belief and confidence to perform or complete tasks and difficulties in order to overcome obstacles and achieve the expected goals. It is not expected to measure one's actual capabilities but, rather, the confidence that an individual holds in regards to particular abilities. Self-efficacy beliefs can directly affect individual's efforts and activities and thus, serve as an excellent predictor of success and achievement.

As an affective variable, self-efficacy affects decision, behaviors and attempts when facing challenges (Bandura, 1986). It also affects the degree of anxiety people experience while doing tasks. Thus, facing challenges, individuals with low-self efficacy may see the situation more difficult. It may lead to higher degrees of anxiety and stress and may make them demotivated while facing the challenges. Meanwhile the learners with higher degree of self-efficacy will make greater efforts in executing the required task. Bandura refers to four sources of self-efficacy: 1. Mastery experience (our achievements raise our level of self-efficacy), 2. Vicarious experience (other individuals' achievements motivate us to believe that we have the same ability in gaining achievements), 3. Persuasions (what others say can influence our beliefs about our abilities), and 4. Psychological states (anxiety, stress, and fear can influence our behavior). In consequence, self-efficacy is significant for struggling learners.

2.2 Classification of Self-Efficacy

Baron's (2004) classifies self-efficacy into three types namely social self-efficacy, self regulatory self-efficacy and academic self-efficacy. The first is about the ability to maintain the relationships, engage in social activities, and become assertive. The second one refers to the ability to cautions, think carefully, and avoid dangerous activities. Finally, the third is related to the ability to participate in learning activities and academic programs. Related to the objective of this study that is related to language learning, this study used type of academic self-efficacy.

Based on self-efficacious learners' characteristics, self-efficacy can be categorized into two, namely high self-efficacy and low self-efficacy. In performing a particular task, people with high self-efficacy tend to be more involved in the situation, while those who have low self-efficacy prefer to avoid and stay away from the task. Individuals who have high self-efficacy tend to be more motivated to do a particular task, even a difficult one. They do not consider the task as a threat to be avoided. They are not afraid to fail in performing the task. Instead, they increase their efforts to prevent a failure that might occur. Those who fail in their work, they usually regain their self-efficacy as quickly after experiencing failures (Bandura, 1997, in Astrid, 2009)

On the contrary, people who have low self-efficacy will try to avoid difficult tasks. Such individuals have low commitment in achieving the goals they set. When they faced complicated tasks, they are busy thinking about the shortcomings they have, the distractions they face, and all the results that can be detrimental to them. They do not increase their efforts and give up very easily. They are too slow in correcting their own mistake and regaining their self-efficacy when facing a failure. (Bandura, 1997, in Astrid 2009).

3. Method

The design of this research was Descriptive Correlation Research. This research aimed to find out whether there is a relationship between learners' reading comprehension and the learners' self-efficacy. Learners' self-efficacy refers to mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and psychology state. The data were collected by using test and questionnaire. The instruments were reading self-efficacy questionnaire and reading comprehension test. The questionnaire consisted of 20 statements was given to identify the learners' self-efficacy. The Four Point scale was used for the answer in each statements of this questionnaire. The option of four point scale was not at all true, hardly true, moderately true, and exactly true.

The questionnaire items were adapted from the previous research by Li and Wang (2010). The format was changed from a question become a statement. The researcher also avoided some items in order to suit the questionnaire to the samples' materials. The total score of 20 items questionnaire was used to know the learners' reading self-efficacy. The reading material was a reading TOEFL test by Longman cited by Sipayung (2015). The right answer of 50 items test was used to know the learners' reading comprehension.

Before calculating the correlation, there were two steps accomplished. They were the normality test and the homogeneity test. In calculating the normality of the data, the researcher used SPSS 15.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

In this study, the correlation of self-efficacy in reading comprehension with foreign language reading comprehension was described as follows.

Table 1. The Correlation between learners' self efficacy and reading comprehension

		S.E	R.C
S.E	Pearson Correlation	1	.765
	Sig (2-tailed)		.005
	N	50	50
R.C	Sig (2-tailed)	.765	1
		.005	
	N	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the above table, the correlation coefficient between self efficacy and reading comprehension is 0.765 and is significant at $p < 0.01$. With total were 50 participants, the results, thus, rejects the null hypothesis of the study. In other words, it can be concluded that the more self-efficacious the readers are, the higher achievement in reading comprehension they have.

From the result of the correlation test, the significance level for the correlation between reading self-efficacy and reading comprehension was $0.000 < 0.765$, so the hypothesis (H1) was accepted which means that there is a significant correlation between learners' self-efficacy and their reading comprehension in English Education Department in Universitas Pembinaan Masyarakat Indonesia. It is inferred that the higher the self-efficacy, the higher the reading comprehension. According to the interpretation table and calculation before, the score of the correlation between reading self-efficacy and reading comprehension was 0.765 which includes in strong coefficient, that is in the interval 0.60 – 0.799.

4.2 Discussion

Recently, the significance of self efficacy and reading comprehension achievement has been well understood. This finding is in line to Salehi and Khalaji (2014) who found that there was a significant correlation between reading self-efficacy and reading comprehension. It is also in line to Fitri, Sofian and Jayanti's study (2019) which found that there was a significant correlation between students' reading self-efficacy and reading comprehension with the correlation between reading self-efficacy and reading comprehension was 0.324.

The significant correlation was because of the learners with high self-efficacy have an encouragement and motivation understand their reading task. However if the task is difficult, the learners should be motivated that they can do it. A motivation and an encouragement play a significant role especially for someone in achieving something. They help somebody become stronger to avoid the failure.

The example of the learners who confidence and no confidence have been explained before. However, based on the reality in the field, the learners with high self efficacy have a high reading ability and many experiences in reading, but he is not confidence that he can make a good summary of his reading task. The othe types of learners have only an average reading ability, but he is confidence that he can work hard to make a good quality summary of his reading task.

By knowing the significance of self-efficacy, it means that the teacher needs to promote the reading self-efficacy in the classroom in order to develop high level of reading self-efficacy. As Salili and Lai's (2003) study noted that the implementation of a variety of instructional strategies was correlated with higher levels of self-efficacy. Learners' self-efficacy may be enhanced if the teachers could engage the learners in meaningful reading activities and provide them the feedback about their performance during reading activities. Therefore the four sources of self-efficacy; mastery experiences, psychological and emotional factors, vicarious experience, and verbal persuasion (Bandura, 1994/1998) need to be considered in the combination of reading instructions.

Two factors might influence the significant correlation but the correlation was categorized in low level. First, it could be because of the time variations. In collecting the data, the researcher took the English class. The time for English class was varied from one to another class. It might be the learners in the morning have a fresher mind rather than learners in the afternoon. Last, it could be due to the learners' lack of knowledge on self-efficacy. Since the teacher has probably never promoted the self-efficacy in the class and it was the first time for the learners to hear about the self-efficacy.

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the data, the correlation between self-efficacy and reading comprehension was 0.765. It showed that there is a significant correlation between learners' self-efficacy and reading comprehension. It can be inferred that the higher the reading self-efficacy, the higher the reading comprehension. In addition, the correlation was categorized in low level. It means that reading self-efficacy is not the only factors that influence high reading comprehension.

From this study, it is expected that this study can improve the quality of teaching and learning reading. In addition, the suggestions are the teacher should help the learners to build their reading self-efficacy by promoting reading self-efficacy in the classroom. The teacher can provide a lot of reading materials and give a feedback to the learners during the reading activities to build the two sources of the reading self-efficacy, mastery experience and vicarious experience. For the learners, they should build their own reading self-efficacy by paying attention to the importance of the reading self-efficacy, so they would know that they need motivation and encouragement in learning reading. The learners should also read a lot of reading materials. In addition for the future researcher who will conduct a further research, the researcher should collect the data at the same time to strengthen the correlation between the reading self-efficacy and the reading comprehension.

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