

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

Reading plays an important role in learning because it allows individuals to access a wider range of information and train their critical thinking skills. Reading is an activity that requires broader cognitive thinking to conclude, connect ideas and experiences, and derive meaning from the content of a text¹. Another study by Brown shows that the process of reading involves high-level cognitive abilities to interpret symbols in order to obtain or understand meaning. Reading skills are a complex process and require specific skills. The more reading experience a person has, the more information and insight they will gain.²

In reading comprehension, this aspect not only includes understanding the content, but also provides further learning and contributes to academic success. Reading comprehension is the primary way to derive meaning from written text³. Reading comprehension is the process of understanding symbols in context and determining how each symbol relates to the ideas in the text. This skill is considered an important and challenging aspect of language learning in international exams⁴.

Reading comprehension has several types, ranging from low to high levels of understanding, including literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, and evaluative comprehension. The interaction between readers and texts may require different approaches depending on the type of comprehension and cognitive

¹ Rohmana and Amalia, *Exploring the Use of Narrative Text in Teaching Reading Comprehension in EFL Classroom*.

² Novitri, "Developing Narrative Text-Based Module for Teaching Reading Comprehension: Focus on Practicality: Developing Narrative Text-Based Modul for Teaching Reading"

³ Kintsch, "Psychological Models of Reading Comprehension and Their Implications for Assessment."

⁴ Samiei and Ebadi, "Exploring EFL Learners' Inferential Reading Comprehension Skills through a Flipped Classroom."

demands⁵. According to Mckee, in reading comprehension involves evaluating content, interpreting meaning in the text to find the main idea, and supporting it with evidence from the text⁶. In addition, reading comprehension can be defined as the level of understanding of the message contained in the text. In the reading process, students not only understand the content but also recognize the author's purpose and make connections between related information⁷. With several definitions, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is the ability to obtain ideas or meaning from written text, understanding it by processing previous experiences and knowledge.

The problem of learners' reading in Indonesia is still one of the problems that need to be addressed. Many students still have difficulty reading English texts fluently both inside and outside of class. Because English is not their native language and there is not enough time to practice, English is rarely used, and they tend to use their native language in daily activities to interact with others. The results of the Human Development Index (HDI) in Indonesia are still low. This is supported by The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows that around 2022, the reading skills of 15-year-old Indonesian students ranked 71st out of 81 countries with a score of 359, down 12 points from 2018 (371). Around 2016 United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) said that Indonesia's index of 0.001 indicates that interest in reading is still low, with only around one in 1,000 people showing a high interest in reading⁸. From this data, it can be seen that students' reading skills in Indonesia are relatively low and require special attention. Most students often face problems or challenges in understanding complex texts, especially in English. They feel frustrated when they read foreign-language texts, even the simplest ones. Students often experience difficulties in reading comprehension, and they also often feel tense, so they

⁵ Basaraba et al., "Examining the Structure of Reading Comprehension: Do Literal, Inferential, and Evaluative Comprehension Truly Exist?"

⁶ Mckee, "Reading Comprehension, What We Know: A Review of Research 1995 to 2011."

⁷ Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching* London: Longman ELT.

⁸ Nurasiah and Wahyudi, "Students' Foreign Language Anxiety and English Reading Comprehension: A Correlational Study at Junior High School."

find the texts presented difficult to understand⁹. In addition, according to Dallmann, someone who experiences tension, frustration, or even failure cannot grasp the meaning of the reading material in learning. Under conditions of stress and worry or anxiety, second language learners become less proficient, experience a decline in efficiency in analyzing grammar, and need more time to integrate information in sentences. This indicates a disruption in central executive function and attention control, which are important for students' comprehension processing¹⁰.

According to Saito, there are two aspects that cause anxiety in reading: an unfamiliar writing system and unfamiliar cultural material.¹¹ In Indonesia, the writing system is generally not a major obstacle because both Indonesian and English use the Roman alphabet. However, Indonesian students may still experience reading anxiety due to unfamiliar vocabulary, sentence structures, and cultural backgrounds presented in English texts. One common anxiety problem is Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA), which affects students' reading comprehension abilities. This can have a negative impact by reducing their concentration while reading and lowering their cognitive levels. Other studies show that in addition to affecting the comprehension process involving cognitive thinking, FLCA can also affect other aspects necessary for foreign language learning, such as vocabulary mastery and pronunciation¹².

At the high school level, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety may have an even greater negative impact. Students who experience high levels of anxiety tend to participate less actively in English classes, causing them to lose valuable opportunities to develop their language skills, particularly their reading comprehension and understanding of English texts.¹³ Many high

⁹ Fauziyah, *The Relationship between Students' Anxiety and Their English Reading Skill*.

¹⁰ Xia et al., "How Do Stress Situations Affect Higher-Level Text Processing in L1 and L2 Readers? An Eye-Tracking Study."

¹¹ Saito et al., "Foreign Language Reading Anxiety."

¹² Miao and Vibulphol, "English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety of Chinese University Students."

¹³ MacIntyre and Gardner, "The Subtle Effects of Language Anxiety on Cognitive Processing in the Second Language."

school students still avoid and participate less in English classes because they are anxious. Because they fear making mistakes, they are humiliated and afraid to improve their English. Some of them fear that if they make mistakes, their classmates will laugh at them. To avoid this, they decide to stay passive in English class. To address these challenges, several studies have explored pedagogical interventions to reduce FLCA and improve reading comprehension skill. One such intervention is the flipped classroom model, which has been shown to reduce anxiety and improve comprehension outcomes in FLCA¹⁴. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) is a specific type of anxiety that occurs only in the context of learning a foreign language in the classroom. According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), FLCA is characterized by communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Unlike general anxiety, which can occur in many aspects of daily life, FLCA is directly related to foreign language learning. It is also broader than other language-specific anxieties, such as reading anxiety or speaking anxiety, because it includes various classroom situations, including speaking, listening, reading, writing, taking tests, and interacting with teachers and classmates.

This study was conducted with reference to several previous studies. First, a study on the previous study comes from Putri Nurasiah (2021) entitled “The Correlation between Students’ Foreign Language Anxiety and Their English Reading Comprehension at the Ninth Grade of Junior High School 04 Dayun”. The results of the study show that there is a significant correlation between students’ foreign language anxiety and their English comprehension. The difference lies in the focus of the anxiety predictor variable and the scope of the research. The previous study used the general concept of foreign language anxiety and was limited to one school, while the second study emphasized Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, which is more specific and theoretically defined. Second, the study held by Wakhidatus Solekhah (2025) about The

¹⁴ Tran et al., “The Impact of Flipped Classroom on EFL Students’ Reading Anxiety in Higher Education.”

Correlation between Students' Reading Anxiety and Reading Comprehension in English Class (A correlation Study on the Eleventh Grade Students at MAN Salatiga in the Academic Year 2024/2025). The study showed significant negative relationship exists between student anxiety and English reading comprehension among the eleventh-grade students of MAN Salatiga. The study at MAN Salatiga examined reading anxiety and reading comprehension in general. Meanwhile, this study used Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, which covers learning anxiety in the classroom more broadly.

Therefore, analyzing the relationship between students' anxiety levels and their ability to understand texts is very important. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety can affect students' comprehension, either directly or indirectly. This study aims to find out whether there is a significant correlation between foreign language classroom anxiety and students' reading comprehension. Through this study, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of the impact of reading anxiety on the learning process, especially in English classes, will be obtained.

The gap that this study attempts to address is the contextualization of more specific variables. No study has simultaneously examined the relationship between anxiety in foreign language classes (as a broader independent variable in the classroom) and comprehensive reading skills. Therefore, the researcher is interested in taking the title Correlation between Anxiety in Foreign Language Class and Students' Comprehensive Reading Skills. By focusing on the dimensions of anxiety in class and comprehensive reading, this study will provide more detailed insights into the impact of affective factors on challenging cognitive aspects in foreign language learning.

B. Statement of Research Problem

In this study, the researcher can formulate the research problem based on the title: Is there a significant correlation between Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) and students' reading comprehension?

C. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research, as formulated in the research question, is to find out whether there is a significant correlation between Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) and students' reading comprehension.

D. The Formulation of Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a prediction made by a researcher about the expected relationship between two or more variables. Hypothesis testing uses statistical procedures in which researcher conclude the population from a study sample. A hypothesis has two possibilities: it can be right or wrong. Therefore, it should be tested by hypothesis testing.

Related of the research question, the researcher formulates the research hypothesis for the study is:

- H_0 (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant correlation between Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety and Students' Reading Comprehension.
- H_a (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant correlation between Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety and Students' Reading Comprehension.

E. Significances of the Research

This study is expected to be both theoretically and practically useful in determining the correlation between anxiety in foreign language classes, specifically English, and students' reading comprehension. This study is also expected to provide useful information and relevant recommendations, which are:

1. For the teachers of MAN 3 Tulungagung, the results of this study are expected to be useful for English teachers to become more aware of how students' anxiety levels in class can affect their ability to conclude when reading English text. Teachers can use the results of this study to create a more supportive learning environment, reduce anxiety, and implement

teaching strategies that can increase students' confidence and reading comprehension

2. For the students, this study can encourage them to recognize and manage their anxiety in English class, helping them to perform better in reading tasks, especially those that require inferential thinking.
3. For future researchers, it is hoped that the results of this study can provide information that can be used by future researchers as a reference regarding the various types and factors that cause anxiety in students when they are in a foreign language classroom.

F. Scope and Limitation of The Research

The limitation of the research is focusing on the correlation between Students' foreign language classroom anxiety and students' reading comprehension at MAN 3 Tulungagung.

G. Definition of Key Terms

In this section, several explanations are provided regarding the title mentioned in the previous section. The title is "The Correlation Between Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety and Students' Reading Comprehension". To avoid misunderstandings from readers, it is important to define the following key terms:

1. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) refers to the types of anxiety that specifically occur in foreign language learning situations in the classroom. Anxiety arises from negative thoughts that can interfere with the learning process, such as worry, fear of getting low grades, and apprehension about participating in class.

2. Anxiety

Huang defines anxiety as a subjective experience characterized by tension, worry, and uneasiness, which is associated with increased activity of the autonomic nervous system. This definition highlights the physiological and

emotional aspects of anxiety, including heightened physical reactions in response to fear or uncertainty. Thus, anxiety can be understood as a subjective feeling that encompasses concern and discomfort.

3. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a cognitive process that involves analyzing information, deciphering meaning, and deriving meaning or conclusions from a text. The researcher agrees with Snow's statement that reading comprehension is an active process of creating and extracting meaning from text.