

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter tells the background of the research, the research questions, the research purposes, the research significance, the research scope, the conceptual framework, the hypothesis, and the previous study.

A. Background to The Study

Mastering English language skills is central to everyday and academic life. One of the English language skills that needs to be mastered by English foreign language learners is reading skills. Farhady (1994), as cited in Adrianti (2024), states that reading is the most crucial ability for language learners to acquire when learning English. Reading skills support the learning process and contribute to students' achievement. According to the National Reading Panel (2000), reading skills are essential for students to succeed in all curriculum areas.

However, it is not easy to develop reading skills that involve complex activities because the readers have to do different activities at the same time to get good results. The readers have to read carefully to understand the text, and other organs work for reading, especially the eyes. Several problems arise when students are exposed to foreign language texts in reading classroom sessions. One of which is learning anxiety. Garden (2003) states that the anxiety involved in learning a foreign language is a feeling of tension and anxiety that requires curiosity in learning a foreign language. Many students experience anxiety in learning, which can affect their academic achievement, including reading achievement. Barnes et al. (2023) state that anxiety also affects attention, which mediates between anxiety and reading achievement.

The impact that students' anxiety in learning English will experience has a negative impact that will affect student learning outcomes. The higher the anxiety they experience, the higher the obstacles students will face to learn English properly. This also happens to students of the Islamic Junior Secondary school (MTs) of Miftahul Falah in Bandung. For example, they feel anxious when facing

English assignments, especially those related to reading skills. After discussing with the English teacher in that class, the cause was identified as the transition from elementary school. The English subject is not taught in junior high school because it is not a part of the school curriculum. In this case, students appear stressed and lack confidence when asked to read a text. Therefore, this study aims to determine the correlation between students' learning anxiety and reading achievement in Grade 7A at MTs Miftahul Falah.

There are several studies related to this present research. The research conducted by Afifah (2024), Bawengan & Kastilong (2019), and Takasana & Sengkey (2022) tended to use the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) theory as a measure of anxiety and semester exam scores as a measure of achievement. The current research uses the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), focusing on test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and English Classroom items and Inventory of Foreign Language Anxiety Factors (IFLAF) to measure students' learning anxiety and tests with descriptive-type text.

B. Research Questions

This research has several research questions:

1. What is the students' learning anxiety in 7th grade at MTs Miftahul Falah?
2. What is the students' reading achievement in 7th grade at MTs Miftahul Falah?
3. Is there any correlation between students' learning anxiety and their reading achievement in 7th grade at MTs Miftahul Falah?

C. Research Purposes

This research has several research purposes:

1. To find out students' learning anxiety in 7th grade at MTs Miftahul Falah.
2. To find out the students' reading achievement in 7th grade at MTs Miftahul Falah.
3. To examine whether or not there is a significant correlation between students' learning anxiety and their reading achievement in 7th grade at MTs Miftahul Falah.

D. Research Significances

The research is thought to provide contributions both theoretically and practically to several parties:

Theoretically, research results can benefit readers and help improve their understanding of the correlation between students' learning anxiety and their reading achievement.

Practically, the results of this research are also expected to be useful for the following parties:

1. EFL Teachers

Hopefully, this research can help teachers learn more about English learning anxiety with students' reading achievement. So that teachers can create appropriate learning for the situation that exists for students. It is believed that using the right learning strategy can help students feel relaxed, reducing the negative impact caused by student anxiety during learning.

2. Material developers

This research is expected to produce the design of effective teaching materials that are responsive to students' needs. It can be used as a reference in developing learning content that focuses on improving reading skills and considers psychological aspects of students, such as self-confidence and motivation to learn. Thus, holistically designed teaching materials can support the achievement of optimal reading learning outcomes while creating a more comfortable and enjoyable learning environment for students.

3. Other researchers

This research is a reference for future researchers and can help develop the research results regarding the correlation between students' anxiety and reading achievement.

E. Research Scope

This research aims to find out the correlation between students' learning anxiety and reading achievement. The primary focus is on 7th-grade students at MTs Miftahul Falah. This research will find out how the anxiety experienced by students can affect their reading achievement. By understanding this correlation, it is hoped that effective strategies can be developed to help students overcome anxiety and improve their academic achievement, especially reading achievement.

F. Conceptual Framework

Learning anxiety is one of the factors that can affect students' achievement, especially in foreign language learning. This research focuses on the correlation between students' learning anxiety and their reading achievement. The main variables in this research are students' learning anxiety and reading achievement. Students' learning anxiety is represented as variable X. This can be measured using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which was developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), Inventory of Foreign Language Anxiety Factors (IFLAF), which was designed by Alsowat (2016). Students' reading achievement, represented as variable Y, can be measured using a test that uses type description text and the titles of texts taken from students' books. According to Brown (2004), reading is a skill that teachers expect students to develop, especially when using introductory, beginner-level textbooks in a foreign language. Reading is often seen as the most essential skill for success in all educational settings, making it a necessary ability for students. According to Alkin (1982), achievement refers to accomplishments and suggests that these accomplishments are achieved after a period of study, training, or practice. Reading achievement shows how well students can learn English, which is one of the skills they need to develop to achieve good results.

In this conceptual framework, it is essential to understand that learning anxiety can be connected to their achievement, especially in reading achievement. Various factors can influence students' academic achievement, including learning anxiety, which can prevent them from achieving in reading achievement. Learning anxiety is an emotional reaction that occurs when students face situations related to

learning, such as exams, presentations, or interactions in class. As Spielberger et al. (1971) stated, anxiety can vary in intensity and fluctuate depending on the situation. This anxiety arises from the unique challenges that come with the language-learning process. Therefore, this study aims to find the correlation between these two variables, hoping to provide deeper insights into students' learning anxiety and reading achievement in English language learning.

The correlation between learning anxiety and reading achievement can be research using a quantitative approach. Creswell (2008) stated that quantitative research is a method where research collect and analyze numerical data to understand patterns. Where data is collected from students through questionnaires that use the FLCAS & IFLAF and tests, make from description-type texts. The results of this research will contribute to the academic literature on learning anxiety and reading achievement and provide practical implications for educators in designing more effective teaching strategies and creating a supportive learning environment to reduce their anxiety in learning English.



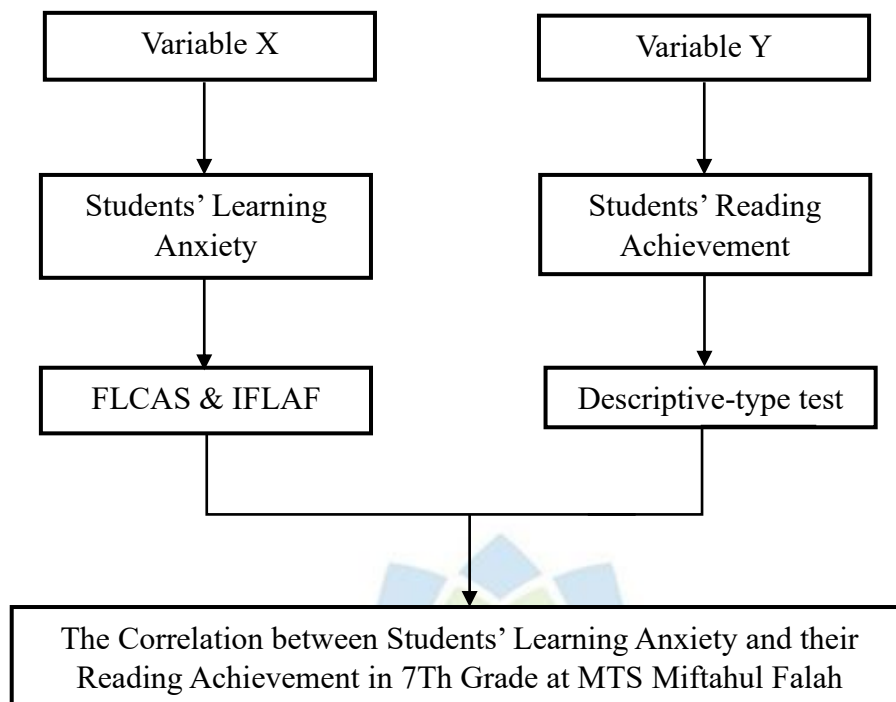


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

G. Hypothesis

This research investigates the correlation between students' learning anxiety and reading achievement. This research uses two variables: students' learning anxiety is the independent variable, X, and their reading achievement is the dependent variable, Y. In quantitative research, a hypothesis predicts what will be found in research regarding the correlation between various factors (Creswell, 2012). The hypothesis for this study is stated as follows:

1. Ha: There is a correlation between students' learning anxiety and their reading achievement.
2. Ho: No correlation exists between students' learning anxiety and reading achievement.

A statistical hypothesis test involves two statements, the null hypothesis (Ho) and the alternative hypothesis (Ha). The process starts with the assumption that the null hypothesis is valid, and the goal is to see if the data provides enough evidence to reject Ho and support the alternative hypothesis Ha.

H. Previous Study

This research utilizes several previous studies to support its findings. First is “Foreign Language Anxiety and Achievement: A Study of Primary School Students Learning English in China,” written by Hu, X, Zhang, X, & McGeown, S (2021). The research aims to determine the relationship between foreign language anxiety and foreign language achievement. The study employs the Persian version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale Questionnaire (FLCAS) to assess students’ foreign language anxiety. It uses regular assessments and formal exams to evaluate their foreign language achievement. The results from this research indicated that students' anxiety about learning a foreign language was negatively related to their success in that language. This negative relationship was more significant for high-stakes formal exams than low-stakes regular assessments. Furthermore, the connection strengthened as students advanced to higher levels of instruction.

The second research is titled “The Relationship Between Students’ Anxiety in Learning English and Their English Achievement,” written by Takasana and Sengkey (2022). This study employs a descriptive and correlational design, gathering data through questionnaires adapted from Park (2012), based on Horwitz and Cope (1986), and students' mid-semester grades. The results showed a significant correlation between the variables.

The third research is titled “The Correlation Between Students’ Learning Anxiety and Speaking Skill in Lower Secondary School,” by Syahbana & Apoko (2023). The study aims to find out the correlation between students' learning anxiety and their speaking skills at the lower secondary school level. This research utilizes a correlational design and gathers the data through a questionnaire and an English-speaking test to assess their speaking skills. The findings indicate a correlation between students' anxiety about learning and how well they can speak. This study helps us understand students' difficulties when improving their speaking skills, especially when learning English.

The fourth research, "English Language Anxiety and Language Achievement Among EFL Students in Saudi Arabia," was conducted by Almesaar (2022). The study aims to determine the main factors of the FLCAS that can predict success in learning English, as measured by university grades. Data was collected through an FLCAS from the Saudi Arabian version and their recent grades from the university English course. The results showed that the main factors of the FLCAS did not correlate with students' success in learning English.

The fifth research is titled "Correlation between anxiety and critical reading ability of Indonesian English as a Foreign Language students," written by Fitrawari et al. (2023). This research used a correlational design to collect data using the TOEFL test, and a questionnaire was developed based on the expert theory. The result of this research was that there was a correlation between the variables.

The previous studies mentioned served as references for this research, allowing it to compare its findings with those of the current research. This research focuses on the correlation between students' learning anxiety and their reading achievement. There are some similarities and differences between this research and previous studies, especially regarding methods and data collection. One of the similarities is the correlation between students' anxiety and their achievement. In addition, this research used quantitative methods, specifically correlation techniques, and collected data through a questionnaire adapted by FLCAS and a test taken from grades. However, there are some differences; this research involved a smaller sample size with only 32 students, while the previous study involved a larger sample size. The questionnaire is based on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), and Inventory of Foreign Language Anxiety Factors (IFLAF) to measure students' learning anxiety. Also, this study specifically focused on reading achievement as the variable, and the test will use descriptive text.