

## The correlation between students' reading fluency and their reading comprehension

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### ABSTRACT

As stated in the literature, it is widely accepted that reading fluency and comprehension are critical components of English learning. Reading fluency, which refers to a person's ability to read a text quickly and accurately, is a necessary skill for students when learning English, and numerous studies on reading fluency and comprehension have been conducted. However, research on the relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension at the high school level is still uncommon. Therefore, this research sought to determine the relationship between students' reading fluency and reading comprehension. This study took a quantitative approach, collecting data from 36 students in Class XI IPA 1 at UPT SMA Negeri 3 Empat Lawang using an oral reading fluency test and a reading comprehension test. The data were analysed using the Person Product-Moment correlation analysis in SPSS Version 20 for Windows. This study found a strong correlation between reading fluency and reading comprehension ( $0.000 < 0.829$ ). The higher the reading fluency of students, the higher their reading comprehension achievement will be. On the contrary, the lower the reading fluency of students, the lower their reading comprehension achievement. The implications of the study's findings and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

**Keywords:** *Correlation, Reading Fluency, and Reading Comprehension*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is an active thinking activity that involves the text, the reader, to get information and to build the meaning based on the readers' prior knowledge is important to be learned and mastered by every learner. Reading is an important skill that must be mastered by students, because the students must be able to read and understand an English text. It requires learners to understand the ideas conveyed by the writer. The process of combining information from a text and reader own background knowledge to build meaning is called reading (Nunan, 2003). It means that the meaning does not rest in text nor does it rest in reader because the readers' background knowledge integrates with the text to build the meaning.

According to Armbruster (2000), comprehension is the goal for reading. Actually, the readers are not really reading when they can read but cannot get the point of what they are reading. It can be said that reading comprehension is an act of understanding what you are reading. Reading comprehension can be defined broadly as a process of constructing a supportable understanding of a text (Neufeld, 2011). Without comprehension, reading is just an activity to decode printed materials with no understanding. Then, Pardo (2004) describes that comprehension skill is the basis for reading, and in order for students to obtain and use effective comprehension skills they must possess a variety of skills, including decoding and fluency. It is also supported that reading comprehension is a very complex skill (Armbruster, 2000). It is much more than decoding. This skill involves elements like in reading a text accurately and fluently, sufficient background knowledge and vocabulary to make sense of the content.

In recent years fluency has been an interesting topic in language learning. Fluency is the bridge between decoding and comprehension (Pikulski, 2014). Decoding refers to a child's ability to

recognize words. Fluency also allows a reader to notice that meaning is not only carried through by word, but by expression, punctuation, and phrasing (Rasinski, 2004). Once a student can learn to accurately, effectively, and effortlessly decode words, he or she can begin to read passages and stories naturally, and they can focus on understanding (Rasinski, 2012).

Therefore, to achieve success in language teaching and learning process especially English as a foreign language (EFL), reading fluency is one of important one. Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with expression (Rasinski, 2004). It is important because it provides a link between word recognition and comprehension. Thus, student's reading fluency will help them to improve their reading comprehension ability (Hudson, 2012). Simultaneously, reading comprehension and reading fluency ability are both interrelated and/or many readers problem with recognition can lead to problems with fluency, which can lead to problems with comprehension (Habibah, 2015)

According to Talada (2007) in her dissertation, she found that almost every time her students read without fail. Therefore, she assumed that if her students read aloud a selected passage fluently without errors, the students would have a perfect score on comprehension questions. Then, she is interested in analyzing the relationship between oral reading fluency and comprehension. Her research found that students from the second and third grades of Catholic elementary school in New York have strong relation of oral reading fluency and reading comprehension.

It is quite similar when the researcher was doing an internship (*Pengenalan Lingkungan Persekolahan* (PLP)) at UPT SMA Negeri 3 Empat Lawang last semester. She found that reading was a hard activity for the eleventh-grade students. The students found it difficult to read a text. They were not fluent when asked to practice reading and most of them seemed confused to comprehend what they read. They found it difficult to identify information and to find a main idea of a text. The researcher, during the internship, gave them a text to practice reading followed with a reading comprehension test with ten questions related to the text they had read. The results indicated that their reading fluency was poor. Besides that, their reading comprehension was also low. Considering that issue, the researcher was interested in conducting this research.

## II. METHOD

In this research, researcher was intended to find: there is correlation between students' reading fluency and their reading comprehension. The researcher used correlational study. Correlation study means the researcher use one group and take the data in one time without giving treatment. The data will be collected by seeing the correlation between cause and effect that might happen (after the fact) (Setiyadi, 2018). Since this research is intended to investigate the correlation between the students' reading fluency and their reading comprehension, the researcher will not give a treatment or experiment to the subjects. The researcher gains the data from the tests that measured each variable.

The population of this research was the eleven grade students of UPT SMA Negeri 3 Empat Lawang. The total number of populations was 268 students divided into 8 classes. According to Sugyono (2011) sample is part of populations or a representative of population which is observed or analyzed. Sample is a representative part of the total population. The sample will be taken by using cluster sampling technique. Cluster sampling technique involves obtaining a random sample of clusters from the population, with all members of each selected cluster invited to participate and each cluster has the same probability of being selected, independently of all others. Thus, the researcher will choose one class or cluster randomly.

In collecting the data, researcher used two kinds of test. They are oral reading test for the reading fluency and written test for the reading comprehension. The purpose of the test is to measure students' ability. Test is important point in this research because the researcher wants to know the students' ability in reading comprehension. In oral reading fluency the students were asked to read the passage in one minute to get the students' rate. Then, to know the student students' accuracy the researcher assessed the number of words read correctly in one minute. Last, to know the score of

students' prosody, the researcher used the dimension of expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace (sections of minimal disruption). The scoring rubric that adopted from (Jerry Zutell, 1991) the scoring rubric can be seen in appendix. At conclusion of one minute, the researcher records the students score for oral reading fluency test. Then, the reading comprehension test was taken from existing test, namely *Penilaian Tengah Semester* (PTS) or Mid Semester. The multiple-choice questions have five possible answers labeled A,B,C,D, E, the students was choosing one answer per question. The reading comprehension test covers five parts of reading aspects. It implies that, there are 5 aspects in every part of reading comprehension.

The compared the students, reading fluency scores and reading comprehension scores at the eleventh-grade students of UPT SMA Negeri 3 Empat Lawang. The test results are in form of scores or interval data. After the researcher obtaining these results, the researcher would analyze the relationship between students' reading fluency and their reading comprehension.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Result

The result of students' reading fluency and reading comprehension taken from the students' scores. The highest score of reading fluency was 92 and the lowest score was 25. While the highest scores of reading comprehension test was 95 and the lowest was 40.

In this research, to find out the correlation of students' reading fluency and their reading achievement, Pearson Product Moment Coefficient is applied. The correlation coefficient is found whenever the p-output was lower than 0.05 (Pallant, 2005). The analysis result is figured out in the table below.

**Table 13 Result Analysis of Measuring Correlation from Students' Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension**

Correlation		Reading Fluency	Reading Comprehension
Reading Fluency	Pearson Correlation	1	.829**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	36	36
Reading Comprehension	Pearson Correlation	.829**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	36	36

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

Based on the statistical analysis it is found that correlation coefficient of reading fluency and comprehension achievement was  $\text{®} 0.829$ . This indicates that there is high correlation coefficient (0.829) is between 0.80 – 1.00 (Sugiyono, 2012). It is also found that there is significant correlation between students' reading fluency and reading comprehension achievement at Sig. 0.000.

#### Discussions

The discussion in this research is presented based on the result of findings and also discusses the review of related theory and analyses the data to clarify the findings. The researcher focuses on the correlation between students' score of reading fluency and reading comprehension at UPT. SMA Negeri 3 Empat Lawang. Here is the result above were discussed by relating them to previous researches.

Some findings are consistent with previous research. Firstly, the result show that there is correlation between students' reading fluency and their reading comprehension. In the previous research, the researcher correlated with reading comprehension. For example, reading fluency has a statically positive relationship with reading comprehension scores of the students in the second grade. The expected relationship is that the students that fluently at grade level will also thoroughly comprehend. Correspondingly, Students are unable to read fluently at their grade level will also be unable to thoro ughly comprehend (Talada, 2007).

Secondly, reading fluency have correlation with writing fluency and reading comprehension (Hardianto, 2019), she finds that reading fluency not only have correlation reading comprehension. But also reading fluency have correlation with writing fluency. The result shows there is a statically significant strongly positive correlation between reading comprehension and reading fluency. The research also showed a strong positive correlation between reading fluency and writing fluency in the posttest measurement. In the quasi-experimental study, the experimental group do not outperform the experimental group: both groups made significant progress.

Likewise, based on Habibah (2015) students' reading fluency gives 70.0% to their reading comprehension achievement. It can be said that the role of students' reading fluency was very high.

On the other hand, Rasinski (2004) stated that reading fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Because fluent reader do not have to concentrate on decoding the words, they can focus their attention on what the next means. Fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time. Less fluent readers, however, must focus their attention on figuring out their words, leaving them little attention for understanding.

Last but not least, it is found that the students of UPT SMA Negeri 3 Empat Lawang in table 8 shows students' reading fluency score, the mean of the score is 64. It can be concluded that students in the XI grade were in developing category and it means quite good but still need many improvements inreadingfluencybecause reading fluency will help students to improve their reading comprehension ability and reading comprehension is one of the important skills in learning language (Hudson, 2012).

While every student has a different way to study especially in learning English, they have their own characteristic while learning. Through assessing students' score of reading fluency, the students will know how to develop a strategy in improving their reading fluency in the classroom. Readers study how to understand text verbally by listen to others read to them in a communicative and evocative approach. Hearing someone read aloud increases students' vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation for reading and it provides a model of how a passage may be interpreted orally (Patel M F, 2008). Learning how to orally be reading properly is not only from text books but it can be learned by other ways such as listening to the teacher or friend who read in classroom.

Based on the finding in table13, it shows students' reading comprehension score, the mean score is 72.6, the highest score is 95and the lowest score is 40. Most of students got the reading comprehension scores lower than standard scores. It concluded that students of UPT SMA Negeri 3 Empat Lawang in the XI grade were need many improvements in reading comprehension because comprehension is important for students in learning language especially English. In comprehending, sometimes students do not know the meaning of words or unfamiliar words,so that it can disturb their comprehension.

In order to explore the correlation between Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension, correlation analysis is conducted using SPSS version 16.0. Based on the result of the correlation between students' reading fluency and reading comprehension in table13can be seen that has significance (Sig.=0.000) and Pearson Correlation=0.829. It means that between reading fluency and reading comprehension does correlate each other variable and degree of correlation is very high. The result affirmed theory correlation Pearson Product Moment thatif significance correlation < 0.05 it has

correlation between two variables. The details of the theory correlation coefficient were explained the degree correlation number is 0.0-199 is very low; 0.20– 0.99 is low; 0.40–0.599 is moderate; 0.60–0.799 is high; 0.80 – 1.000 is very high (Sugiyono :2012).

**Table 14 "r" score Interpretation**

<b>Strength of Correlation</b>	
<b>Interval Coefficient ®</b>	<b>Correlation Level</b>
0.00-0.199	Very Low Correlation
0.20- 0.399	Low Correlation
0.40- 0.599	Middle Correlation
0.60- 0.799	High Correlation
<b>0.80- 1.000</b>	<b>Very High correlation</b>

*Sources: (Sugiyono, Metode Penelitian kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&B, 2012)*

In the final analysis, this research came to a conclusion that the students' reading fluency and reading comprehension has significant correlation. The better students' reading fluency, the better their reading comprehension achievement and vice versa.

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

##### **Conclusions**

In comparing reading fluency and reading comprehension, the research came to the results of getting the relation between reading fluency and reading comprehension. The students were doing the test of fluency for measured the capacity of students' accuracy, automatic and expression. By comparing the test, as the result is there is relation between reading fluency and reading comprehension. In other words, the better students' reading fluency, the greater their reading comprehension achievement will be, and the lower students' reading fluency, the worst their reading comprehension achievement.

##### **Suggestions**

The result shows that when students' reading fluency in good score, their reading comprehension will also in good score and vice versa. Because of that, the teacher must keep in mind the level of students' reading fluency while teaching due to the fact having acknowledged them will then determine the techniques teachers used, what strategies a good way to teacher used to enhance students' reading fluency, because reading fluency can improve their reading comprehension achievement. subsequent, the teacher needs to be conscious in what level their students' reading fluency, through knowing this, the teachers can encourage students' interest about something, after which the students begin to read to make their fluency be better, and to get information wanted themselves. with any luck, the present research will also make contribution to be carried out new research to raise awareness of reading fluency for students' reading achievement and increase knowledge relative to reading fluency and its relationship with reading comprehension achievement, and other reading skills.

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