

CORRELATION BETWEEN READING INTEREST, GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE AND READING SKILL

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Abstract: The objective of this research was to find out whether there is a correlation between (1) reading interest and reading skill; (2) grammatical competence and reading skill; and (3) reading interest, grammatical competence simultaneously and reading skill. The method used in the research was correlation. The study was carried out in June to August 2013 at SMA Negeri 1 Karanganyar. The population was all of the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Karanganyar which consist of eight classes. The total number of the students was 272 students. The sample was 34 students taken by cluster random sampling. The instruments in collecting the data were questionnaire and test. Questionnaire was used to collect the data of reading interest, while objective test was used to collect the data of grammatical competence and reading skill. The techniques used to analyze the data were Single and Multiple Linear Regression and Correlation. The result of analysis shows that there were a positive correlation between (1) reading interest and reading skill; (2) grammatical competence and reading skill; and (3) reading interest, grammatical competence simultaneously and reading skill. It means that reading interest and grammatical competence cannot be neglected in improving reading skill.

Keywords: *Reading Interest, Grammatical competence, and Reading Skill*

INTRODUCTION

English as the subject matter of curriculum has four basic language skills that should be mastered: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Reading is a major activity in learning process. Nowadays, a lot of information is provided in the form of books, articles, essay, magazines, newspaper, blog, and so on. Stauffer in Petty and Jensen (1980: 207) defines reading as a complex process of getting information from the written text, in which it needs the ability to pronounce and comprehend the author's impression via printed words. Reading becomes the difficult skill because reading is much more than finding out what happens

next in a story or being able to answer comprehension questions related to a piece of text, but it is followed by mastering the components of language competence to understand it (Vale and Feunteun 1998: 81). So, students need to improve their reading skill by learning about words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and the other aspects that support reading skill in order to get information or ideas from the text.

Interest becomes the other factor which influences reading skill. Every student has different aims in reading depending on his need and interest. In terms of reading, interest has close relation to achieve better reading skill because interest

is an important point to help the reader focus their attention on his reading text. Crow (1963: 159) states that interest as the motivating force which causes individual to give attention to a person, a thing, or an activity. Students who have great interest in reading will have great motivation in reading. They will concentrate on the reading text well. They will be more creative and active in comprehending and understanding the meaning of the text.

Interest is similar and related to curiosity (Stephen and Kratochwill, 2000: 349). Curiosity occurs when students are interested to an activity or object. In terms of reading, students who have interest in reading will have high curiosity. Their curiosity is higher than others who do not like reading. They will read more to get the information that they are looking for. The more they have curiosity, the more they will read a text. The great desire in reading will help them to develop their skill in reading.

Another thing that affects reading skill is grammar. Grammar becomes one of the most important components of a language. Hornby (1995) defines grammar as the description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistics units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language. It usually takes into account the meaning and functions the sentences have in the overall system at the language. It means that grammar not only concerns on the structure of language but on the meaning and the function of sentence.

In terms of reading, grammar is the important point to help readers comprehend and understand what the text means. As stated by Lenz (2013), comprehension is affected by the reader's knowledge of language structures. Knowledge of language

structures here refers to grammatical competence. To be able to comprehend the text well, students need grammatical competence to help them understand what the text means in reading passage. By having grammatical competence, they can comprehend the text easily. Others who do not have grammatical competence will face many difficulties to understand the meaning of the text. So, understanding the grammar of English is needed to help them comprehend the reading passage well.

Based on the background study, the objectives of the study are to find out the correlation between: (1) reading interest and reading skill; (2) grammatical competence and reading skill; and (3) reading interest and grammatical competence simultaneously and reading skill.

As one of the four language skills, reading is an important activity in human's life. This is due to the fact that people mostly get information through reading. According to Stauffer in Petty and Jensen (1980: 207) reading is a complex process of getting information from the written text, in which it needs the ability to pronounce and comprehend the written language. Then, Aebersold and Field (1997: 15) state that reading is what happens when people look at a text and assign meaning to the written symbols in that text. Another definition is stated by Grellet (1981: 8) who defines reading as an active skill. Before and after reading a text the reader should guess what the text would inform him, then he reads to get the message of the text, and the next he should try to answer some questions about the text. So, it can be concluded that reading is an active process of assigning meaning from the author's impression in order to get information from the written language.

Learners sometimes find difficulties in reading, so they need some skills to make them easier in getting their purpose in reading. As stated by Harris and Hodges in Peter Afflerbach (2008), skill is an acquired ability to perform well. Then, Guthrie (1952) defines skill as the ability to bring about some end result with maximum certainty. So it can be concluded that skill is the ability to perform well with maximum certainty.

According to DeBoers and Dallman (1982: 38) reading skills are how to recognize letters and phonic elements, how to discover familiar elements in the longer unfamiliar words, how to use context clues, how to note details, how to find the main idea of a longer passage, how to compare, evaluate, and visualize the author's meaning, how to locate and utilize needed information, how to follow printed directions, and how to approach and speed of reading both the nature of the material read and to their purpose. These skills can be learned through guided practice.

Roe and Ross (1984: 265) state that reading or study skills are techniques that enhance comprehension and retention of information in printed material and thus help students cope successfully with reading assignments in content area classes. Students need to develop their ability to use a good method that can help them comprehend the material they have read, flexibility of reading habits, and the ability to locate and organize information effectively.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that reading skill is the abilities to comprehend the written text by means of recognizing letters and phonic elements, discovering familiar and unfamiliar words, using context clues, finding the main idea of a longer passage,

comparing, evaluating, visualizing the author's meaning to get the detail information, locating and organizing information effectively.

According to DeBoer and Dallman (1982: 161), there are several skills that make up the ability to comprehend what is read. According to the reader's purpose, the skills are: reading to find the main idea, reading to select significant details, reading to answer the questions, reading to summarize and organize, reading to arrive at generalizations, reading to follow directions, reading to predict outcomes, and reading to evaluate critically.

From the explanation above, reading involves various different skills. The writer restricts on the five aspects of reading skills as follows: (1) reading to find main idea, (2) reading to find the specific or explicit information of text, (3) reading to find the meaning of vocabulary items or guess the meaning of words used in the selection, (4) reading for making inferences, getting information that is implied or not directly stated in the text, and (5) reading to identify the referent of pronoun.

Interest becomes an important thing in one's activity in the daily life, including in learning. It's also the one of the most important areas of growth in reading. According to Hidi and Anderson in Ellis (2003: 399) state that interest is a form of intrinsic motivation accompanied by positive effect: as the example, people pursuing a task in which they are interested in experience such feelings as pleasure, excitement, and liking. Similarly, Getzels in Smitch and Dechant (1961:273) states that interest is a characteristic disposition, organized through experience, which impels an individual to seek out particular objects, activities, understanding, skills, or goals for

attention or recognition. Then, Skinner (1958: 455) defines interest is the fundamental factors in motivating the acquisition of functional information, skills, appreciations and discriminations. The last definition comes from Crow (1963: 159), who states that interest is an activity or give attention to a person or an object as a matter of duty or routine. However, the experience may arouse in one's interest that does not present at a beginning of the activity. So, it can be concluded that interest is a form of intrinsic factor that attracts an individual to repel him in positive effect from particular objects or activities for attention or recognition. The intrinsic factor includes consciousness, motivation, pleasure, and attention.

According to Getzels (1966) reading interest is a direct reading behavior. It means that reading is done as a routine activity without any pressure. Another definition is stated by Winkle (2004) who said that reading interest is a situation arising from the desire to perform reading activities and to achieve a goal. Basically an interest in reading among individuals to each other differently depending on the size of the motives they have read. So, it can be concluded that reading interest is one's positive activity that motivate an individual to assign meaning more accurately from receiving ideas and author's impression in order to achieve the goal. The goal here means of getting information from the written language.

Mastering English grammar is the important point to achieve the goal of learning English. Grammar is the rule of language which supports four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Without mastering grammar, students will face many difficulties in

learning English. As stated by Ur (1996: 75) grammar is the way words are put together to make correct sentences. Another definition comes from Widowson (1997: 84). He states that grammar is knowledge of how words are adapted and arranged to form sentences. According to Harmer (1997: 1), grammar is the way in which words change themselves and group together to make sentences. Based on the explanation above, it can be summarized that grammar is the rule or system of how words are adapted and arranged in the form of correct sentences.

According to Brown (1994: 31), competence refers to one's underlying theory or knowledge of a system, event, or fact. It is non-observable ability to do something, to perform something. Then, Savignon (1997: 41) says that grammatical competence is mastery of linguistic code, the ability to recognize the lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological features of a language and to manipulate those features to form words and sentences. As stated by Chomsky (1999), grammatical competence is the ability to recognize and produce the distinctive grammatical structure of language and to use them effectively in communication. He adds that grammatical competence is the ability to use the forms of language (sounds, words, and sentence structure). So, it can be concluded that grammatical competence is person's knowledge or ability to apply grammar in appropriate context.

The materials of grammatical competence cover all grammar aspects stated in the syllabus used for the Tenth Grade of Senior High School. They are: Modality Acts, Simple Past Tense, Past Continuous Tense, Past Perfect Tense, Imperative Sentence, Adjectives,

Comparison, and Direct and Indirect Speech. 456

Based on the rationale above, the hypotheses of the research can be formulated as follows: (1) there is a positive correlation between reading interest and reading skill, (2) there is a positive correlation between grammatical competence and reading skill, (3) there is a positive correlation between reading interest and grammatical competence simultaneously and reading skill.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Karanganyar, which is located at Jl. AW Monginsidi 03 Karanganyar. The population of this research was the tenth grade of SMA N 1 Karanganyar in the academic year 2012/2013 which consists of eight classes. Each class consists of 34 students, so the total number of the students was 272 students. The sample of this research was 34 students of class X-3. The research was conducted in June to August 2013.

Related to the objectives of the study, the method used in this study was correlational study. Hallonen and Santrock (1999: 20) define correlational study as a method to describe the relationship between two or more events or characteristics. The writer used this method because she wanted to know the level of correlation between reading interest, grammatical competence, and reading skill. There are three possible results of a correlation study: a positive correlation, a negative correlation, and no correlation. According to Nunan (1992: 39) the correlation coefficient is a measure of correlation strength and can range from -1.00 to +1.00. Perfect positive correlation

would result in a score of +1. Perfect negative correlation would result in -1.

In this research there are two kinds of variables, namely independent variable and dependent variable. The independent variables are reading interest and grammatical competence, while the dependent variable is reading skill.

The writer used questionnaire and test as the techniques to collect the data of the study. According to Nunan (1992: 231) questionnaire is an instrument for collecting the data, usually in written form, consisting of open and/or closed questions and other probes requiring a response from subject. In this study the writer used questionnaire to measure the data of reading interest. The questionnaire of reading interest consists of 50 items. The writer used the positive and negative item.

Beside questionnaire, another techniques used to collect the data was test. Test is a systematic procedure for observing one's behavior and describing it with the aid of numerical device or category system (Cronbach in M. Syakur, 1999: 5). The writer used test to measure the data of the grammatical competence and reading skill. The type of test was objective test.

The first was test of grammatical competence. It was used to collect the data about the students' grammatical competence. This test consists of 50 items which covers WH-Questions, Modality Acts, Simple Past Tense, Past Continuous Tense, Past Perfect Tense, Imperative Sentence, Adjectives and order of adjectives, Comparison, and Direct and Indirect Speech.

The second was test of reading skill to collect the data about the students' reading skill. The reading skill consists of 50 items. The items covers find main idea, find

the specific or explicit information of text, find the meaning of vocabulary items or guess the meaning of words used in the selection, making inferences that is implied but not directly stated in the text, and identify the referent of pronoun.

An instrument can be said good, if it is valid and reliable. An instrument is called valid if it measures what should be measured or tests the appropriate content, and it is called reliable if it continually produces the same result when applied in identical situations on different occasions. Therefore, before being given to the sample class, the test instrument is tried out in other class which does not belong to the sample group. The researcher used 38 items of valid reading interest questionnaire (from 50 items tried out), 30 valid items of grammatical competence test (from 50 items tried out), and 31 items of reading skill test (from 50 items tried out).

In analyzing the data, the writer tested the three hypotheses of the study. Product Moment Formula was used to test the first and the second hypotheses which say that there is a positive correlation between reading interest and reading skill, and there is a positive correlation between grammatical competence and reading skill. Besides, to know whether the coefficient correlation between X and Y is significant or not, the writer used t test formula. The correlation coefficient is significant if the value of t observation (t_o) is higher than t table (t_t), or $t_o > t_t$.

Multiple Linear Correlation was used to test the third hypothesis which says that there is a positive correlation between reading interest and grammatical competence toward reading skill. Besides, to find out whether or not the coefficient of $R_{y(1.2)}$ is significant, the writer used F test

formula. The correlation coefficient is significant if the value of F observation (F_o) is higher than F table (F_t), or $F_o > F_t$.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data of reading interest are collected by using questionnaire. From the questionnaire, it is obtained that the highest score is 116 and the lowest score is 82, so the range is 34. The mean or the average score is 96.85. The mode is 101.8 and the median is 97.5. The standard deviation is 8.08.

While, the data of grammatical competence are collected by using test. It is obtained that the highest score is 23 and the lowest score is 13, so the range is 10. The mean or the average score is 18.029. The mode is 17 and the median is 17.7. The standard deviation is 2.75.

The last is the data of reading skill which are collected by using test. It is obtained that the highest score is 30 and the lowest score is 16, so the range is 14. The mean or the average score is 23.529. The mode is 23.214 and the median is 23.42. The standard deviation is 3.174.

The writer used Pearson Product Moment Formula to test the first hypothesis. In the first hypothesis says that there is a positive correlation between reading interest (X_1) and reading skill (Y). The correlation analysis shows that the correlation coefficient (r_{x_1y}) between reading interest (X_1) and reading skill (Y) is 0.367. After being calculated to the t-value, the value of t_o (t-obtained) is 2.234. The value of t_t (t-table) at the level of significance $\alpha=0.05$ for $n=34$ is 1.7. Because t_o (2.234) $> t_t$ (1.7), the coefficient correlation is significant. It means that H_o is rejected. So, there is positive correlation between reading interest

(X_1) and reading skill (Y). The coefficient of determination between X_1 and Y is $(0.367)^2 \times 100\%$. It means that 13.47% variation of reading skill (Y) is influenced by reading interest (X_1) and 86.53% is influenced by other factors.

The second hypothesis in this research says that there is a positive correlation between grammatical competence (X_2) and reading skill (Y). To test the hypothesis, the writer analyzes the collected data by using Pearson Product Moment Formula. The correlation analysis shows that the correlation coefficient (r_{x_2y}) between grammatical competence (X_2) and reading skill (Y) is 0.352. After being calculated to the t-value, the value of t_o (t-obtained) is 2.13. The value of t_t (t-table) at the level of significance $\alpha=0.05$ for $n=34$ is 1.7. Because t_o (2.13) $> t_t$ (1.7), the coefficient correlation is significant. It means that H_o is rejected. So, there is positive correlation between grammatical competence (X_2) and reading skill (Y). The coefficient of determination between X_2 and Y is $(0.352)^2 \times 100\%$. It means that 12.39% variation of reading skill (Y) is influenced by grammatical competence (X_2) and 87.61% is influenced by other factors.

In the third hypothesis, the writer analyzed the collected data by using the Multiple Linear Regression Formula. This hypothesis says that there is a positive correlation between reading interest (X_1), grammatical competence (X_2) simultaneously and reading skill (Y). The multiple linear regression analysis shows that the coefficients of a_0 , a_1 , a_2 are 124.72, 0.111, and 0.316. Therefore, the multiple linear regression equation of Y on X_1 and X_2 becomes $\hat{Y} = 124.72 + 0.111X_1 + 0.316X_2$. The value of F_o is 3.628 and the distribution table (F_t) with the degree of freedom (df) 2

and 31 at the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$ is 3.32. It is obvious that $F_o > F_t$; it means that the regression of X_1 , X_2 , and Y is significant.

The multiple correlation analysis shows that the correlation coefficient R_o between reading interest (X_1) and grammatical competence (X_2) simultaneously and reading skill (Y) is 0.435. After being calculated to the F-value, the value of F_o (F-obtained) is 3.628. The value of F_t at the level of significance $\alpha=0.05$ and df (degree of freedom) 2:31 is 3.32. Because $F_o(3.628) > F_t$ (3.32), the coefficient correlation is significant. It means that H_o is rejected. So, there is a positive correlation between reading interest (X_1) and grammatical competence (X_2) simultaneously and reading skill (Y). R^2 (0.1896) is coefficient of determination meaning that 18.96% variance of Y is determined by X_1 and X_2 and 81.4% variance of Y is determined by other factors.

The result of the correlation analysis between two independent variables (reading interest and grammatical competence) and one dependent variable (reading skill) is positive and significant. The correlation between reading interest, grammatical competence, and reading skill can be illustrated as follows.

Reading is the major activity in learning process. Although reading is important, a lot of people do not like to read because they are not interested. Reading will be interesting and enjoyable if there are some intrinsic factors affect them, such as interest. This intrinsic motivation is needed to encourage them in doing activity especially reading. So, interest can be the determinant factor for improving reading skill. If they have high reading interest, their reading skill will be better.

Interest is related to curiosity and persistence. Curiosity occurs when students are interested to an activity. Students who have high curiosity in reading will be motivated to develop their skill in reading. If their reading skills are developed, it will help them to be able to comprehend the text easily in order to get the information that they are looking for. Besides, students who are interested in a particular topic show greater cognitive engagement in that topic (Printrich in Ellis, 2003: 400). It means that when students are interested in reading, they will have persistence to be more active in comprehending the text. During reading, they will be more active to get the information by underlining the main idea, asking and answering the specific questions, noting details information, and so on. Those abilities are required in reading for better comprehension.

To be able to acquire all of those abilities, having high reading interest is not enough for the students. Students also need to have grammatical competence to help them understand the meaning and the function of each sentence in reading text. According to Andrews (2004), grammar is highly relevant to reading. To read a sentence is to analyze it; its words, its grammar, and its meaning. Without the ability to analyze it, students will have difficulty to comprehend the reading passage. By having good grammatical competence, students can identify the subject, predicate of each sentence; define the meaning of unfamiliar words by using context clues; identify the tenses used in the text. If they master those competences, they will find the main idea easily, answer the specific question correctly. So, they will comprehend the text easily.

From the explanation above, it can be pointed out that reading interest and grammatical competence can be the determinant factors for improving reading skill. The more they have good grammatical competence, the more they have great interest to develop their skill in reading in order to get information that they are looking for. If reading interest and grammatical competence are developed, the reading skill will be better.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

From the hypothesis testing in chapter IV, it can be concluded that there is a positive correlation between reading interest and reading skill, grammatical competence and reading skill, and reading interest and grammatical competence simultaneously and reading skill. In other words, it can be said that reading interest and grammatical competence are the important variables to give the contribution to reading skill. It is considered that reading interest is the important aspects that influence reading skill. The teacher can increase the students' reading interest by using an interesting topic in reading class. By using interesting topic, it can motivate them to read. They will be more serious during reading activity. Those great desires in reading will help them achieve better reading skill.

The competency of grammar is the important aspect to achieve the goal of reading. Although grammar is not easy to learn by the students, the teacher can help them by giving the materials from simple to complex in order that they can understand the materials easily. Besides, creating fun learning activity and using appropriate material such as jumble sentences is also

needed to improve their grammatical competence. The better students master grammar of a language, the more easily they understand the difficult phrases or sentences in reading passage they read. Besides, they also easily comprehend what the text means. So, reading interest and grammatical competence can be the determinant factors for improving reading skill. If reading interest and grammatical competence are developed, the reading skill will be better.

Based on the conclusion and implication above, the researcher would like to give some suggestions to the teachers as follows: (1) The teachers should be aware that there are many factors influencing the students' reading skill, such as: reading interest and grammatical competence; (2) In order to increase students' reading skill, the teachers should motivate them in order to develop their reading interest by using an interesting topic in reading class; (3) The teachers should give a close attention to teach grammar in order to help the students to succeed in reading skill.

For the students, the researcher gives some suggestions as follows: (1) The students should be aware that reading interest and grammatical competence are the important factors in improving their reading skill; (2) The students should increase their reading interest because it will help them easier to achieve better reading skill; (3) The students should improve grammatical competence which is very important in supporting the reading skill.

The writer realizes that the result of this study is far from being perfect. The writer hopes that there will be other research which concerns other aspects related to reading skill because there many factors

which can affect students in improving reading skill like reading habit, vocabulary competency, and so on.

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