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Impacts of English Reading Attitudes on L2 Achievements

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Abstract:

Reading is an acquired skill needed for obtaining knowledge. To be successful in reading, one should adopt certain attitudes to ensure the reading activity's fruitfulness. This correlational study investigates the possible significant relationship between reading attitude and L2 achievement. The subjects of this study were 47 vocational school students in Yogyakarta. Samples were chosen using purposive sampling with X graders and XI graders of a vocational school. The data were collected through a questionnaire, interview sessions, and an English exam. The hypothesis of this research was the more positive the students' attitude was, the higher were L2 achievements of the students. The writers conducted a Pearson correlation computation to analyze the correlation of the obtained data. The findings showed that the students' reading attitude was positive and the L2 achievements were high, but the reading attitude correlated negatively and weakly to L2 achievements. Other factors affected L2 achievements as well. ESL teachers should be concerned about their students' reading attitudes.

Keywords: *affective attitude, cognitive attitude, L2 achievement, reading attitude*

1. INTRODUCTION

Literacy is of extreme importance in an individual life. One of the easiest ways to absorb a piece of information is by reading (Nazurty, Priyanto, Pratiwi, & Mukminin, 2019). Gathering information about the world and others is essential for personal development and living together in a society. So, reading activities will capacitate a person to make meaning to their lives as members of the human community (Papadopoulou & Goumas, 2018). However, the capacity for reading is not inborn (Wolf, Barzilai, & Dunne, 2009). People need to be trained and drill themselves regularly to obtain the expected degree of literacy in society (Yeatman & White, 2021). When people learn reading and writing, their knowledge is added (Vasquez, Janks, & Cober, 2019). Toste et al. (2020) highlighted that reading capacity consists of code-focused skills (skill to do the precise and articulate reading) and meaning-focused skills (skill to understand and obtain knowledge via reading). Literate people, then, enjoy more access to vast knowledge. Kaba & Ramaiah (2018) unearthed the fact that reading the source of knowledge is a common way of gaining knowledge. Furthermore, reading is part of modern people's life. People read daily, whether to get more ability or entertainment (Rahman & Amir, 2019).

In the learning environment, Grabe (2012), having conceptualized reading as an effort to capture a common comprehension, affirmed that the most fundamental aim of reading is to yield a general understanding. A comprehensive and deep understanding generated from an effective reading is essential for constructing knowledge, and literacy at school targets the formation of pupils' knowledge (Ben-Chaim, 2016). He explained further that a child's cognitive growth enters a new phase when the child learns to read. Later as pupils, their intellectual capacity needs to be developed so that they can achieve what they dreamt in life and engage in societal life. Thus, the determining role of reading in learning is indisputable (Ölmez, 2015). Success in learning is much more impacted by reading capacity and reading habits (Yildiz, 2020). He also stressed that reading habit is a materialisation of a positive reading attitude which could become the predictor of students' academic achievement. In fact, in his study, he found that students who achieved high at the end of the academic were most likely those who are fond of reading books. Similarly, Makhmudov (2021) found that EFL reading proficiency opens the way for achieving the developmental and educational goals of subjects taught in school. Hence, it is important to cultivate the reading habit among the learners, especially the early ones (Celik, 2019), as he discovered that the developing reading habit among preschool children in Iraq had made them ready for going to school.

The cultivation of reading habits comes together with the cultivation of a positive attitude toward reading. It means that reading habits can be built and maintained

thanks to maintaining a positive attitude towards reading. Meanwhile, having the right attitude toward reading can generate a fruitful and successful reading. This view is reflected by the study result of Yuyu (2020), who pinpointed that the pupils' reading attitude is impactful on the success of reading. Rafi, Islam, & Cahyani (2021) strengthened this view with their findings which described the fact that students' reading attitude is positively but moderately related to their reading scores; and that students with high scores possessed a good attitude toward reading.

Furthermore, Wangchuk & Zangmo (2021) underlined that a positive reading attitude stimulates the reading habit; then, the reading habit is influential in speeding up the acquisition of the English language. Uslu (2020) pinpointed that L2 achievement is influenced by a positive reading attitude and reading habit. Sparks, Patton, & Luebbers (2018) concluded that students' reading attitudes affected the increase in L2 achievement.

Many studies in Indonesia examined the relationships between reading attitude and reading achievement (Agustiani, 2017; Ardiansyah et al., 2020; Rachmajanti & Musthofiyah, 2017; Trisnayanti et al., 2020; F. Widyasari, 2016; Yuyu, 2020). The study of the reading attitude of vocational school students in Indonesia as the predictor of L2 achievement is still quite a few. It would be curious to find out how the technical school students see the reading activity as meaningful and prosperous for their language learning. So, the present research will fill the gap in the literature about the technical school students' reading attitude in Indonesia in relation to their English performance manifested in L2 achievement. We assume that the more positive the attitude of EFL learners toward English Reading, the more they will achieve highly in English. Thus, the formulated research question is: what is the relationship between L2 learners' reading attitude and their achievement in L2?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading attitude is formed by people's experiences and is something that a person acquires (Junko Yamashita, 2013). Agustiani (2017) conceptualized reading attitude as the way an individual values or conducts all activities which are related to reading. Furthermore, Yamashita (2013) stated that the multifariousness of reading attitude is commonly accepted; so there are three elements of attitudes including an affective element (what the learner feels), cognitive element (what the learner thinks), and conative element (what the learner is willing to do) (p.250).

Some previous studies reported that L2 achievements were affected by students' attitudes (Al-Hoorie, 2016; Balan et al., 2019; Bulgurcuoglu, 2016; Cancino & Ubilla, 2021; Fakeye, 2010; Moskovsky et al., 2016). Fakeye (2010), investigating high school students in Nigeria, found a positive relationship between student language attitudes as one of the personal variables and achievement in English.

Moskovsky et al. (2016) highlighted that a positive learner attitude cannot assure high achievement. The findings were contrary to Widyasari's (2016) findings which revealed that the pupils' positive attitude toward reading could predict their reading achievement. This positive attitude toward reading led the student-participants to believe that reading activities can enhance and enlarge their knowledge and develop their interest in reading. The students' reading attitude, motivation, and parental involvement would improve their reading comprehension scores. Clark & De Zoysa (2011) unveiled that L2 achievements are well related to positive reading attitude.

Other factors are 'competitive' to the reading attitude. Bulgurcuoglu (2016) discovered in her research that preservice teachers possess a positive reading attitude achieving high academically. Balan et al. (2019) unveiled that reading attitude and reading materials, reading frequency, and time spent for reading were among the factors that were not supportive of academic achievement. Moreover, Cancino & Ubilla (2021) underlined the possibility of past learning experiences to become contributive to the formation of the reading attitude.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study employs a correlational study. Queirós et al. (2017) said that the relationship between two or more variables is examined in a correlational study, which is exploratory. The main features of this research design are the direction and the strength of the relation between the two variables. The writers investigated the reading attitude of 47 tenth graders and eleventh graders of BOPKRI Vocational School Yogyakarta.

First, thirty-two female pupils and fifteen male pupils self-assessed their reading attitudes using a questionnaire. The questionnaire is an adapted version of the reading attitude questionnaire of Yamashita (2004). It consists of 9 items: 5 items (number 1 to 5) assessing the affective dimension of attitude and four items (number 6 to 9) assessing the cognitive dimension. The items' responses ranged according to a Likert-type scale of 1 to 6, from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The data from the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS 25. Then the authors presented the descriptive analysis generated. The interviews consisted of five semi-structured questions with four students administered to obtain additional supporting data on the variable researched.

Correlation analyses are applied to the quantitative data collected. The level of correlational intensity were identified based on Hasan (2013) classification: 0,81 – 1,00=very strong; 0,61 – 0,80=strong; 0,41 – 0,60=moderate; 0,21 – 0,40=weak; 0,00 – 0,20=very weak. The authors hypothesized that the reading attitude of the students affects significantly their L2 achievement.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This subchapter discusses the results of the data analysis. The data obtained are the questionnaire responses, the transcripts of the interview, and the L2 exam scores. The reliability of the questionnaire has been computed with SPSS 25. The Cronbach Alpha of the reading attitude is shown in Table 1. Reading attitude scored .701 for reliability. An alpha score of more than .700 is commonly regarded as high in reliability (Asbari et al., 2020).

This study investigates the relation between L2 achievement as the dependent variable and reading attitude as the independent variable. In order to accommodate a better comprehension, this section will be divided into three parts: reading attitude results, L2 achievement results, and the correlation between reading attitude and L2 achievement.

Table 1: Reading Attitude Item Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.701	.710	8

4.1 Analysis of Reading Attitude

A descriptive analysis of the students' reading attitude is presented in Table 2 and Table 3 below. Most of the students showed a positive attitude towards reading (85.1%) which forms an absolute majority in contrast with seven students (14.9%) who displayed a negative reading attitude. The writers found that the mean is 4.11, and the standard deviation is 0.36.

Table 2: Reading Attitude

Range of Score		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
$x < 3.5$	Negative	7	14.9	14.9
$x \geq 3.5$	Positive	40	85.1	85.1
	Total	140	100.0	100.0

Table 3: Item Statistics

Questionnaire Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1: I feel anxious if I don't know all the words.	47	4.30	1.267
2: I feel anxious if I'm not sure whether I understood what I read	47	4.28	1.228
3: Even if I cannot understand what I read thoroughly, I don't care.	47	4.38	1.261
4: If it is not necessary, I prefer to avoid reading as much as possible	47	4.23	1.220
5: I think reading many texts enables us to acquire depth of knowledge and sophistication	47	5.02	.967
6: I think I can read quickly	47	3.64	1.241
7: <i>I think my reading ability is advanced</i>	47	3.47	1.080
8: I think I read a lot	47	3.60	1.136

Meanwhile, Table 3 above displays the descriptive statistic of the questionnaire items. The highest mean score is at Item 5 (I think reading many texts enables us to acquire depth of knowledge and sophistication) with the lowest deviation standard. It means that most of the students acknowledged that the purpose of the reading activity is to get more knowledge, obtain it deeply, and satisfy their curiosity about some topics of interest. It implies that reading facilitates learners to know a subject matter more exhaustively. This finding echoes the argument of Gabriel & Wenz (2017). They stated that good reading skills could enhance the possible access to deep knowledge. The present study's findings strengthened the findings of Mohammed et al. (2021), who discovered that the students who were more able to read gained a more profound understanding, in this case, a deep knowledge of Chemistry.

The data also revealed that even the statement with the lowest mean score of 3.47 and a high standard deviation of 1.080 (Item 7) still indicated a positive attitude toward reading which is reflected by the positive self-evaluation for reading ability (I think my reading ability is advanced). As explained above, advanced reading ability is motivated by a positive reading attitude. The result resonates with Rafi et al.'s (2021) study, which demonstrated that students' reading attitudes positively related to the students' reading ability. Septianingsi (2021) confirmed that reading ability is improved by frequent readings performed by readers with a positive reading attitude.

These findings were supported by the interview's results. Interviewee-3 responding to the question how you feel about learning from a book in English said that *"Menurut saya bisa (belajar dari sebuah buku berbahasa Inggris), karena pasti dalam sebuah buku itu sudah tercantum banyak materi; nah dari situ kita bisa belajar lebih banyak dibandingkan...dengan mencari di internet, sosial media.* (I think we can learn from a book in English, because a book contains a lot of materials form which we can learn a lot more than...looking in the internet or social media)." In the same tone is the Interviewee-2 saying *"...kalau memakai bahasa Inggris khan kebanyakan dari luar (negeri) ya, jadi kita sedikit banyak tahu budaya-budaya luar yang belum kita ketahui.* (If the books are in English, it means that hey from abroad, so we can more or less learn foreign cultures we do not know yet)." It is affirmed by the Interviewee-4 by saying *"Iya, banyak belajar hal baru Kak, kayak lebih tahu sesuatu yang aku gak tahu (sebelumnya).* (Yes, we learn a lot of things, so we come to know more about things we do not know before)." To sum up, most student participants assume the importance of reading as for gaining deep knowledge and understanding. Thus, the student-participants' cognitive attitude appeared to be more salient than their affective attitude. It can be concluded that the pupils agreed that reading is important in order to become a more knowledgeable person.

4.2 Analysis of L2 achievement

L2 achievement data are obtained from a comprehensive test on English conducted by the respective EFL teacher. The students participated in the exam individually. The authors categorized the L2 exam scores according to the standard deviation of the minimum score of 0 (zero) and the maximum score of 100 (one hundred). The standard range is: $x < 33.33$ (Low range), $33.33 \leq x < 66.67$ (Medium range), and $x \geq 66.67$ (High range). Their results are described in Table 4 below. The descriptive analysis yielded that almost all the student participants got high scores (97.9%), with only 2.1% (1 student) who achieved moderate results, and no students displayed low achievement in L2.

Table 4: The Range of L2 Achievement

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Medium	1	2.1	2.1	2.1
	High	46	97.9	97.9	100.0
	Total	47	100.0	100.0	

4.3 Correlation between reading attitudes and L2 achievement

In the present study, it is assumed that there is a significant positive relationship between the attitudes toward reading and L2 achievement. The hypothesis is the more positive are the students' reading attitudes, the higher the students' L2 achievement is. However, after the Pearson Correlation was computed, the writers found that the relationship between reading attitude and L2 showed a negative correlation (see Table 5. below) with $r = -.062$, $p < .50$, as the Sig. 2-tailed $.680 > .005$. It means that the students' reading attitude cannot predict students' L2 achievement. Their reading attitude was not the significant determining factor that impacted L2 achievement. The variation in L2 achievement of the pupils cannot be explained solely and primarily by their reading attitude.

As revealed in Table 5, the Pearson Correlation score is minus (-), which shows the negative direction. It means that it is not the reading attitude that affects the L2 achievement but the L2 achievement that affects the reading attitude. While the r square $= .004$ is displayed in Table 6. It means that the students' positive attitude is not the only factor in achieving high scores in L2. It means that only 0.04% of the achievement in L2 was related to or could be elucidated by the students' reading attitude. The level of significance of $.680$ implies that there is a very weak correlation between the two variables.

Table 5: Correlations between Reading Attitude and L2 Achievement

		Reading_Attitude	L2_Achievement
Reading_Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	-.062
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.680
	N	47	47
L2_Achievement	Pearson Correlation	-.062	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.680	
	N	47	47

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	RStd. Error of the Estimate
1	.062 ^a	.004	-.018	.14720

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reading Attitude

The results shown in Table 5 and Table 6 reflected the similar effects of the previous research (Agustiani, 2017; Tisa et al., 2021). Agustiani (2017) concluded that positive attitudes toward reading demonstrated by the students had not guaranteed the high reading achievement, and most of the students with high scores showed a

positive attitude toward reading. While Tisa et al. (2021) found a negative and very weak correlation between the students' reading attitudes and their reading comprehension grades. The present study results contradicted the study result of Pablo & Jiménez (2018), which revealed that the positive attitude towards the language (including the use of English, vocabulary, listening, and reading) had affected L2 achievement. The authors concluded that reading attitudes though positively displayed by the students, in this case, did not predict the high L2 achievement. On the contrary, it is the L2 achievement that affects students' reading attitudes. It implies that other factors could explain the variation in L2 achievements, such as self-efficacy, motivation, and anxiety (Kitikanan & Sasimonton, 2017), interactive learning design (Makhmudov, 2021), positive social classroom environment, self-determined motivation, and willingness to communicate (Joe et al., 2017).

5. CONCLUSION

Reading attitudes of the pupils as they were connected to the L2 achievement in the Indonesian context was relevant to be investigated. There were but a few studies on the topic. The authors of this study explored the potential significant relationship between reading attitudes and L2 achievement. This correlational study aimed to investigate the variation in L2 achievement. This study yielded the result that there was a negative and weak correlation between reading attitude and L2 achievements. Even though the majority of the students showed positive attitudes and though their achievements were mostly high, the reading attitude did not predict the L2 achievements. Still, the other way around, L2 achievements affected reading attitudes. Other factors contributing to L2 achievements were motivation, teacher's role, and classroom environment, for example.

Limitations and Recommendation

The present study, however, has some limitations. First, the sample size, which consisted of 47 participants, was relatively small. The future investigation might have a larger survey population for greater generalizability. Second, the writers have not yet researched other variables that could predict the L2 achievements, such as motivation, self-efficacy, instructional strategies, and the role of a teacher. Future researchers might explore issues such as the role of the teacher, the classroom design, and students' motivation as influential factors in L2 achievement.

This research brings out some implications. First, L2 teachers should be aware of their students' attitudes in L2 learning in general, particularly the reading attitude. So, they can help their students to experience success in their academic life. Second, students applying the right strategies should be made aware of the importance of the

reading attitude for their future endeavors in life; the supportive role of the parents, teachers, and school community is needed.

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Appendix

Attitude Affective

1. I feel anxious if I don't know all the words. *Saya cemas bila saya tidak paham semua kata dalam suatu teks bahasa Inggris.*
2. I feel anxious if I'm not sure whether I understood what I read. *Saya cemas bila saya tidak yakin apakah saya paham yang saya baca dalam bahasa Inggris.*
3. Even if I cannot understand what I read completely, I don't care. *Saya tidak peduli bahkan seandainya saya tidak bisa mengerti seluruhnya teks bahasa Inggris yang saya baca.*
4. If it is not necessary, I prefer to avoid reading as much as possible. *Jika tidak diwajibkan, saya lebih suka menghindari sebanyak mungkin tugas membaca teks bahasa Inggris.*
5. I feel tired when I am presented with a long text. *Saya merasa lelah jika diberi tugas membaca teks bahasa Inggris yang panjang.*

Attitude Cognitive

6. I think reading many texts enables us to acquire depth of knowledge and sophistication. *Menurut saya, membaca banyak teks bahasa Inggris akan memungkinkan kita meraih pengetahuan dan pemahaman yang mendalam.*
7. I think I can read quickly. *Saya pikir saya dapat menyelesaikan bacaan bahasa Inggris dengan cepat.*
8. I think my reading ability is advanced. *Saya pikir kemampuan memahami teks bahasa Inggris saya sudah sangat maju.*
9. I think I read a lot. *Saya pikir saya sudah banyak membaca teks bahasa Inggris.*

A guide for a semi-structured interview

1. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books? *Seberapa pentingkah membaca berbagai macam bacaan bahasa Inggris?*
2. How do you feel reading during vacation? *Apa kamu terpikir untuk membaca bahasa Inggris selama libur sekolah?*
3. How do you feel getting a book for a present? *Apa yang kamu rasakan saat mendapat hadiah sebuah buku berbahasa Inggris?*
4. How do you feel about reading instead of playing? *Apa kamu terpikir untuk membaca bacaan bahasa Inggris daripada bermain?*
5. How do you feel about learning from a book? *Apa kamu merasa kamu bisa belajar banyak dari sebuah buku berbahasa Inggris?*
6. How do you feel about reading your schoolbook? *Seberapa pentingkah membaca buku pelajaran berbahasa Inggris?*
7. How do you feel about taking a reading test? *Apa yang kamu rasakan saat mengikuti tes bacaan bahasa Inggris (reading comprehension text)?*
8. How do you feel when a teacher asks you questions about what you read? *Apa yang kamu rasakan ketika guru bertanya lisan padamu tentang teks bahasa Inggris yang baru kamu baca?*