

**THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PROSODIC READING AND
READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT OF ENGLISH
EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM STUDENTS OF SRIWIJAYA
UNIVERSITY**

A Thesis by

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LANGUAGE AND ARTS DEPARTMENT**



**FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
SRWIJAYA UNIVERSITY
INDRALAYA
2019**

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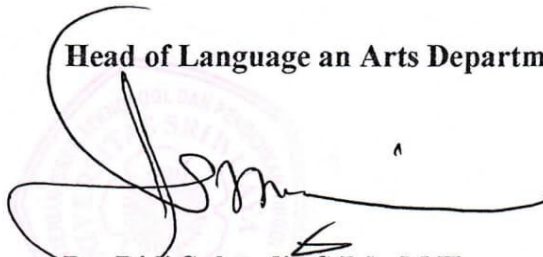
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dedicated to my beloved papa and mama

“aut viam inveniam aut faciam”

- I shall either find a way or make one; *Hannibal*.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to find out the level of prosodic reading, the level of reading comprehension achievement, the correlation between prosodic reading and reading comprehension achievement, and the contribution of prosodic reading to reading comprehension achievement of English Education Study Program Students of Sriwijaya University. This quantitative study consisted of 77 students in second semester of English Education Study Program in Sriwijaya University as the sample chosen by using purposive sampling technique. Reading comprehension achievement test and oral reading test were used to collect the data, which were analyzed statistically. Later, Multidimensional Fluency Scale was used to measure the level of students' prosodic reading. The findings of this study showed that the students' level of prosodic reading and reading comprehension achievement were moderate and there was a significant correlation between prosodic reading and reading comprehension achievement with the r -obtained (0.538) and p value (0.000). It was also found that prosodic reading contributed 32.4% of reading comprehension achievement. Closer analysis showed that the other 67,6% was explained by other predictors such as students' difficulties in recognizing the vocabulary contained in the text, their inability to comprehend the sentence structure of the text, and the length of the passage. Moreover, among four features, there were only pace (25.1%) and expression & volume (6.3%) contributed to reading comprehension achievement.

Keywords: *Correlation, prosodic reading and reading comprehension achievement*

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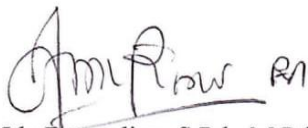
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter presents (1) background, (2) problems of the study, (3) objectives of the study, (4) significance of the study.

1.1 Background

Reading is one of the important skills for students who learn English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL). It can be said that reading will support the student's ability to gain knowledge from reading materials (Debat, 2006). Similarly, Miller and Schwanenflugel (2009) state that reading is a complex performance which requires implementation simultaneously of multiple interdependent tasks. It means the readers must not only determine what words are present in the text, but he or she must also make sense of them. In other words, a reader must derive meaning from what is being read. However, an efficient reading is considered to be a difficult skill to master due to its complex process. It has been observed that students, especially ESL and EFL learners, deal with a variety of difficulties while reading. Oakhill (as cited in Jayanti, 2016) distinguishes three issues in reading comprehension. The first reading issue states that comprehension problems arise as a result of difficulties at the single-word level. The second reading issue suggests that a poor readers have a difficulty in the syntactic and a semantic analysis of the text. The third reading issue is that poor readers have difficulties with higher order comprehension skills: creating inferences from text, integrating ideas in it, and monitoring comprehension. In fact, Jayanti (2016) who has conducted a study of 80 students of English Department Program at the University of Bengkulu found that most of the students find difficulties in reading related to syntactic analysis and semantic analysis.

Reading problems often occur because of students' insufficient understanding of the relationship and functions of words within sentences. In fact, long sentences, tend to make the students confused and difficult to convey meaning from the text.

Hence, in order to achieve good reading comprehension, a reader must learn to handle a number of tasks at once, including being able to decode individual words and extract meaning from the text. Since the readers are only able to process a limited amount of information at a time, it is important for them to be able to automatically decode and understand the text to perform well in higher level processes such as reading comprehension (Binder, Tighe, Jiang, Kaftanski, Qi, & Ardoin, 2013). Both Perfetti's verbal efficiency theory and LaBerge and Samuels' automaticity theory (as cited in Miller & Schwanenflugel, 2009) stated that students will engage easily in text-level reading once they can read and process the text fluently and automatically. Presumably, prosodic reading might be included.

Dowhower (1991) stated that prosodic reading is the ability to read in expressive rhythmic and melodic patterns. Prosodic readers segment text into meaningful units marked by appropriate prosodic features such as pauses, the variation of duration of those pauses, the lowering and raising of pitch, and lengthening of certain vowel sounds. Similarly, Rasinski (2004) conceptualized prosody in reading as a multifactorial concept such as;

- (a) expressiveness, that refers to a kind of reading that sounds like natural language, with proper tone and volume;
- (b) phrasing, defined as the reader awareness of phrase boundaries, the way reader denotes the end of sentences and clauses, and so on;
- (c) smoothness, that has to do with how the reader slides over the text;
- (d) and pace, that refers to the consistency and rhythm of reading along the text.

Furthermore, Kuhn and Stahl (2003) stated that to automatically decoding individual word, prosodic or expressive reading of the text is needed in order for the student to adequately comprehend the text. They theorize that the development of reading prosody may assist comprehension because prosodic reading indicates

that the student has segmented text according to major syntactic/semantic elements.

According to Schwanenflugel, Hamilton, Wisenbaker, and Stahl (2009), prosodic reading or expressive reading is widely considered to be an indicator of the achievement of reading fluency. Thus, prosody must be acknowledged since it has its vital place in the development of fluency, and all definitions of fluency have included prosody as a main component. As fluency is a combination of accuracy, automaticity, and oral reading prosody, thus if taken together will facilitate the readers ability to construct the meaning. Even though it is demonstrated during reading aloud through the ability of word recognition, appropriate pacing, phrasing, and intonation, it also occurs in silent reading that can support or limit comprehension (Pikulski & Chard as cited in Kariuki & Baxter, 2011). It can be said that when a student is reading prosodically, oral reading sounds much like speech. It is in line with Sinambela (2017) who found that prosody is a reliable sign to determine students' reading comprehension and clearly shown student's reading fluency. When students do not create the reading sounds like a natural oral speech, they will sound monotonous, read word-by-word, makes frequent long pauses and sounds tentative, as a result, the reading process is requiring plenty of time and effort thus they fail to be able to derive meaning from the text.

Some studies stated that prosody is a sign of comprehension, and prosodic reading is a hallmark for reading fluency. Hence many researchers found a significant relationship between prosody and comprehension in elementary students. In a study of 20 third-graders students, Overstreet (2014) examined the impact of instructional focus on prosody. He found that prosodic reading instruction has an effect on students' reading fluency and comprehension. Another study by Kariuki and Baxter (2011) using the Multi-dimensional Fluency Scale as the measurement found that overall reading comprehension of 24 students in second grade in northeast Tennessee has a significant relationship between prosodic oral reading and reading comprehension.

In bilingual students or English as their second language or foreign language, Recent studies on Cantonese-English bilingual students also showing an association of prosodic reading towards reading comprehension. Both researchers Tsui, Tong, and Fung, (2016) and Xiuli Tong, Ka-Ying Tsui, and Kan-Ki Fung, (2018) found that Cantonese-English bilingual in elementary students who tend to make more pauses in their early English prosodic reading may have worse English reading comprehension skill. Another prosodic study of bilingual English-Portuguese conducted by Lopes, Silva, Moniz, Spear-Swerling, and Zibulsky, (2015) in ninety-eight second graders from a private school of north Portugal showed that high results in prosody are associated with higher results in reading comprehension.

Although most of the studies in prosody have been conducted with elementary students as their subject, yet many researchers suggest that the prosodic structure of texts is more accessible for the fluent or adult reader. Due to limitations in word recognition, beginning readers must focus on their available cognitive resources on word decoding. Reading is therefore tentative and inaccurate, and the student does not have a completely clear representation of the text (Miller & Schwanenflugel, 2009). It also agreed that the development of reading comprehension is associated with expressive reading and that the development of prosodic reading takes place largely after decoding becomes automatic (Lopes et al, 2015).

Another advantage of investigating the relationship between prosodic fluency and reading comprehension in adult readers is that they tend to realize more features of prosody than younger readers (Breen, Kaswer, Van Dyke, Krivokapić, & Landi, 2016). In fact, a study that was conducted in Indonesia, prosodic reading was used to assess reading fluency of undergraduate ESL students who learned English for more than 12 years and all were taking English course in a language center in Medan. The researcher found out that prosodic reading is a reliable sign to determine adult student's reading comprehension and clearly shown students' reading fluency (Sinambela, 2017).

Based on the facts above, the writer interested to make an attempt to conduct a research about student's prosodic reading and reading comprehension achievement entitled **"The Correlation between Prosodic Reading and Reading Comprehension Achievement of English Education Study Program Students of Sriwijaya University"**. The reason for the writer to choose this title because the writer would like to figure out whether there was a correlation between prosodic reading and reading comprehension. Since reading comprehension is pre-requisite courses that every English Education Study Program students must take, it is very important to see the achievement of their reading comprehension and how their prosodic reading correlates to their reading comprehension score.

1.2 The Problems of Study

Based on the background above, the problems of the study were formulated in the following questions:

- 1) What is the level of prosodic reading of English Education Study Program Students of Sriwijaya University?
- 2) What is the level of reading comprehension of English Education Study Program Students of Sriwijaya University?
- 3) Is there any significant correlation between prosodic reading and reading comprehension achievement of English Education Study Program Student of Sriwijaya University?
- 4) Is there any significant contribution of prosodic reading to reading comprehension achievement of English Education Study Program Student of Sriwijaya University?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems of the study above, the objectives of the study are to find out:

- 1) the level of prosodic reading of English Education Study Program Students of Sriwijaya University.
- 2) the level of reading comprehension of English Education Study Program Students of Sriwijaya University.
- 3) the correlation between prosodic reading and reading comprehension achievement of English Education Study Program Student of Sriwijaya University.
- 4) The contribution of prosodic reading to reading comprehension achievement of English Education Study Program Student of Sriwijaya University.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study hopefully can benefit English language learners on the influence of prosodic reading towards reading comprehension achievement. Moreover, it is hoped that the results of this study could encourage students and teachers of English to apply prosodic reading in the reading activity as a recommended approach to train students better, thus it would help them to solve the problem encountered in reading and students can attain high reading comprehension score. After all, hopefully, this study could be a good inspiration or reference for the researcher to help them uncover critical areas in reading comprehension through prosody.

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