

## The Correlation among Reading Attitude, Interpersonal Intelligence and Reading Comprehension

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### Abstract

Reading is one of the crucial skills to be mastered by students in Indonesia. The genre text approach is mostly implemented in each degree on formal education. This caused the redirection of teaching learning process aim, that is from mastering four English skills become more inclined in mastering reading skill. The curriculum sets the requirement of passing the final examination to step up into higher grade with a good reading score. Reading becomes interesting subject to be investigated by many researcher in Indonesia in order that teacher not only teach reading by the surface purpose of text, but make them become meaningful reading teaching learning process. Digging the inner factors to reading comprehension, this research aims are to investigate the correlation among the reading attitude, interpersonal intelligence and reading comprehension of English Education Study Program of Widya Dharma University (UNWIDHA), Klaten, Central Java, Indonesia and how those factors can theoretically has impact on creating meaningful teaching and learning of reading? This research implemented the procedure of *expose de facto* reasearch. Questionnaires of reading attitude and interpersonal intelligence and a test of reading comprehension were administered to the sample (n=152). Perason Product-moment correlation was used to analyse the data. The result of this study showed that there was a significant correlation between the students' reading attitude and their reading comprehension. Students with positive reading attitudes strengthen their willingness to read for more reading experience which consequently influenced their reading comprehension. The students interpersonal intelligence also associated with their reading comprehension. This intelligence brings reading to another level. The students who had more precentage of interpersonal intelligence tend to insert emptahy or feeling in a text, then reading not only for reading text but comprehending the text.

**Keywords:** Expose de facto reasearch, interpersonal intelligence, reading attitude, reading, reading comprehension

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## Introduction

Most educators would agree that reading comprehension is very important among four major English skills. Mason (2004) claims that reading comprehension is the essential key not only to in school academic learning, but also to life-long learning. In order to fully function in society and be able to tackle problems and have access to important texts (whether literary, philosophical, or technical), people need to read. Allington and Cunningham (2002, p. 2) present a projection indicating that the 7 shifting economy will require a future workforce in which the workers, and not just the people in charge, will need some college or some form of post-secondary education. They also argue that nation's literacy needs for the 21st-century require "strong academic skills, thinking, reasoning, teamwork skills, and proficiency in using technology." However, although reading is useful for the students, for some students, reading is not always an easy activity to do. They still find difficulties in doing this important activity which affects their reading comprehension.

There are several factors affecting or influencing reading comprehension as stated in Harvey, Stephanie, & Goudvis (2000, p.102), (1) students' reading attitudes (motivation and interest); (2) time truly engaged in reading; (3) vocabulary and world knowledge; (4) fluency; (5) type of text or genre; (6) opportunities for rich talk and written response; (7) effective comprehension strategy instruction; and the last is (8) understanding and implementing the strategies used by effective reading. Beside the factors, it could be caused by the macro developmental aspect (Brand, 2002) in which the students' reading comprehension changes overtime as the readers get matures and develop cognitively, have reading experience with more challenging text and benefits from classroom instruction. Some scholars have pointed out that students' reading performance is associated with their attitudes toward reading. According to Sallabas (2008), attitude can be described as an individual's response tendency against any phenomenon or thing around him or her, In line with this, Gardner (1985, p. 9) describes as an individual attitude as an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent. In addition, Pratkains (1989) argues that attitude concept is associated with emotional behavioral and cognitive process. In other words, attitude is an individual's response toward an object or situation and it is very important in learning process, in which the improvement of students' educational performance depends on attitude. Sani and Zain (2011) find that the students with positive attitude toward reading have the stronger reading ability. Students with positive attitude toward reading have the enjoyment in reading. Enjoyment in reading is significantly related to reading attainment (Clark & Douglas, 2011).

Reading is also believed to be most complicated one for some students to cope because it is an active process which need recognition and comprehension skill (Patel & Jain, 2008, p. 113). In reading, comprehension skills are important especially for students who learn English as a foreign language. Reading comprehension is a process that involves the orchestration of the readers' prior knowledge about the world and about language. It involves such as: predicting, questioning, summarizing, determining meaning of vocabulary in context, monitoring one's own comprehension, and reflecting (Weaver, 1994, p. 44). To comprehend, a reader must have a wide range of capacities or abilities beside of attitudes. According to Ward (2008):

“Every student is smart according to the kinds of intelligence own by the students start from when he/she is born, or as the result of learning the culture. This theory is important to be applied in education. There is no stupid child, nor the difficult subject-study, it is caused by the highest intelligence of that person has been known. So, it is multiple and it is also various.”. (p.548)

Interpersonal intelligence can be seen to play a key role in second language learning. Empathy is an aspect of interpersonal intelligence involving the ability to understand people and respond to them appropriately, and those with a high degree of empathy seem likely to more successful second language learners. Language is one of the ways in which people respond to each other. Effective communication calls for empathy, which allows an ongoing assessment and modification of what is being said, how it is being said and the body language that accompanies it. Horwitz (1995, p. 576) considers that successful second language learning depends on the emotional responses of the learner. At the cognitive level Multiple Intelligences theory develops a framework which assists in explaining individual variations in students’ second language learning proficiency.

In relation the problems faced by the students of English Education Study Program of Widya Dharma University (UNWIDHA), Klaten, Central Java, Indonesia., this research aims to answer the following questions: (1) Is there any significant correlation between the students reading attitude and reading comprehension?, (2) Are there any significant correlation among the aspects of reading attitude and the students’ reading comprehension?, (3) Is there any significant correlation between the students’s interpersonal intelligence and their reading comprehension? (4) Are there any significant contributions of the aspect of reading attitude to reading comprehension?, (5) Are there any significant contributions of the students’ interpersonal intelligence to their reading comprehension?

### **Research Method**

The population was the students of English Education Program of UNWIDHA, Klaten. Purposive sampling technique was applied. The students who had taken all the reading courses and had the interpersonal intelligence (less or more percentage of its intelligence included) were the sample. Total number of the sample was 152 students.

A ready made questionnaire of reading attitude by Rhody and Alexender (1980) and a constructed questionnaire of the interpersonal intelligence and a ready-made test of reading comprehension by Chesla (2011) were used to collect the data. Validity used in this study was content validity in which the researcher considered the items of questionnaire based on the purpose of the study. It was to find out the students attitude, their interpersonal intelligence, and reading comprehension. To measure the validity statistically, factor analysis was applied and to see the reliability statistically, Cronbach Alpha was applied. The result of the try out of the questionnaires and the test showed that the instruments were reliable with Cronbach Alpha values were higher than .70. The result of normality test showed that the data were normal, the p-value was higher than .05 . To find out the correlation between variables, Pearson Product Moment was used. Linier regression analysis was applied to find out the contribution.

## Findings

### Descriptive Statistics

This study revealed there were 125 students (82.2%) who had positive attitude toward reading and 11 students (17.8%) who had negative attitude. The interpersonal intelligence, most of the students had the interpersonal intelligence, less or more. Based on the data of reading comprehension, most of the students had good reading comprehension and there only one student who had poor reading comprehension. The average score of reading comprehension was 73.61.

### Correlation Analysis

The result of correlation analysis showed that the correlation between students' reading attitude and students' reading comprehension was .562 ( $p=.000$ ). It means that there was a significant correlation between students' reading attitude and students' reading comprehension since the pvalue (.000) was lower than .01. The strength of the correlation of both variables was in moderate level of correlation (Sugiono, 2012). The writer also did the correlation analysis for each aspect of reading attitude to reading comprehension. The result showed that all aspects of reading attitude (prevailing feelings about reading, action readiness for reading and evaluative beliefs about reading) correlated to reading comprehension. The correlation of prevailing feelings about reading and reading comprehension was .552 ( $p=.000$ ), the correlation of action readiness for reading and reading comprehension was .536 ( $p=.000$ ), and the correlation of evaluative beliefs about reading and reading comprehension was .442 ( $p=.000$ ). The p-values of the aspects of reading attitude were lower than .01. The strength of the correlation of all aspects were moderate (Sugiono, 2012), since the r value for all aspect of reading attitude and reading comprehension was between .40 and .599.

From the findings, it was also founded that there was a significant correlation between the students' interpersonal intelligence and their reading comprehension. The r-obtained was .200. The strength of the correlation of the students' interpersonal intelligence and their reading comprehension was low correlation (Sugiono, 2012). Correlation analysis was also conducted to see the correlations among the aspects of reading comprehension and reading comprehension total. The finding showed that the correlation of detail and reading comprehension was .569 ( $p=.000$ ), main idea was .435 ( $p=.000$ ), sequence was .411 ( $p=.000$ ), cause and effect was .436 ( $p=.000$ ), vocabulary was .494 ( $p=.000$ ) and inference was .518 ( $p=.000$ ).

### Regression Analysis

The regression analysis by using stepwise method was applied to find out the contribution of the aspects of reading attitude to their reading comprehension and the contribution of the students' interpersonal intelligence to their reading comprehension.

### Contribution of the Reading Attitude on their Reading Comprehension.

From the result of the regression analysis, it was found that the R Square ( $R^2$ ) was .315. It means that the students' reading attitude gave contribution to their reading comprehension 31.5%. Table 1 presents the result of the regression analysis.

**Table 1** *The Result of Regression Analysis of the Students Reading Attitude and their Reading Comprehension*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change	Sig. F Change
Reading Attitude	.562	.315	.315	.000

Regression analysis was also conducted to see the contribution of the aspects of reading attitude on the students' reading comprehension. The result of the regression analysis showed that only two from three aspects of reading attitude influenced the students' reading comprehension (see table 2). The result of the analysis revealed that R<sup>2</sup> for Prevailing Feelings about Reading was .305 which means it contributed to the students' reading comprehension 30.5%. Next, Action Readiness for Reading contributed 3.1% to the students reading comprehension. Both Prevailing Feelings about Reading and Action Readiness for Reading contributed 33.7% contribution to the students' reading comprehension.

**Table 2.** *Result of Regression Analysis of the Aspects of Reading Attitude and Their Reading Comprehension*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change	Sig. F Change
Prevailing feeling about reading	.552	.305	.305	.000
Action readiness for reading	.580	.337	.031	.009

### **Influence of the students interpersonal intelligence on their Reading Comprehension.**

The result of the regression analysis that the students' interpersonal intelligence contributed 4% to their reading comprehension.

**Table 3** *The Result of Regression Analysis of the Students Interpersonal Intelligence and Their Reading Comprehension*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change	Sig. F Change
Interpersonal Intelligence	.200	.040	.040	.013

### Aspects of Reading Comprehension and Reading Comprehension

Regression analysis was also applied to see which aspects of reading comprehension gave the best support to the students reading comprehension. The result of the analysis revealed that detail gave the best support to the students' reading comprehension with 32.3% contribution. Inference contributed 23.2%, cause and effect contributed 16.9%, vocabulary contributed 11.9%, sequence contributed 7.9% and main idea contributed 7.7%. Table 4 presents the result of regression analysis of the aspects of reading comprehension and reading comprehension.

**Table 4** *The Result of Regression Analysis of the Reading Comprehension on Students' Reading Comprehension*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change	Sig. F Change
Detail	.569	.323	.323	.000
Inference	.754	.556	.232	.000
Cause and Effect	.851	.725	.169	.000
Vocabulary	.919	.844	.119	.000
Main Idea	.960	.921	.077	.000
Sequence	1.000	1.000	.079	.000

### Discussions

There are some interpretations of this study. First, this study revealed that most of the students had positive attitude toward reading. It was 82.2% of the students (125 students out of 152 students) who had positive attitude toward reading with the score ranged from 35 to 62 and there were 17.8% of the students (11 students) with negative attitude toward reading with the score range from 25 to 33. It could happen because of some factors. From the finding, it can be assumed that the students felt and realized the importance of reading. It also can be seen from the result of the questionnaire responded by the students with positive attitude.

The finding showed that they like to improve and broaden knowledge and interest through reading. As the result, they would read for some reasons. It could happen because they like it, they need to, or they have to. When they read because they like it, they would read in their own will and choose many kinds of topic as what they were interested in or as what they need for. The finding showed that there were 60% of the students got really excited about books they had read. The number was possible to be the prediction of the students excitement for them who read books based on what they interested in. While, the rest was the students who read because they have to. Besides students' awareness about the importance of reading, owning and having

access to books and library also could be the factor influencing their attitude toward reading. In line with this, finding revealed that the students often bought books, and they also had another way to access books. It was by checking out the books from the library and by sharing books with friends. Concerning factors influencing reading attitude, according to Nickoli, Hendricks, Hendricks and Smith (2004), there is a relationship between owning and having access to books and library and reading attitude.

Second interpretation of the finding was about the students' interpersonal intelligence. The finding showed that most of the students had interpersonal intelligence despite less or more percentage they had, but the students who had more portion of interpersonal intelligence is 56.6% from sample. The students who had interpersonal intelligence then to do some activities that involved them in group or connected them in society such as: doing grup or pair course assignment, reading journal articles, sharing information, chatting with friends, sending message and email. Those activities bring reading activity not only in surface level, but in deep level. Third, in this study there were only 14.5% of the students who are very good in reading comprehension and there were 29% who are average in reading comprehension. There might be some reasons why the students with average reading comprehension were higher than the students with very good reading comprehension. It might occur due to some factors. One of them is the difficulties they had in reading comprehension.

Based on the observation, the lack of vocabulary, many difficult words, complexity of the sentences or the sentence pattern and the genre of the text could be the things they had to encounter in the process of reading comprehension even they had passed all reading courses. Besides that, negative attitude toward reading. The finding showed that there were 70.37% students with negative attitude had average reading comprehension. The students with negative attitude toward reading might consider reading as uninteresting activity. It is in line with what according to Seitz (2010), students who do not like texts to read often fail to engage in reading. This condition would impact the students' reading experience which meant they missed the opportunity of having reading practice that might improve their reading comprehension. Next, the data distribution showed that most of the students were good in reading comprehension (55.3%). It could be caused by the macrodevelopmental aspect (Rand, 2002) in which the students' reading comprehension changes overtime as the readers get matures and develop cognitively, have reading experience with more challenging text and benefits from classroom instruction. In this study, the students had passed all reading courses in the previous semesters where they practiced to improve the reading skill and gained experiences in reading. Many reading activities and classroom instruction during the reading courses and other courses that made the students to read, lead them to improve their reading ability.

Besides the macro developmental aspects, the students' positive attitude toward reading could be the predictor. Looking at the score of reading comprehension, it was found that the average score of reading comprehension was 73.61 which came from detail score (15.87), main idea score (8.57), sequence score (8.94), cause and effect score (13.25) vocabulary score (11.01) and inference score (15.96). The finding also revealed that there were correlations among the aspects of reading comprehension and reading comprehension total. Then, regression analysis was conducted to see the contribution of each aspect. The highest contribution was from detail (32.3%). It could be because the students were accustomed in finding specific information in

reading text to fulfill the need of answering question from the lecturers during the teaching and learning process and answering the written test for the assignments, midterm and final examination, and it was not only for reading courses, but also for other courses. Next, inference contributed 23.2% to reading comprehension.

It could be summed up that the students understood the context then they were able to answer the questions although inference questions were considered difficult. It could be because the students did practicing for TOEFL prediction test in which some inference questions were available. Besides that, considering the inference questions were hard to answer, the students sometimes focused on learning how to answer inference question. Next, cause and effect contributed 16.9%. It was found that the kind of cause and effect questions were often available in their reading material in reading courses as well as in other subjects. Furthermore, vocabulary contributed 11.9% to reading comprehension. Some new vocabularies still became the barrier for some students in reading comprehension. They failed to understand the meaning of the new words based on the context. Unfortunately, not all the students tried to find the meaning of the new words. Some of them preferred to ignore the difficult words by considering that they could solve the problem latter. Then, sequence contributed 7.9% to reading comprehension. Although the students like reading short story in which the sequence of the story is available, they did not analyze this aspect. Reading short story was reading for fun. They did not need to analyze short story. Moreover, main idea contributed 7.7% to reading comprehension. It might because the students focused more in specific information in the text and there were some new vocabularies and the complexity of the sentence in the text which gave them difficulties to conclude the idea. Furthermore, the findings revealed that there was a significant correlation between the students' reading attitude and the aspects of reading attitude to their reading comprehension. It might happen because most of the students had positive attitude toward reading and most of the students with positive attitude toward reading had good reading comprehension. It could be because the students considered reading as an important activity and reading courses as crucial subjects. It was supported by the finding that 51.9% of the students like to read whenever they have free time. The students were accustomed to check out books from library and share books with friends. Besides that, most of the student had their own book, since the result showed that there were 66.45% of the students had a lot of books in their room. Moreover, from the book they had read, they usually got really excited about what they found. It could be concluded that the students with positive attitude had higher reading comprehension than the students with negative attitude toward reading. It was because the students with positive attitude toward reading were more interested in reading and read more than the students with negative attitude toward reading. This finding was supported by the literature. According to Bastug (2014), positive attitudes to reading activity make contribution to amount in reading, variety in reading, and affect the students' success. Students' positive attitudes toward reading lead to positive reading experience which help the students to achieve higher academic performance (Karim & Hasan, 2007).

Looking at the students interpersonal intelligence, this study revealed that there was correlation between students' interpersonal intelligence and reading comprehension. The writer assumed it happened because Interpersonal intelligence can be seen to play a key role in second language learning. Empathy is an aspect of interpersonal intelligence involving the ability to understand people and respond to them appropriately, and those with a high degree of empathy

seem likely to more successful second language learners. Language is one of the ways in which people respond to each other. Effective communication calls for empathy, which allows an ongoing assessment and modification of what is being said, how it is being said and the body language that accompanies it. According to Horwitz (1995, p. 576) successful second language learning depends on the emotional responses of the learner. Gardner (1985) states the definition of interpersonal intelligences as follows:

This area has to do with interaction with others. In theory, people who have a high interpersonal intelligence tend to be extroverts, characterized by their sensitivity to others' moods, feelings, temperaments and motivations, and their ability to cooperate in order to work as part of a group. They communicate effectively and empathize easily with others, and may be either leaders or followers. They typically learn best by working with others and often enjoy discussion and debate. (p. 90)

Interpersonal intelligence is the capacity to understand and interact with others effectively. It is evident in successful teacher, social workers, actors and politicians. Just as Western culture has recently begun to recognize the connection between mind and body, so too has it to come to value the importance of proficiency interpersonal behavior.

The students' reading attitude gave 31.5% contribution to reading comprehension. Reading attitude plays a very important role to support reading comprehension. When the students had positive reading attitude, their reading achievement tend to be higher. It can be assumed that the students' attitude toward reading promote the students ability in comprehending the reading text as Chamberlain (2008) claims that students' reading attitudes improve their comprehension skills and learning experiences. As a result, by having positive attitude toward reading, the students get better reading comprehension. The result of regression analysis showed that the aspects of reading attitude (Prevailing Feelings about Reading and Action Readiness for Reading) influenced 33.7% to reading comprehension. Since they felt and realized the importance of reading, students would have a tendency to have a good reaction toward reading, they would enjoy reading, and the students who enjoyed reading will get information better than who were not. According to Clark and Douglas (2011), enjoyment of reading is significantly related to reading attainment. Moreover, the writer assumed that when the students feel that reading is useful and important, they would have tendency to read. When they read more, they would have more reading experience which helps them improve their skill of reading and promote their reading comprehension. Although the correlation of the students' interpersonal intelligence and their reading comprehension was significant, the contribution of the students' interpersonal intelligence to their reading comprehension was only 4%. Finally, looking at the result of regression analysis, reading attitude contributed 31.6% to reading comprehension and the students' interpersonal intelligence contributed 4% to reading comprehension. The total contribution from both reading attitude and students' interpersonal intelligence was 35.6%. Since the contribution of both variables was less than 100%, there was a possibility that the rest was influenced by another factor which was not investigated in this study.

## Conclusion

The result of this study shows that there is a significant correlation between the students' reading attitude and their reading comprehension. Therefore, teachers should encourage reading

attitude in terms of improving their reading comprehension. Students with positive reading attitudes strengthen their willingness to read for more reading experience which consequently influenced their reading comprehension. The students interpersonal intelligence also associated with their reading comprehension. Therefore, teachers need to consider students' interpersonal intelligence in teaching program. This intelligence brings reading to another level. The students who have more percentage of interpersonal intelligence tend to insert empathy or feeling in a text, then reading not only for reading text but comprehending the text. Moreover, teachers and stakeholders should facilitate the students in order to establish reading attitude. For instance, by providing books in many kinds of genre and interest, journal article, magazines, newspaper and so forth. Next, in teaching and learning process, teachers guide students to read many kinds of reading resources. In brief, thus both interpersonal intelligence and reading attitude have impact in creating teaching learning of reading becomes meaningful by not only reading the surface of the text, but comprehending the reading text.

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