

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FLUENCY AND COMPREHENSION IN READING ACTIVITY: A BRIDGE TO BUILD READING PROFICIENCY**

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### **Abstract**

Reading activity is not only about reading in silent situation. Expert said reading aloud is some approach that can improve reading proficiency. Some researchers showed that reading fluency is a part that takes a big portion in reading aloud activity but some experts said that comprehension of the readers that takes an important part. Based on that situation, this paper focuses on discussing the overview by the experts and previous study of how reading comprehension and fluency are related. It also provides the brief how that correlation can improve reading proficiency for EFL students.

***Keywords: reading comprehension, reading fluency, reading proficiency.***

## Introduction

The ability to read is essential for students who learning English as a second or foreign language. According to Mraz, Nichols, Caldwell, Beisley, Sargent, and Rupley (2013), reading is a process in which readers attempt to comprehend and respond to the ideas expressed in written text. In order to succeed in school or in their careers, students or learners need to establish excellent reading skills early on. If they don't, they may also find it difficult to enjoy reading activity.

Reading activity is not only about reading in silent situation. There is some approach that purpose by the experts to gain reading achievement, e.g. reading aloud. Reading aloud or oral reading plays an important part of someones' fluency in reading activity. As Lynn (2001), reading comprehension depends significantly on oral reading fluency.

Fluency in reading, especially oral reading, serves as a good indicator of other skill competency for students. Fluent readers are more likely to comprehend what they are reading, which increases their propensity to choose to read, according to Egmon et al. (2013). It can be said that fluency in reading activity is needed to students. It such a key point that should be activate in reading activity. Fluency, according to Rasinski (2006), is the capacity to read rapidly, accurately, and correctly. It implies that those elements are crucial for helping students to develop their fluency.

Beside that, there is a components of reading activity that should be mastered. It is a comprehension in reading activity. Reading comprehension involves analyzing the text and finding its meaning. Doyle (2004) argues that comprehension is the ability to gradually ascribe meaning to a reading selection, starting at the same level and working up. To get some comprehension, it means that readers must interpret the text's meaning. A reader's ability to understand the content better may depend on their past knowledge of it. The readers' understanding can be increased in many ways. Because of this, reading comprehension is a crucial component. Without comprehension, readers would not be able to understand the author's message as it is conveyed in a text (Rachmatia, 2016). Anggeraini et al. (2020) and Sartika et al. (2020) have conducted the research dealing with reading comprehension.

In conclusion, applying comprehension techniques to decipher the meaning of a communication process is the act or outcome of reading comprehension (Rasinski, 2010). Likewise, the comprehension level is divided into three categories: (a) understanding the literal meaning; (b) understanding the interpretive or suggested meaning in reading; and (c) critically assessing what has been read (Harris & Hodges in Black, 2016). Furthermore, word recognition is a reading skill that helps readers understand the value or true meaning of the text (Rasinski, 2010).

## Methodology

A theoretical investigation is one that attempts to describe, explain, or anticipate a specific component of experience (Thyer, 2010). When conducting research, the writers base their predictions on theoretical conceptions. This study was carried out one of these types of studies.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to the literature on fluency, reading fluency and comprehension are positively correlated. In a big Midwestern metropolis, Rasinski (2003) studied 75 third-graders and 65 fifth-graders to determine the relationship between fluency and comprehension. The study was done using a correlational research approach. According to his research, comprehension in third and fifth grade students can be reasonably predicted by fluency. In other experts said that Reading fluency has come to light as a crucial feature in effective reading

instruction for elementary school pupils, according to surveys of the literature on the subject (Kuhn & Stahl, 2000; Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003).

In terms of assessment, studies have shown that measures of reading fluency, including reading speed and prosodic oral reading, were significantly correlated with reading comprehension and other more general reading achievement measures (Rasinski, 2004).

Reading fluency was found to be a bigger deficiency among struggling elementary school readers referred for compensatory training in reading than word identification or comprehension by Rasinski and Padak (1998). Likewise, according to Duke, Pressley, and Hilden (2004), reading fluency and word recognition issues may be the main cause of up to 90% of children's substantial comprehension issues.

As was already indicated, researchers claim that most instructors lack a clear concept of fluency and what it entails. This may be because fluency is not a major component of pre- and inservice teacher training. It can be claimed that teachers need to comprehend their students' reading fluency clearly. Reading fluency can be tested for a variety of factors. Fluency is defined by Zutell and Rasinski (1991) as an oral reading skill that comprises effortless or automatic proper phrasing as well as the use of pitch, stress, and intonation.

### ***Reading Comprehension and Reading Fluency are Related in Certain Ways***

According to La Berge and Samuels' idea, readers have a certain quantity of mental capacity that is available for reading (Hardianto, 2019). A concept known as automatic information processing, or automaticity, was discussed in their reading model. They claimed that because human brains are single-channel processors, we can only focus on one item at a time. If we need to accomplish multiple tasks at once, the other tasks must be conducted with such high levels of proficiency that they can be carried out automatically. As the case of oral reading, decoding and understanding are two separate activities that must be completed by the reader when reading aloud. In light of this, it is typically assumed that fluent readers are those who have mastered decoding techniques. The reader who has mastered word recognition to the point where it happens fast and naturally can concentrate more on creating the text's meaning. Those who are not fluent readers, whose decoding skills are weak, must pay conscious attention to decode each word, which makes it challenging for them to focus on constructing the meaning of the sentence. All in all, the more focus or cognitive effort put into decoding, the less can be employed to understand the text that forms the basis of this research's theory.

Another research showed that reading between word decoding and comprehension, which are the two main parts of reading, fluency serves as a link. Fluency relates to precision and automaticity in decoding on a single point of this bridge. On a related note, fluency facilitates comprehension through prosody or expressive interpretation (Rasinski 2004).

### **Conclusion**

At the end, in terms of establishing a relation between reading fluency and reading comprehension, all of the earlier studies and the aforementioned experts have similarities. This article tries to explain how reading comprehension and fluency are related. It also suggests that the teacher of EFL student should focus on reading fluency of the student before focusing on comprehension. As Reutzel & Hollingsworth (1993) and Zuttel & Rasinski (1991), fluency is a crucial component of the reading curriculum, but teachers struggle to grasp it. Researchers have found, as previously indicated, that the majority of teachers lack a clear knowledge of fluency and what it entails. This may be because fluency is not a major component of pre- and inservice teacher training, which is why it is not a central issue (Rachmatia, 2016). It might be argued that teachers need to grasp clearly how fluently their students read towards their comprehension so that they can get a good reading proficiency.

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