



## Using EFLRAI to Spot Reading Anxiety on Junior High School 1 Bukittinggi Students

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### Abstract

*Based on the author's experience in teaching English at Junior High School 1 Bukittinggi, many students find it hard when it comes to reading. Their English score is always good except for the reading section. The Author suspects that the students are experiencing reading anxiety, but the cause is not known yet. Considering these problems, the right thing to do is to run the reading anxiety test towards the students. This test is not only to find their level of reading anxiety, but also the factors of their reading anxiety. The instrument that is used to run the test is EFLRAI which is an instrument that specifically designed for non-English major students who are suspected of experiencing reading anxiety. EFLRAI stands for English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory. It is an instrument to measure reading anxiety developed by Masoud Zoghi (2012). It consists of three sections that contain several questions. These questions will help the teacher to know what the causes of reading anxiety for each student are. As a likert type questions instrument, EFLRAI has 4 point; 1 (totally disagree), 2 (somewhat disagree), 3 (somewhat agree), and 4 (totally agree) with the high total score means high reading anxiety. By using EFLRAI instrument to run the reading test the teacher can spot students with reading anxiety as soon as possible and point out the factors cause reading anxiety to students. After knowing the factors, teacher can help students to overcome their anxiety in the right way.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, with different ethnics and cultures, has many languages. Those ethnics with different languages are united by the main language, which is bahasa Indonesia. As the main language that unites the nation, bahasa Indonesia must be

taught in schools. Apart from being taught the main language, students in Indonesia are also taught foreign languages.

As an English education student, the author had an opportunity to teach English during teaching practice. The author's teaching practice is assigned at grade 7A one of junior high school in Bukittinggi. As one of the task, the advisor assigned the author to check the answers to the test questions and analyzed in which questions the students were wrong. That was when the author found out that the students made many mistakes in the reading section. It left the author wonder whether these students experienced reading anxiety while studying foreign language.

In studying Foreign Language (FL), people usually have a tendency to experience language anxiety. Horwitz (1986) describes foreign language anxiety as "self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors associated with learning complex and different class languages that arise from the uniqueness of the language learning process".

Language anxiety itself includes speaking anxiety, reading anxiety, and writing anxiety. Many people have talked about speaking anxiety, because essentially the language itself is about communicating. People who study the FL tend to be anxious about talking, neither about pronunciation nor about how the other person understands what he is saying in FL. Especially if speaking is done in public. The gaze of the person who listens as it becomes a separate threat in speaking that causes speech anxiety.

This paper only focuses on reading anxiety due to one of junior high school in Bukittinggi's score analysis that only bad at reading skill. Many people are not aware of reading anxiety in learning FL. In fact, to learn a new language, understanding of the language must be needed. This can be obtained from reading.

Reading anxiety is an unpleasant and uncomfortable emotional reaction when reading which has an influence on physical and cognitive reactions, this anxiety is a situational type (Jalongo & Hirsh 2010). So reading anxiety is a feeling of nervousness or fear in situations when reading texts in a foreign language. Then, what is causing reading anxiety at one of junior high school Bukittinggi students?

According to Saito (1999) scripts and writing systems are unfamiliar and cultural material that totally new seems to have great potential in causing language anxiety. Differences in the writing system and differences in cultural material are the first cause. As for the junior high school Bukittinggi students, they are already familiar with bahasa Indonesia's writing system but not English writing system yet.

The second cause is time to learn a foreign language. As a 7<sup>th</sup> grader, it is their first time to learn English because it is no longer taught as a main subject in elementary school. Some schools do not even have English classes. As Day & Bamford (1998) suggested that the more people read, the better. This means that the more and often you learn about a language, the more you will understand foreign language itself both in terms of structural grammar, vocabulary, and textual knowledge.

The next cause is the lack of vocabulary. According to Baker, Simmons, Kame'enui (1997) vocabulary is a concrete form of student success in learning FL. It means that vocabulary is the fundamental in learning a foreign language in terms of

speaking, reading, listening and writing. The lack of vocabulary makes these junior high school students hesitate in learning English which leads to reading anxiety.

Thus, reading anxiety is inevitable for FL learners including Indonesian students. However, that does not mean it cannot be spotted. The sooner it is found, the quicker it is to overcome it. The way to spot reading anxiety is through test. One of the instruments used in this test is EFLRAI.

EFLRAI is an instrument to measure reading anxiety for non-English major students developed by Masoud Zoghi (2012). EFLRAI stands for English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory. It is an instrument that specifically designed for non-English major students who are suspected of experiencing reading anxiety.

There are several instruments to spot FL anxiety, but the author decided to choose EFLRAI because it focuses on non-English students who experienced reading anxiety. According to Perry, Ball and Stacy (2004) instruments with general measurement is not suitable and may cause inaccuracies in certain group of people. Another instrument such as FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) designed by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) is not focusing on reading anxiety. FLCAS is an instrument with 33 questions about language anxiety in general. It is mostly about speaking anxiety in the classroom. Thus, EFLRAI is more appropriate for reading anxiety instrument.

The study conducted by Masoud Zoghi in 2012 found that EFLRAI had acceptable reliability and validity in spotting students with reading anxiety. In his study, Zoghi randomly selected 251 participants from eight classes of two different faculties at Azad University. Majority of the students (68.7%) admitted their level of English is low. The results of this study also show what the causes of their anxiety are. They are cultural knowledge, vocabulary/grammar, and the way the lesson delivered.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This section describes the definition and explanation related to; reading skills, reading anxiety, anxiety, reading anxiety and EFLRAI

### ***Reading skills***

According to Day and Bamford (1998: 12) reading is the assembly of meanings from messages that are printed or written. This means that the assembly of meanings requires the reader to combine the contents of a written message with knowledge that was obtained beforehand so that later it arrives at the intended understanding and meaning. So, in order to assembly the meaning of the contents we need to obtain knowledge beforehand. It shows how important to read a lot.

According to Harmer (2007: 99) the usefulness of reading is for mastery of language. As long as students understand what they are reading, the more they read, the easier it will be for students to understand the contents of the reading. It also has the same idea with the previous paragraph. You will gain more knowledge by reading a lot, it even helps you to understand the new knowledge.

From the previous paragraphs, the writer understands that reading is the process to gain information and knowledge. Even when you do not understand

something, you will find the answer by reading another one. That is how you gain the information through reading. In some cases, the process of gaining the information is often hindered by their own anxiety.

### **Anxiety**

According to Wilson (Anxiety in Learning English as a Foreign Language, 2006, p.41) says that anxiety is a feeling felt by individuals associated with arousal of the autonomic nervous system such as tension, fear, anxiety, and anxiety. More details, Wilson (2006: 41) stated that there are two components of general anxiety, namely "worry and emotional." Concern here is commonly called "cognitive anxiety" meaning "negative possibilities and cognitive worries about the situation at hand and its consequences," while emotionality or "somatic anxiety" concerns "one's assumption of indications of autonomic stimulation and unpleasant feelings, in the form of physiological elements - affective experiences of anxiety, such as nervousness, abdominal pain, palpitations, sweating, and tension "(Morris, David, & Hutchings, 1981, quoted in Wilson, 2006, p. 41, & quoted in Cubucku, 2007, p. 134).

So, anxiety is the excessive feelings of worry that irritate the nervous system causing people have a hard time to stay calm. This anxiety is divided into emotions and cognitive. The cognitive one leads to language anxiety.

*Language anxiety* Horwitz (1986) is the first person to distinguish foreign language anxiety from other anxiety as part of language learning (Young, 1991, quoted in Wang, 2005, p. 16). Horwitz argues (1986, p. 128), foreign language anxiety is "things that arise in the language learning process from self-perceptions, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom learning."

*Other researchers also proposed the same definition. Oh (1992, cited in Wang, 2005, p. 16) perceives foreign language anxiety as a special anxiety experienced by students in class, which is characterized by "negative thinking about oneself, feelings of inadequacy, feelings of failure, and emotional reactions". Mac Intyre and Gardner agree with Oh (1994, quoted in Wang, 2005, p. 16) suggest foreign language anxiety as a feeling associated with foreign language learning activities in the form of not relaxing and fearing.*

*Reading anxiety*  
According to Jalongo and Hirsh (2010) reading anxiety is a form of a particular phobia or fear, which causes some reactions to the body and mind in the form of unstable emotions when reading. This reading anxiety has a correlation to reading comprehension, Nazarinasab (2014) stated in their study about the impact of foreign language reading anxiety and text feature awareness on university students' reading comprehension ESP texts that the lower the level of reading anxiety the higher scores they tended to attain in reading comprehension test and vice versa. It lends support to the premise that reading anxiety influences the low proficiency L2 readers' comprehension performance.

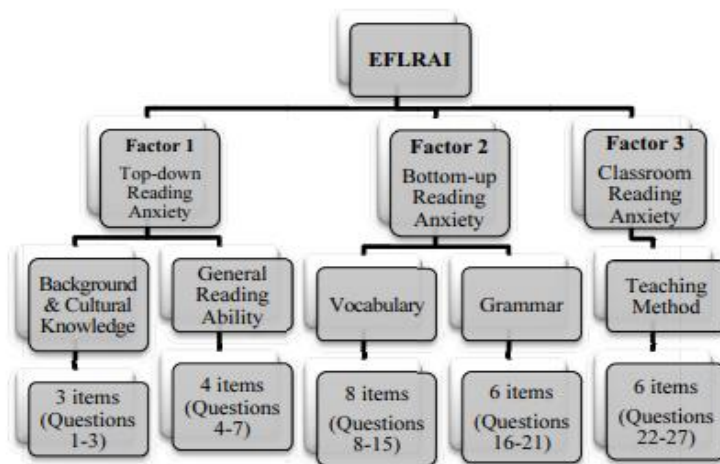
Santoso, Sutarsyah and Sudirman (2014) in their study concluded that there is a significant difference of reading comprehension between higher level anxiety students and lower level anxiety students. It also means that students with lower level of anxiety have higher score in reading comprehension than students with higher level of anxiety. Since  $p$  value (0.002) is less than  $\alpha$  (0.05) in Linear Regression and it can be concluded that anxiety could really influence students' reading

comprehension. R2 shows that its influence about 30% of the overall score on reading comprehension.

However, in paper, this reading anxiety can be spotted using foreign language anxiety instrument such as EFLRAI.

**EFLRAI**

EFLRAI (English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory) is a likert scale question instrument to measure reading anxiety for non-English major students developed by Masoud Zoghi (2012). It is modeled after FLRAS, so there are similarities in some aspects. It consists of three sections that contain several questions. These questions will help the teacher to know what the causes of reading anxiety for each student are. Here is the graphic representation of EFLRAI:



**FIGURE 1**  
Graphic Representation of EFLRAI

As a likert type questions instrument, EFLRAI has 4 point; 1 (totally disagree), 2 (somewhat disagree), 3 (somewhat agree), and 4 (totally agree). The scores range from 27 as the lowest and 108 as the highest, as the high score means high reading anxiety.

**DISCUSSION**

This part discusses the preparation of using EFLRAI to junior high school students in spotting reading anxiety and the implementation of using EFLRAI to junior high school students in spotting reading anxiety.

***Preparations of Using EFLRAI to Junior High School Students in Spotting Reading Anxiety***

EFLRAI (English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory) is a likert type questionnaire by Masoud Zoghi (2012) that has 27 questions. Every questions have 4 points; 1 (totally disagree), 2 (somewhat disagree), 3 (somewhat agree), and 4 (totally agree). The points will be accumulated later on by the teachers

to find out the students score. The higher the score is, the higher their level of reading anxiety is.

**Table 1.** Likert Scale Table

Score	Likert Scale
1	Totally disagree
2	Somewhat disagree
3	Somewhat agree
4	Totally agree

These points will be the options of 27 questions. The questions are based on three factors. The first factor is top-down reading anxiety which is divided into background & cultural knowledge (3 questions) and general reading ability (4 questions). The second factor is bottom-up reading anxiety which is also divided into vocabulary (8 questions) and grammar (6 questions). And the last factor is classroom reading anxiety which is teaching method (6 questions). Here is EFLRAI questions table based on the factor.

**Table 2.** EFLRAI Questions Table

No	Questions	Factor	Sub-factor
1	I do not feel at ease when the title of the text is unfamiliar to me	Top-down reading anxiety	Background & cultural knowledge (1-3)
2	It is worrying to me when the ideas expressed in the text are culturally unclear		
3	I get upset when I lack the previous knowledge about the ideas expressed in the text		
4	I worry when I cannot get the gist of the text although no new vocabulary items or grammatical points exist in the text	Bottom-up reading anxiety	Vocabulary (8-15)
5	When I cannot recognize minor ideas (details) of the text is worrying to me		
6	I am nervous when I cannot spot the main idea of a certain paragraph		
7	It bothers me when I cannot express my opinions or feelings about the text		
8	I feel uneasy when I cannot figure out meanings of unknown words	Classroom reading anxiety	Teaching method (6)
9	It bothers me when I encounter a lot of words whose meanings are unclear		
10	I get upset when I cannot figure out the meaning of a		

- word that I feel I have seen before
- 11 It bothers me when I feel unable to look up a word in the dictionary
- 12 I get confused when the word that I know has a different meaning in the sentence
- 13 I get upset when I come across idioms that are unfamiliar to me
- 14 It makes me feel uneasy when an unfamiliar is made up of several parts of syllables
- 15 I feel worried when the unknown word is difficult to pronounce
- 16 I am nervous when a certain sentence is long and has a complex structure
- 17 When a certain sentence is grammatically unfamiliar is worrying to me
- 18 It bothers me when a passive voice is used in a sentence
- 19 I feel upset when the tense of a certain sentence is unclear to me
- 20 I worry when I am unable to recognize different parts of speech such as adjectives, adverbs, or connective words
- 21 I get confused when what I know about a grammatical point does not make any sense
- 22 It bothers me when the instructor calls on me to read out
- 23 It worries me when the instructor calls on me to translate a piece of an English text into our first language
- 24 When the instructor asks me reading comprehension questions is worrying to me
- 25 It upsets me when the instructor chooses uninteresting texts to read in class
- 26 It makes me feel uneasy when the instructor corrects my pronunciation or
- Grammar (16-21)
- Classroom reading anxiety Teaching method (22-27)

- 27 translation mistakes  
 I am nervous when the  
 instructor uses English as a  
 medium of instruction and  
 hardly ever makes use of our  
 first language

As shown in the table above, each question has its own factors. These factors will determine what causes reading anxiety in junior high school students. For instance, the questions number 1 to 3 is about unfamiliar title and lack of knowledge that causes uneasy feeling (anxiety) to students in reading. This unfamiliarity is related to background & cultural knowledge. Through this test, teacher will be able to know how much this background & cultural knowledge affects students by the option they choose. Thus, teacher can take action and find a way to help students to overcome it.

***The Implementation of Using EFLRAI to Junior High School Students in Spotting Reading Anxiety***

In order to get the objectives of this test, the reasearcher must follow these steps:

1. Prepare EFLRAI questionnaire sheets  
 Here is how EFLRAI looks like:

English Version of EFL Reading Anxiety Inventory  
 (EFLRAI) EFLRAI, ©M. Zoghi, 2012

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This questionnaire does not intend to gauge your EFL reading ability. Nor is it a test that you can score high or low. In fact, this questionnaire helps us help you i.e. by knowing about your true responses, we will be able to find out when you undergo anxiety while reading in English. This may enable us to be well-prepared in your future English classes. Thus, your cooperation can certainly make a big difference. Thanks for your time in advance.

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Age: ..... Gender: Male  Female   
 Current Proficiency in English:  
 Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent

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Directions: Statements 1–27 refer to how you feel about reading in English. Please read all of the statements and tick the option that describes you by indicating whether you (1) totally disagree, (2) somewhat disagree, (3) somewhat agree, or (4) totally agree.

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1. I do not feel at ease when the title of the text is unfamiliar to me



- (1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
2. It is worrying to me when the ideas expressed in the text are culturally unclear  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
3. I get upset when I lack the previous knowledge about the ideas expressed in the text  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
4. I worry when I cannot get the gist of the text although no new vocabulary items or grammatical points exist in the text  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
5. When I cannot recognize minor ideas (details) of the text is worrying to me  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
6. I am nervous when I cannot spot the main idea of a certain paragraph  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
7. It bothers me when I cannot express my opinions or feelings about the text  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
8. I feel uneasy when I cannot figure out meanings of unknown words  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
9. It bothers me when I encounter a lot of words whose meanings are unclear  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
10. I get upset when I cannot figure out the meaning of a word that I feel I have seen before  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
11. It bothers me when I feel unable to look up a word in the dictionary  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
12. I get confused when the word that I know has a different meaning in the sentence  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
13. I get upset when I come across idioms that are unfamiliar to me  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
14. It makes me feel uneasy when an unfamiliar is made up of several parts of syllables  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
15. I feel worried when the unknown word is difficult to pronounce  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree

16. I am nervous when a certain sentence is long and has a complex structure  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
17. When a certain sentence is grammatically unfamiliar is worrying to me  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
18. It bothers me when a passive voice is used in a sentence  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
19. I feel upset when the tense of a certain sentence is unclear to me  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
20. I worry when I am unable to recognize different parts of speech such as adjectives, adverbs, or connective words  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
21. I get confused when what I know about a grammatical point does not make any sense  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
22. It bothers me when the instructor calls on me to read out  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
23. It worries me when the instructor calls on me to translate a piece of an English text into our first language  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
24. When the instructor asks me reading comprehension questions is worrying to me  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
25. It upsets me when the instructor chooses uninteresting texts to read in class  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
26. It makes me feel uneasy when the instructor corrects my pronunciation or translation mistakes  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree
27. I am nervous when the instructor uses English as a medium of instruction and hardly ever makes use of our language  
(1) Totally disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Totally agree

Explain how to do the test

Here are the steps:

- a. Fill in the personal data
- b. Mark one of the option given based on what students' feel

For example, if the students totally agree with statement number

1. Mark on option 4 (totally agree)
2. Distribute the questionnaire sheets
3. Recollect the sheets from the students when they have done the test
4. Accumulate the students' score  
The higher their score is, the higher their reading anxiety are
5. Analyze the students' results (the cause of reading anxiety)  
Use the EFLRAI question table to find out what the causes of their reading anxiety are
6. Give the results back to their English teacher  
It can help the teacher to find a suitable way to help the students regarding their factor of reading anxiety. Thus, the foreign language learning will run smoothly

By following those steps, teacher would be able to find the students' factor of reading anxiety and helps them to overcome it.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

As an FL learner, FLA (Foreign Language Anxiety) is something that cannot be avoided. Almost everyone experienced Foreign Language Anxiety. The FLA itself includes speaking anxiety, writing anxiety, listening anxiety, and reading anxiety. As one of the FLA that have not been discussed much, reading anxiety is inevitable. Especially when the FL learners read anything related to FL that us being studied, reading anxiety becomes a frightening spectre that awaits. Apparently, reading anxiety is indeed experienced by students in Indonesia.

To overcome this reading anxiety, the teacher must be able to spot the students with reading anxiety as soon as possible. The method used to spot students with reading anxiety is through a test using EFLRAI questionnaire. Not only it can spot students with reading anxiety and its level, EFLRAI can also point out what factors cause reading anxiety in Junior High School students.

It is suggested that the teacher should use EFLRAI to spot reading anxiety in Junior High School students for EFLRAI uses questions that can reveal the causes of reading anxiety in students. Besides, EFLRAI can also calculate the students' level of reading anxiety based on the point that students choose in every questions. This reading anxiety test should be carried out as early as possible by the teacher to avoid the reading anxiety level that gets higher over time when there is no effort to improve.

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