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# Contribution of Skill-Based Approach on Reading Achievement of EFL Students

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**Abstract:** People can acquire valuable information for their lives if they have reading skills. Each individual has his own unique goal in reading. Therefore, some considerations need to be made to improve the skills especially regarding the approaches that can be used. One of the approach that can be applied in teaching reading is skill-based approach. Quantitative correlational study was employed to explore the contribution of skill-based approach on reading achievement of EFL students. The number of the respondents were eighty-one which were taken randomly from the students of Sriwijaya State Polytechnic semester two on the academic year 2023–2024. The questionnaire regarding skill-based approach and their reading scores were used to collect the data; and they were analyzed by using descriptive statistic, Pearson coefficient correlation and linear regression. Students' perception regarding skill-based approach showed that 35.80% of the respondents have moderate perception; 45.68% have high perception, and 18.52% have a very high perception. In terms of reading achievement, 9.88% of respondents were sometimes able to comprehend; 56.79% were often able to comprehend reading; and 33.33% were usually able to comprehend reading. There was a significant but moderate correlation between the variables ( $R=0.493$ ). The influence was significant and the contribution was 24.3%.

**Keywords:** Skill-based approach, reading achievement, correlation

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## 1. Introduction

It is believed that reading skill especially reading comprehension skill is very important [5, 7, 8, 14]. The ability to read enables individuals to acquire valuable information for their lives [11]. Each individual has his own unique goal in reading [4, 10]. One of the goals is to keep up with the latest news. Another goal is to get knowledge in terms of appearance so that he or she can select the appropriate attire for various situations and events. Next is to understand the instruction from the boss. People also read to obtain the main idea of an article. Another reason for reading is to entertain himself. People also read to develop his ability to choose the correct words when speaking or writing. Finally, individuals read to be able to think critically and complete assignments from professors.

English in Indonesia is taught as a foreign language.

Therefore, the approaches used in studying reading should be tailored to meet the needs of the students. Actually, some efforts have been conducted by English lecturers at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic to ensure that the students have reading comprehension skills. Unfortunately, some obstacles are still being experienced by the students.

One of the approaches that can be used in teaching reading comprehension is skill-based approach. In general, the approach has been being used in English classrooms to improve the students' reading skills [6, 16].

In skill-based approach, the students are trained to connect letters and formed them into word and from words into meaningful sentences. They are also trained to read similar patterns and respond to the instruction based on the text given. Next, they are trained to understand the

synonym and antonym of the words and how to use them in sentences. After that, they are trained to find out the main idea and the conclusion. How to do scanning and skimming are also trained [12]. Therefore, consideration needs to be made to improve the skills [2, 3].

The following are the previous study. The ability to think critically has a significant correlation with students' reading comprehension [13]. There was a strong and positive correlation among reading habit, learning skill, and students' English achievement [1]. The connection between teaching strategy and pupils reading achievement is significant [14]. Building the reading skill itself will not develop comprehension if the students do not understand the topic [17]. Therefore, collaboration between the students and the teachers should be developed. The more the reading activities conducted in the classroom, the better is the students' reading attainment [9]. The primary concern of the previous research is about students' reading achievement. Unfortunately, the correlation between skill-based approach and students' reading achievement are not identified yet.

## 2. Research Methodology

In this research, the researchers conducted quantitative correlational study. The objectives of the research were to investigate the skill-based approach used in the classroom; to investigate the reading achievement of EFL students; and to investigate the correlation between them.

The population of the research was the students of Sriwijaya State Polytechnic semester two on the academic year 2023-2024. The number of the respondents were eighty-one which were taken randomly.

The questionnaire was used to collect the data regarding the skill-based approach as perceived by the students who studied reading. The number of the items were thirty. The minimum score was 30 and the maximum one was 150. The researcher also used the reading score of the students to see the students' achievement. There were 10 aspect investigated in this test. Therefore, the minimum score was one for each aspect and the maximum was 10. The total score ranging from 10 to 100.

The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistic to illustrate the approach used in the classroom and also the achievement of EFL students. Pearson coefficient correlation was used to see the relationship between the variables; and linear regression was used to analyze the influence and contribution of independent variable towards dependent one.

The students' perception towards independent variable was divided into 5 level: very low (10 to 37; low (38-65); medium (66-93); high (94-121); and very high (122-150). Regarding the reading achievement of the students, they got 100 in reading achievement if they consistently read well; 80-99 if they usually read well; 60-79 if they frequently read well; 40-59 if they sometimes read well; and  $\leq 39$  if they seldom read well. The following is the level of correlation: very low (0.0 to 0.199), low (0.20 to 0.399), medium (0.40 to 0.599), strong (0.60 to 0.799), and very strong (0.80 to 1.000) [15].

## 3. Finding and Discussion

### 3.1 Students' perception on skill-based approach

The following were the findings and discussions regarding the skill-based approach as perceived by the students. The number of respondents was 81. The mean and median were 104.12 and 104.00 respectively. The standard deviation was 16.746. Meanwhile, the kurtosis and the standard error of kurtosis were -0.683 and 0.529. It showed that the data followed a normal distribution. The minimal score obtained was 80.00 and the maximal was 145.

Statement that the approach was effective in increasing the reading fluency of the students was perceived neutral by one third of the respondents, agreed by 37.04% respondents, and the rest were very agreed. Furthermore, skill-based approach helped the students developing their phonic skills. It was agreed by 55.56%; very agreed by 8.64%; but 35.80% had neutral position. The results align with the ideas regarding reading skills that can be obtained by the students [6, 12, 16].

There were 54.32% respondents agreed that the skill-based approach can increase the students' ability to recognize unfamiliar words; 11.11% of them very agreed and the rest had neutral position. 65.42% of respondents believed that the approach could assist students in enhancing their vocabulary; 28.40% agreed and the rest (6.18%) made neutral position. There were 64.19% respondent agreed to the statement that the approach can make the students focus on additional points of the text; 28.40% very agreed; and 7.41% respondent perceived it neutrally. The approach can enhance the students' ability to make inferences was agreed and very agreed by 64.2% respondent. 1.23 % respondents did not agree and 34.57% were in neutral position. The statement that the approach helped students develop their comprehension in various kinds of text was agreed and very agreed by 64.2% respondents; 34.57% respondents had neutral position; and the rest disagreed to the statement. There were 17.29% accept the issue, 1.23% have highly recommendation to the point that the approach developed the students' ability in reading as a whole; and 81.48% respondents were in neutral position. There were 53.06% respondents agreed and 8.64% very agreed to the statement that the approach can enhance the students regarding the strategy of learning reading comprehension; 28.27% gave neutral statement. There were only 13.58% respondents who agreed and very agreed to the statement that the method makes them like to involve in activity; 30.86% did not agree and 55.56% gave neutral perception. In general, the respondents gave positive reaction to the above items. However, attention should be given in developing the students' knowledge regarding the various kinds of reading texts and their involvement in reading activities. Those findings align with the ideas regarding how to enhance reading skills of the students [2, 3].

The skill-based approach is perceived positively by 11.11% respondents and very positive by 2.47% respondents. They believed that the use of the approach can increase their confidence in reading. There were 55.56% respondents who have neutral perception to the statement; meanwhile, 30.86%

respondents mentioned their disagreement. 51.85% of the respondents were neutral toward the statement that students enjoy reading more when the approach is used, 12.35% agreed, and 2.47% very agreed to the statement. However, there were 33.33% who felt pessimistic about the statement. There were 14.82 who agreed and very agreed to the idea that they can apply their reading skill to the real life after they applied the approach. There were 33.33% respondent who disagree and 51.85% respondents had neutral position. It was a very positive information that there were 60.49% respondents who have the same interpretation towards the statement that the students who were given the instruction using the approach showed a significant improvement compared to others who didn't. There were only 39.51% respondents who were neutral with the statement that the approach was effective in helping the novice to catch up with his learning, 17.28% agreed and 13.58% very agreed. The rest had neutral position. The facts above showed that students' confidence and motivation should be developed. The application in the real life should also be considered by giving positive feedback towards the efforts that has been conducted by the students. The achievement can be gained by conducting continuous practice. The lecturers must provide supportive learning environment to motivate the students to learn. Various activities and the application of technology must be provided. The use of case study, simulation, and giving project relating with the real world can also be conducted to improve the students' reading skills. The result is in line with the idea regarding the skill-based approach [3].

There recent research showed that 69.14% respondents chose to remain neutral towards statement that the approach was easy to be applied by the lecturers in classroom, 16.05% agreed, and 14.81% very agreed. There were 83.95% respondents who were neutral with the statement that the students can be given more individual learning using the approach, 13.58% agreed, and 2.47% very agreed. The statement that the approach is suitable with the standard and curriculum guidance was agreed by 16.05% respondents, and very agreed by 2.47% respondents. Unfortunately, there were 81.48% respondents who were neutral to the statement. Not more than one fourth of the respondents responded positively (16.05%) towards the statement that the lecturers received adequate support and training to apply the approach effectively. The rest (83.95%) were neutral. It also showed that 77.78% respondents agreed and 13.58% very agreed to the statement that the approach was suitable for students with various level of achievement. Only 8.64% respondents who were neutral.

The statement that the approach is challenging but can be managed was responded pessimistically by 2.47% respondents. However, 39.50% respondents responded optimistically and 16.05% respondents responded very optimistically; the rest had neutral position. The approach according 56.67% respondents were flexible enough to fix various teaching style. There were 3.70% respondents who disagreed; and the rest were neutral. 22.22% respondents believed that the approach can encourage collaboration and peer learning; the rest disagreed (35.80%) and neutral (41.98%). The statement that the students were motivated to

increase the reading skills when using the approach was agreed by 25.93% respondents and very agreed by 1.23% respondents. There were only 3.70% respondents who disagreed and the rest gave neutral response. The approach was agreed by 30.86% respondents can help them improving their critical thinking skills. Unfortunately, there were 33.33% respondents who disagreed; and 35.80% mentioned neutral position. They indicated some pessimism regarding the governance, flexibility, collaboration, motivation, and critical thinking skills when the approach was used in the classroom. The data align with the idea regarding how the skill applied in EFL language classrooms [2, 3, 13].

The students can apply reading skills learned through the skill-based approach to other courses. This idea was acknowledged by 50.91% respondents. There were 4.94% who disagreed and the rest provided neutral statement. The approach prepares students for future academic success. This statement was agreed upon by 38.27% of respondents, and strongly agreed upon by 1.23% of respondents. Meanwhile, 7.41% of respondents disagreed, and 53.09% were neutral. There were 28.40% who agreed and strongly agreed (2.47%) with the statement that the students who received learning using the approach were more likely to continue reading outside of the class. Unfortunately, the statement was responded negatively by 27.16% of respondents, they expressed their disagreement. The remainder (41.98%) remained neutral. Positive responses were given by respondents regarding the statement that the approach is effective in improving students' standardized test score in reading. 29.63% agreed and 35.80% strongly agreed with the statement. There were no respondents who strongly disagreed; only 9.88% disagreed, and neutral (24.69%). 64.20% of the respondents believed that the approach influenced the reading achievement of the students but 13.58% who were either pessimistic or neutral, and the rest did not agree.

There was a slight of pessimism among students regarding its application to other courses, academic success, likelihood of continued reading, effectiveness in raising test scores, and positive impact on reading achievement. Therefore, the lecturers need to understand this pessimism and strive to find solutions by providing optimal support, motivation, appropriate guidance to help students overcome their doubts and build confidence in their ability to apply their reading skills and achieve the success they aspire to [6].

Here is the overall perception of respondents towards the skill-based approach implemented in the classroom. 35.80% of the respondents have a moderate perception; 45.68% have a high perception, and 18.52% have a very high perception. Although generally the students' perception was quite positive, the lecturers still need to consider aspects for improvement to enhance its use in reading instruction in the classroom.

### 3.2 Students' reading achievement

The number of respondents in this study was 81. The mean and median of this statistical data were 72.95 and 72.00, respectively. The standard deviation was 8.9567. Meanwhile, the kurtosis and standard error of kurtosis were -0.930 and

0.529. The lowest total score obtained by students was 55.00 and the highest score was 88.00.

In terms of phonemic mastery, no respondents were able to understand and manipulate sounds within words consistently; 53.09% of respondents were usually able to do so; and 46.91% of respondents were often able to do so. None were occasionally able or rarely able. Although no respondents were able to identify words by associating letters with sounds consistently, there were 53.09% of the respondents usually able to do so, and 46.91% were often able to do so. The good news is that there were no respondents who were occasionally or rarely able to do so. There were 51.85% respondents were usually able to enrich their familiar words and use in reading; 46.92% often able; and 1.23% sometimes able. The positive aspect is that in terms of vocabulary mastery, there were no respondents who were rarely able, although there were also no respondents who consistently were able. In terms of reading comprehension, no respondents were able to understand and interpret the meaning of the texts read consistently; 46.91% were usually able to do so; 45.68% were often able; 7.41% were sometimes able; and none were rarely able. In relation to the reading fluency, the researcher did not find any respondents who consistently read texts fluently and accurately, 43.21% were usually able to do so; 49.38% were often able; and 7.41% were sometimes able. The positive news is that there were no respondents who were rarely able. There were 40.74% respondents who were usually able to develop reading technique such as skimming, scanning, and inference to understand the text. There were 54.32% were often able and 4.94% were sometimes able. There were no respondents who consistently were able and rarely able. No respondents consistently understood how texts are structures, including the recognition of different genres and formats; 37.27% were usually able; 58.03% were often able; and 4.70% were sometimes able. No respondents consistently had critical reading skills, such as the ability to analyze, evaluate, and critically respond to reading materials; 35.80% were usually able, 60.49% of all respondents were often able, 3.71% were sometimes able, and none were rarely able. In the context of morphological awareness, no respondents consistently understood word structures, including root words, prefixes, and suffixes, which can help in recognizing and understanding new vocabulary; 33.33% were usually able, 64.20% were often able, and 2.47% were sometimes able. No respondents were consistently able to read extensively, 34.57% of respondents were usually able, 64.20% were often able, and 1.23% of respondents were sometimes able.

There were no respondents who were rarely able to comprehend reading; 9.88% of respondents were sometimes able to comprehend because they scored between 40 and 59; 56.79% of respondents were often able to comprehend reading as they scored between 60 and 79; 33.33% of respondents were usually able to comprehend reading; and there were no students who consistently achieved full comprehension because no respondents scored 100.

Overall, students' reading comprehension skills are quite good. However, several aspects such as phonemic awareness,

word identification skills, vocabulary mastery, reading comprehension, reading fluency, reading techniques, text structure, critical reading skills, and morphological awareness need improvement. Extensive reading skills should also be enhanced by increasing reading activities and varying reading materials. These skills aim to improve reading speed and broaden understanding of context and vocabulary. Results strengthen the ideas regarding issues and merits of skill-based approach in tertiary education as investigated previously [16].

### 3.3 Correlation, influence, and contribution

The following is relationship between the skill-based approach perceived by students and their reading achievement indicated by their total reading scores.

|                      |                     | Skill-based approach | Reading achievement |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Skill-based approach | Pearson Correlation | 1                    | .493**              |
|                      | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                      | .000                |
|                      | N                   | 81                   | 81                  |
| Reading achievement  | Pearson Correlation | .493**               | 1                   |
|                      | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000                 |                     |
|                      | N                   | 81                   | 81                  |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table shows that there was a significant correlation between the skill-based approach as perceived by students and their reading achievement. The relationship between them is moderate ( $R = 0.493$ ).

The following is the influence and contribution of the skill-based approach to students' reading achievement.

#### Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .493 <sup>a</sup> | .243     | .233              | 7.84352                    |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Skill-based approach

b. Dependent Variable: Reading achievement

There was a significant influence of skill-based approach on students' reading achievement ( $R^2 = 0.243$ ). The contribution of the independent variable to dependent one is 24.3%. This means that 75.7% of other factors that contribute to students' reading achievement were not addressed in this research.

## 4. Conclusion

The lecturers need to provide guidance on different reading materials, characteristics, and forms so that students can better grasp important information. Involving students in learning to read using the approach is also necessary to gradually and purposefully enhance their motivation and abilities. Therefore, attention needs to be given to enhance understanding of various types of texts and engaging students in reading activities using a skill-based approach.

Lecturers should build students' confidence and motivation to use the approach in real-world situations. Confidence can be enhanced by providing positive feedback regarding the efforts that have been made. To motivate students to learn, relevant reading materials matching their interests and experiences should be chosen, diverse reading activities should be provided, and technology should be incorporated. Case studies, simulations, and real-world project assignments can also be used to enhance students' reading abilities. Next, lecturer should also convey that achievement comes from gradual practice. Finally, Supportive learning environment should also be built.

There was moderately optimistic among students regarding governance, flexibility, collaboration, motivation, and critical thinking skills when a skill-based approach is used in the classroom, as well as regarding the application of reading skills in other courses, academic success, the likelihood of continuing reading, the effectiveness of raising test scores, and the positive impact on reading achievement. Therefore, English language educators need to strive for solutions by providing optimal support, motivation, and guidance so that students can overcome doubts and build confidence in their ability to apply their reading skills and achieve the success they hope for.

The correlation between the skill-based approach and students' reading achievement was 0.493. The relationship between the two is significant but moderate. There is a significant influence between them with a contribution of 24.3%.

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