

Correlation Of Self-Regulated Learning And Cefr Reading Achievement In EFL Learners

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ABSTRAK

Pemahaman membaca merupakan aspek penting dalam pendidikan Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL); namun, banyak pembelajar menghadapi tantangan yang berasal dari strategi yang tidak memadai dan paparan yang kurang terhadap sumber daya Bahasa Inggris yang autentik. Tantangan-tantangan ini sering kali terkait dengan kemampuan pembelajar untuk mengelola dan mengatur proses belajar mereka sendiri, yang dikenal sebagai pembelajaran yang diatur sendiri (SRL). Studi ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki korelasi antara pembelajaran yang diatur sendiri (SRL) dan kemampuan pemahaman membaca siswa. Peserta penelitian terdiri dari 86 mahasiswa program Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, mewakili berbagai kelas. Desain penelitian korelasi digunakan, dan data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner SRL dan bagian membaca dari EF Standard English Test (EF SET), yang sesuai dengan Kerangka Acuan Umum Eropa untuk Bahasa (CEFR). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan korelasi positif yang signifikan antara pembelajaran yang diatur sendiri (SRL) dan pemahaman membaca, menunjukkan bahwa siswa dengan kemampuan pengaturan diri yang lebih baik umumnya mencapai hasil membaca yang lebih baik. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa mempromosikan strategi pembelajaran yang diatur sendiri dapat meningkatkan pemahaman membaca di kalangan pembelajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL) dan memberikan wawasan penting bagi program pendidikan guru. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa mengintegrasikan metodologi pembelajaran yang diatur sendiri (SRL) ke dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris dapat meningkatkan kinerja akademik siswa dan mendorong kemandirian belajar mereka.

Kata kunci: Pembelajaran Mandiri Terarah; Pemahaman Bacaan, Tes Bahasa Inggris EF (EF SET), Standar CEFR, Pembelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing.

ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension is an essential aspect of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education; however, numerous learners face challenges stemming from inadequate strategies and insufficient exposure to authentic English resources. These challenges are frequently associated with learners' capacity to manage and regulate their own learning processes, referred to as self-regulated learning (SRL). This study sought to investigate the correlation between self-regulated learning (SRL) and students' reading comprehension proficiency. The participants comprised 86 students from the English Education program, representing various classes. A correlational research design was used, and data were gathered via an SRL questionnaire and the reading section of the EF Standard English Test (EF SET), which corresponds with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The results demonstrated a significant positive correlation between self-regulated learning (SRL) and reading comprehension, suggesting that students with enhanced self-regulation typically attained superior reading outcomes. The findings indicate that promoting self-regulated learning strategies can improve reading comprehension among EFL learners and offer significant insights for teacher education programs. The study concludes that incorporating self-regulated learning (SRL) methodologies into English instruction enhances students' academic performance and fosters their learning autonomy.

Keywords: Self-Regulated Learning, Reading Comprehension, EF SET, CEFR, EFL Learners.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is a crucial element of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, as it enhances students' academic achievement and fosters their overall linguistic proficiency. Reading comprehension can be defined as *a complex cognitive process in which readers construct*

meaning by interacting with written text, utilizing linguistic knowledge, background experience, and reading strategies to interpret and integrate information (Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Snow, 2002). It encompasses not only the capacity to decode words but also necessitates advanced cognitive skills, including inference-making, analysis of the author's intent, evaluation of concepts, and self-monitoring of comprehension during reading. In the EFL context, reading comprehension frequently poses greater difficulties due to learners' restricted exposure to authentic English input and their inadequate application of effective reading strategies.

A significant factor affecting reading performance is Self-Regulated Learning (SRL). Zimmerman (2000) defines self-regulated learning (SRL) as the extent to which learners engage metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally in their own educational process. Pintrich (2004) defines self-regulated learning (SRL) as a process wherein students establish learning objectives, assess their progress, manage their cognition, motivation, and behavior, and reflect on results to enhance performance. Essentially, SRL enables learners to autonomously plan, organize, and assess their own educational activities. In EFL learning, students exhibiting elevated self-regulation typically employ more effective reading strategies, sustain motivation, and persevere in understanding intricate texts.

A growing body of research over the past ten years has highlighted the essential role of self-regulated learning (SRL) in promoting learners' reading development. Empirical research demonstrates that students who effectively utilize self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies generally attain superior levels of reading proficiency (Tse, Lin, & Ng, 2022; Al Asmari & Ismail, 2012). Studies on motivational factors indicate that goal orientation and self-efficacy are positively correlated with learners' capacity to manage their learning and achieve success in reading comprehension tasks (Wang & Bai, 2022; Apriliyani & Usuludin, 2023). Furthermore, research underscores the role of metacognitive awareness, executive functioning, and reading strategy utilization in comprehension performance across various educational contexts (Avramovich & Yeari, 2022; Gazali & Baa, 2023; Rollins et al., 2022). While these findings offer significant insights, the majority of studies were conducted outside Indonesia or involved participants at the primary and secondary education levels, thereby constraining their applicability to tertiary EFL learners.

This research gap is especially important in programs that train teachers. Future English teachers should not only be able to read well, but they should also be able to learn on their own so that they can effectively teach their future students. Numerous studies have investigated SRL-based instructional methodologies (Arees, 2020) and analyzed the impact of reading strategy training (Yapp, de Graaff, & van den Bergh, 2021); however, limited research has concentrated on the relationship between SRL and reading proficiency among Indonesian EFL learners. Furthermore, the application of standardized frameworks, including the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and its corresponding assessment instrument, the EF Standard English Test (EF SET), is still constrained in SRL research in Indonesia, despite their acknowledged reliability in evaluating language proficiency.

Consequently, this study seeks to examine the correlation between self-regulated learning and English reading comprehension among students enrolled in the English Education program. There were 86 students from different classes who took part. A structured questionnaire was used to measure SRL, and the EF SET reading test was used to measure reading proficiency. The study aims to address the following inquiry: Is there a substantial correlation between students' self-regulated learning and their proficiency in English reading comprehension? The reviewed literature suggests a hypothesis of a positive and significant correlation between the two variables. This study aims to enhance existing discourse on self-regulated learning (SRL) and reading comprehension within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, providing practical implications for teacher education in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational methodology to investigate the relationship between self-regulated learning (SRL) and reading comprehension among students in the English Education program. This design is suitable for discerning both the magnitude and direction of associations among variables without their manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The study's participants consisted of 86 students from various classes in the English Education program, selected via purposive sampling. These students were chosen because they had a good amount of experience learning English and were still working on their academic reading skills. This made them good candidates for studying the connection between SRL and reading comprehension.

Two tools were used to gather data. The first was an SRL questionnaire based on the work of Zimmerman (2000) and Pintrich (2004), who are two of the most important people in SRL research. The questionnaire had 20 statements that were rated on a five-point Likert scale. These statements were about five different areas: (1) Setting Goals and Making Plans (items 1–4), (2) Self-Monitoring and Metacognition (items 5–8), (3) Regulating Effort (items 9–13, with item 13 being reverse-coded), (4) Managing Time and Environment (items 14–16), and (5) Seeking Help and Using Strategies (items 17–20). All statements were framed within the context of English reading activities. This tool was chosen because it fully shows the whole SRL cycle planning, monitoring, and evaluation while still being useful for college-level students.

The questionnaire was adapted from Pintrich's Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), which has been validated with numerous university students and demonstrated internal consistency coefficients from 0.73 to 0.89 (Pintrich, 2004; Duncan & McKeachie, 2005). To ensure content validity, three experts reviewed the items, and a pilot test with 35 students confirmed their clarity and reliability. The reliability analysis in this study indicated a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 for the overall scale and between 0.72 and 0.85 for each subscale, all surpassing the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The item-total correlations varied between 0.34 and 0.68, demonstrating adequate internal consistency. People could fill out the online version of the tool at <https://bit.ly/SRLReading> using Google Form.

The second tool was the reading part of the EF Standard English Test (EF SET), which is an online test that follows the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The EF SET was chosen because its scores are comparable to those of other tests around the world (Council of Europe, 2001), it has a strong correlation with IELTS and TOEFL scores ($r > 0.80$), and it has a high test-retest reliability (0.88–0.92) (Kamkankaw, 2025; EF Education First, 2016). The EF SET also uses an adaptive testing system to match the difficulty of the test to the ability of the test taker. It also uses automated scoring to reduce bias among raters and is free to use, which makes it perfect for research settings. Participants took the EF SET Reading Test, which can be found at <https://www.efset.org/ef-set-50/launch/>.

This study only used the reading part of the EF SET. There were a number of methodological reasons for this choice. The research concentrated on reading comprehension as a self-paced activity facilitating the application of self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies, in contrast to listening, which is constrained by time and provides minimal opportunities for self-regulation (Wang et al., 2022; Tse et al., 2022). Second, the SRL questionnaire in this study specifically assessed regulation within reading contexts, thus incorporating listening comprehension may compromise construct validity. Third, previous studies on SRL and reading have consistently employed reading-only assessments to guarantee conceptual coherence (Al Asmari & Ismail, 2012; Tse et al., 2022; Habibah et al., 2024). Lastly, the 50-minute reading test was the right length to keep participants' attention and avoid the fatigue that comes with the full 100-minute version.

The process of collecting data took place in two steps. First, participants filled out the SRL questionnaire in a supervised setting with clear instructions that stressed the importance of confidentiality and honest answers. This took about 12 to 18 minutes. One week later, they all took the EF SET reading test online, each using a different access link and following the same steps. The one-week break was meant to reduce any possible priming effects. Each participant was given a unique code that linked their questionnaire and test results while keeping their identity secret.

We used JASP (Version 0.95.3) to look at the data we had gathered. We used descriptive statistics like the mean, standard deviation, and range to sum up how well the participants did. We used Shapiro–Wilk tests and visual checks of histograms and Q–Q plots to see if the data was normal. Pearson's correlation was used if the data met the normality assumptions; otherwise, Spearman's correlation was used. The primary analysis investigated the correlation between overall SRL scores

and EF SET reading scores at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ (two-tailed). The correlation's strength was assessed in accordance with Cohen's (1988) criteria. Additionally, exploratory analyses were performed to examine the correlation between each SRL subscale and reading comprehension performance.

RESULTS

Overview

This chapter shows the results of the statistical analyses that were done to answer the research question about how self-regulated learning (SRL) affects students' reading achievement. The analyses encompass normality tests and a correlation analysis conducted with JASP version 0.95.3.

Test of Normality

A normality test was done to see if the data for both variables were normally distributed before the correlation test was done. The Shapiro–Wilk test was utilized due to its suitability for samples comprising fewer than 200 participants.

Table 1 shows the results of the normality test.

Table 1 Results of Shapiro–Wilk Test

	SRL_Total	nilai Reading
Valid	86	86
Missing	0	0
Mean	68.87	51.23
Std. Deviation	11.86	18.22
Shapiro-Wilk	0.920	0.976
P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	< .001	.103
Minimum	28.00	15.00
Maximum	89.00	99.00

Based on the results in Table 4.1, the p -value for SRL_Total was less than 0.05 ($p < .001$), indicating that the data were not normally distributed. Meanwhile, the p -value for Reading Score was greater than 0.05 ($p = .103$), indicating that the data were normally distributed.

Since one of the variables did not meet the normality assumption, the non-parametric Spearman's rho correlation test was chosen for further analysis.

Correlation Analysis between Self-Regulated Learning and Reading Achievement

To investigate whether there was a relationship between students' self-regulated learning and their reading achievement, a Spearman's rho correlation test was performed. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 2

Variable		SRL_Total	nilai Reading
1. SRL_Total	Spearman's rho	—	
	p-value	—	
	Lower 95% CI	—	
	Upper 95% CI	—	
2. nilai Reading	Spearman's rho	0.117	—
	p-value	.283	—
	Lower 95% CI	-0.097	—
	Upper 95% CI	0.321	—

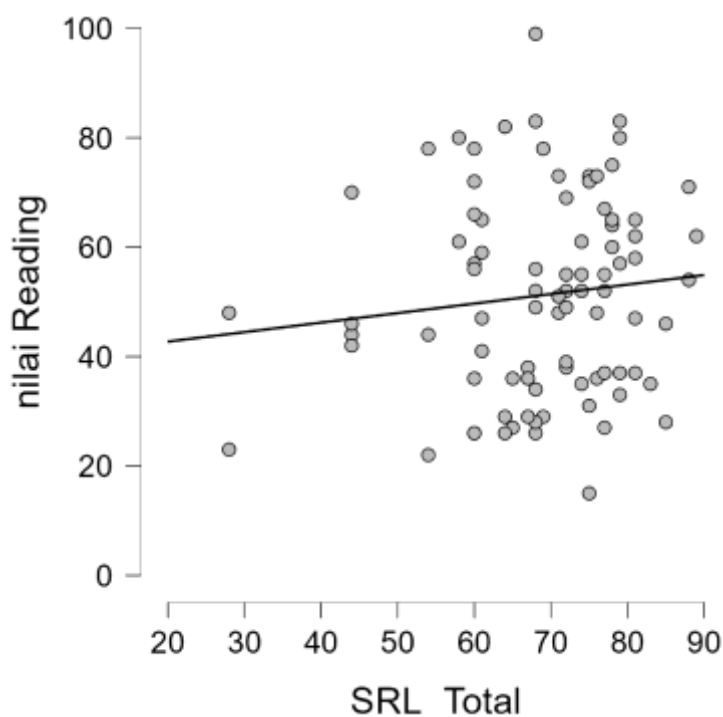
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

As shown in Table 4.2, the correlation coefficient between SRL_Total and Reading Score was $r_s = 0.117$ with a p -value of 0.283 ($p > 0.05$). This indicates a very weak, non-significant positive correlation between students' self-regulated learning and their reading achievement.

This result suggests that although students who demonstrated slightly higher levels of self-regulated learning tended to achieve somewhat higher reading scores, the relationship was not statistically significant. In other words, students' self-regulation levels did not have a meaningful effect on their reading performance in this study.

Visualization of the Relationship

A scatter plot was generated to visualize the relationship between self-regulated learning and reading achievement. The plot is presented in Figure 1



The scatter plot shows a slightly upward trend line, but the data points are widely dispersed. This pattern confirms that the relationship between SRL and reading score is weak and inconsistent among the participants.

Summary of Findings

The analyses revealed that the Reading Score variable exhibited a normal distribution, in contrast to the SRL_Total (self-regulated learning) variable, which did not. In light of this, Spearman's rho correlation was deemed the most suitable statistical test for analyzing the relationship between the two variables. The correlation analysis revealed a negligible and statistically insignificant relationship between self-regulated learning and reading achievement ($r_s = 0.117$, $p = 0.283$). This indicates that, within the examined sample, elevated levels of self-regulated learning did not inherently correlate with enhanced reading comprehension performance among the students.

DISCUSSION

The current study sought to examine the correlation between self-regulated learning (SRL) and students' reading comprehension performance. The Spearman's rho correlation test indicated that the correlation between SRL_Total and Reading Score was negligible and statistically insignificant ($r_s = 0.117$, $p = .283$). This result shows that the levels of self-regulated learning in students did not have a significant effect on how well they did in reading. In other words, students who said they were better at self-regulated learning didn't always do better on reading comprehension tests.

This outcome contradicts numerous prior studies that indicated a substantial positive

correlation between self-regulated learning (SRL) and reading performance (e.g., Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2021; Zimmerman, 2000; Pintrich, 2004). These studies contend that self-regulated learners possess superior capabilities in goal-setting, comprehension monitoring, and the application of effective reading strategies, which typically result in enhanced reading outcomes. Nevertheless, the lack of a substantial relationship in the current study may be elucidated by various contextual factors.

One possible explanation is that the participants in this study may have had relatively similar levels of self-regulated learning, which could have led to low variability in their scores. Statistical correlations tend to diminish when there is minimal variation in students' SRLs, even in the presence of a theoretical relationship. Another possible factor is how outside things affect reading performance, like knowing a lot of words, being motivated to read, feeling anxious, or having good test-taking strategies. These external factors may exert a more significant influence on reading comprehension than students' self-regulation alone.

In addition, the results may reflect participants' developmental stage. Since the participants were university students in the early stages of their study program, they may still be developing their self-regulated learning skills. According to Zimmerman (2000) and Pintrich (2004), SRL is a process that matures through practice and feedback; thus, students with limited academic experience may not yet apply self-regulation effectively in complex reading tasks.

Even though the result wasn't statistically significant, this finding helps us understand how SRL works in the context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It underscores that SRL, despite its conceptual significance, does not inherently lead to improved reading scores unless students receive explicit training in the application of SRL strategies during reading activities. Consequently, educators and curriculum developers ought to incorporate explicit self-regulated learning (SRL) instruction, such as goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-reflection, into reading courses to facilitate the transfer of these competencies into practical application.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to look into how self-regulated learning (SRL) affects how well students read English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The statistical analysis employing the Spearman's rho correlation test revealed that the relationship between the two variables was exceedingly weak and not statistically significant ($r_s = 0.117$, $p = .283$).

This finding suggests that students' levels of self-regulated learning did not significantly impact their reading comprehension performance. In other words, students who scored higher on the SRL test didn't always do better on the EF SET reading test.

While the outcome contrasts with earlier research indicating a positive correlation between self-regulated learning (SRL) and reading proficiency (Zimmerman, 2000; Pintrich, 2004; Afflerbach et al., 2021), it offers significant insights into the learning attributes of EFL students. The absence of a significant correlation indicates that self-regulation alone may not dictate reading success. Other factors that may have affected the students' reading results include how well they knew vocabulary, how motivated they were, how anxious they were about reading, and how they took tests.

So, we can say that SRL is good in theory, but how much it helps students read better depends on how well they use self-regulated strategies in real-life situations.

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