



Original Research

Relationship Between the Frequency of Reading English Texts and Students' English-Speaking Skills

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Abstract

Despite years of formal English instruction, many Indonesian senior high school students remain reluctant and unable to speak English fluently, largely due to limited exposure to authentic language input outside the classroom. Although reading is a readily accessible source of such input, its specific contribution to speaking performance has rarely been examined empirically at the senior high school level in Indonesia, leaving a gap in understanding how reading frequency in particular relates to oral proficiency. This study investigated the relationship between the frequency of reading English texts and students' English speaking skills at An Nur Aliyyah Senior High School, using a quantitative correlational design. The sample consisted of 30 eleventh-grade students selected through purposive sampling from a population of 76. Reading frequency was measured using a 30-item Likert-scale questionnaire, while speaking skills were assessed through an oral test covering pronunciation, intonation, accuracy, comprehension, and fluency. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-Moment correlation, and t-test analysis. Results showed a positive and significant correlation between reading frequency ($M = 66.00$) and speaking skills ($M = 77.66$), with reading frequency accounting for 64.7% of the variance in speaking performance ($t = 7.16 > 1.70$, $p < 0.05$). These findings suggest that integrating reading activities into English instruction can support the development of students' speaking proficiency.

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1. Introduction

English has become a global language widely used in international communication, education, business, technology, and science. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language across all levels of formal education and is considered essential for students to access global information and compete internationally. Among the four language skills, speaking is often regarded as the most important indicator of successful language learning because it directly reflects learners' ability to communicate in real time (Ghafar & Raheem, 2023). However, many Indonesian EFL learners continue to face serious challenges in speaking English fluently and accurately despite years of instruction. Common problems include limited vocabulary, weak grammatical control, inaccurate pronunciation, and low confidence, particularly when speaking in front of others (Fadhilah, 2022).

In many traditional classrooms, speaking practice is overshadowed by a stronger focus on grammar exercises and written tasks, leaving students with few opportunities for meaningful oral communication. Preliminary observation at An Nur Aliyyah Senior High School in Bogor revealed that many eleventh grade students were reluctant to speak English even when they understood the teacher's instructions, and that their main exposure to English was limited to school textbooks and assignments (Hernanda et al., 2022). These conditions indicate a need for richer and more varied language input to support the development of speaking skills (Kasino, 2017).

One accessible source of such input is reading. Several previous studies in Indonesian school settings have reported associations between reading related variables and speaking ability, such as reading aloud and speaking performance among elementary school students, or reading interest and speaking skills (Nindriani, 2019; Wardana et al., 2021). However, most of these studies focus on younger learners, use reading interest or reading habit as a general construct, and do not specifically operationalize the frequency of reading English texts as a distinct, measurable variable. Consequently, it remains unclear how much of the variance in speaking performance among senior high school students can be explained specifically by how often they read English texts, rather than by their general interest in reading or exposure to media. This gap is what the present study addresses.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on reading frequency, rather than reading interest, reading habit, or media exposure, as a distinct predictor of speaking skill among senior high school EFL learners, and in quantifying the strength of this relationship through correlational analysis in an under researched school context (An Nur Aliyyah Senior High School). By isolating frequency as the variable of interest, this study offers a more precise understanding of how the regularity of reading practice, independent of reading enjoyment or ability, contributes to oral language development. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between the frequency of reading English texts and students' English-speaking skills at An Nur Aliyyah Senior High School.

2. Literature Review

In order to examine the relationship between the frequency of reading English texts and students' English-speaking skills, this study first outlines the main theoretical concepts and previous empirical findings that underpin the research. The literature review begins by clarifying the notion of frequency in the context of reading English texts, followed by a discussion of reading as a fundamental language skill and the role of English as a foreign language in the Indonesian educational system. It then elaborates on the nature of speaking skill and its key components in English language learning. Finally, relevant studies on the relationship between exposure to English input, particularly reading activities, and speaking performance are presented, which together form the basis for the conceptual framework and research hypothesis of this study (Husna, 2021).

Reading Frequency

Reading frequency refers to the regularity with which learners engage in reading activities over a certain period. Unlike reading ability or reading interest, reading frequency emphasizes how often individuals read rather than how well or how much they enjoy reading. Theoretically, this distinction matters because frequency captures the quantity of language exposure a learner receives, which input based theories of second language acquisition identify as a necessary condition for language development (Setiawan et al., 2023). According to these theories, learners develop their language system primarily through exposure to comprehensible input, obtained through listening or reading, which is gradually internalized and later drawn upon during production tasks such as speaking. Written input differs from spoken input in that it allows learners to process language at their own pace, re-read difficult structures, and encounter vocabulary in context repeatedly, conditions that are believed to strengthen retention and later retrieval during oral communication.

Empirical studies on reading frequency, however, have produced somewhat inconsistent operationalizations. Rifki (2023) and Hikmah & Muslih (2023) both link reading intensity to reading comprehension outcomes, but neither study extends the analysis to productive skills such as speaking. This leaves an empirical gap regarding whether frequency specifically, as opposed to interest or comprehension ability, transfers to oral performance, which the present study attempts to address.

English Speaking Skills

Speaking is a productive skill requiring learners to integrate vocabulary knowledge, grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, and communicative competence in real time (Putri & Sya, 2023). Hughes (2003) identifies pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, accuracy, and intonation as interconnected components of speaking proficiency, a framework that is also adopted as the scoring rubric in the present study. Among the factors influencing speaking performance, anxiety has been repeatedly identified as a major obstacle for Indonesian EFL learners (Ghafar & Raheem, 2023), while limited vocabulary and grammatical uncertainty

compound learners' reluctance to speak. This suggests that speaking difficulties are not purely linguistic but are also shaped by the amount and quality of prior language input learners have received, which is the theoretical link connecting speaking performance back to reading frequency in this study.

The Relationship between Reading Frequency and Speaking Skills

Empirical evidence on the reading-speaking relationship remains mixed in terms of scope. Wardana et al. (2021) found that reading interest, not frequency, correlated significantly with elementary students' speaking skills, while Nindriani (2019) reported a positive relationship specifically between reading aloud ability, a performance measure, and speaking outcomes. Haryadi (2020) demonstrated that stronger reading habits were associated with better speaking outcomes among senior high school students in Jakarta, offering the closest precedent to the present study's context, though the study did not isolate frequency as a distinct variable from general habit.

Taken together, these studies converge on a positive association between reading related variables and speaking performance, but they differ in which reading construct they measure (interest, habit, aloud ability) and in the age groups studied. None specifically test reading frequency as an isolated predictor at the senior high school level using a validated frequency instrument, which is the gap this study fills. Based on this synthesis, it is hypothesized that a higher frequency of reading English texts is positively and significantly related to higher English-speaking skill scores among eleventh grade students.

3. Method

This research employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. A correlational design is suitable for investigating whether a relationship exists between two variables without manipulating them. The independent variable in this study is the frequency of reading English texts (X), and the dependent variable is English speaking skills (Y). The population of the study consisted of 76 eleventh-grade students of An Nur Aliyyah Senior High School in Bogor, West Java, during the 2024/2025 academic year. The students were distributed across three classes. Using purposive sampling, one class was selected as the sample, resulting in 30 students participating in the study. The selection was based on accessibility and the class teacher's permission (Putri & Sya, 2023). his sampling approach was chosen primarily for practical accessibility rather than statistical representativeness, and it carries limitations that should be acknowledged (Rifki, 2023). Because the sample was drawn from a single class within one school through purposive sampling rather than random sampling, the findings reflect the characteristics of this specific group of students and cannot be generalized to the broader population of Indonesian senior high school EFL learners without caution. Future studies employing random or stratified sampling across multiple classes or schools would strengthen the external validity of these findings (Wardana et al., 2021).

The frequency of reading English texts was measured using a 30-item Likert-scale questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire items were designed to cover several aspects: (1) time spent reading English texts, (2) types of texts read (e.g., stories, articles, news, online content), (3) interest and motivation in reading, (4) perceived benefits of reading, and (5) comprehension and engagement when reading. The response options were "Always," "Often," "Sometimes," "Rarely," and "Never." For positive statements, "Always" was scored 5 and "Never" was scored 1, while for negative statements the scoring was reversed. The total score reflected the overall frequency of reading English texts, with higher scores indicating higher reading frequency. Sample items representing each indicator of the instrument are presented below to illustrate how reading frequency was operationalized: for time spent reading, "I read English texts every day"; for types of text read, "I read English fiction such as novels or short stories"; for interest and motivation, "I enjoy reading English texts"; for perceived benefits, "I gain a lot of new vocabulary after reading English texts"; and for comprehension and engagement, "I reread a text if I have not understood its content." The content validity of the instrument was examined by two experts from the English Education Study Program, who reviewed the relevance, clarity, and coverage of the items. A try-out was conducted with 30 students outside the main sample, and item validity was tested using the product-moment correlation coefficient by comparing each item score with the total score. All items exceeded the critical r-value of 0.361 and were retained. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha produced a coefficient of 0.913, indicating very high internal consistency. Students' speaking skills were assessed through an individual oral test. Each student was asked to deliver a short monologue and engage in a brief interaction with the examiner on familiar

topics such as daily routines, hobbies, family, and school life. The test was designed to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their ability to speak English in a relatively natural way.

The scoring rubric included five components: pronunciation, intonation, accuracy, comprehension, and fluency. Each component was rated on a five-point scale from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent). The total speaking score was obtained by summing the component scores, dividing by the maximum possible score (25), and multiplying by 100 to obtain a percentage score. The rubric was adapted from guidelines used in national examinations and aligned with the curriculum's speaking descriptors. To increase scoring reliability, the examiner paid careful attention to each criterion and used recorded performances as a reference when needed.

Data collection was carried out in several steps. First, the researcher obtained official permission from the school principal and the English teacher to conduct the study. Second, the researcher explained the purpose and procedures of the research to the students and assured them that their responses and scores would be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. The questionnaire on the frequency of reading English texts was administered during regular class hours. Students were given clear instructions on how to respond to each item and were encouraged to answer honestly based on their real reading habits. The completion of the questionnaire took about 20–30 minutes. On a different day, the speaking test was conducted. Students were called one by one to a quiet room where the researcher acted as the examiner. Each session lasted about 5–7 minutes and was audio-recorded for scoring. The examiner used the same set of prompts for all students to ensure consistency.

Data analysis consisted of several stages. First, descriptive statistics (minimum, maximum, mean, median, mode, variance, and standard deviation) were calculated for both variables. Frequency distributions and histograms were prepared to visualize the spread of scores. Second, assumption tests were conducted. The normality of each variable's distribution was tested using the Lilliefors test. The linearity of the relationship between the two variables was examined through regression analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the regression line. Third, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the frequency of reading English texts and speaking skills.

4. Results & Discussion

The results of the study were obtained from all 30 respondents, eleventh grade students of An Nur Aliyyah Senior High School.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Reading Frequency (X) and Speaking Skills (Y)

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Mode	Variance	SD
Reading Frequency (X)	49	90	66.00	66.00	66.70	67.586	8.221
Speaking Skills (Y)	64	92	77.66	77.25	76.50	74.712	8.643

The mean score for reading frequency (66.00) indicates a medium level of engagement, while the mean speaking score (77.66) suggests a generally good level of oral performance among the sample.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Reading Frequency Scores (X)

Interval	f
49–55	3
56–62	7
63–69	10
70–76	8
77–83	1
84–90	1
Total	30

The distribution of reading frequency scores is presented in Figure 1.

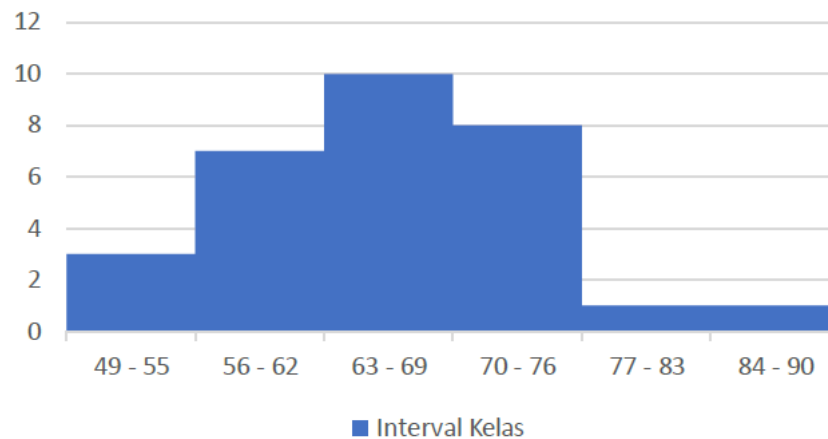


Figure 1. Histogram of Reading Frequency Scores (X)

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Speaking Skill Scores (Y)

Interval	f
64-68	7
69-73	2
74-78	8
79-83	4
84-88	5
89-93	4
Total	30

The distribution of speaking skill scores is presented in Figure 2.

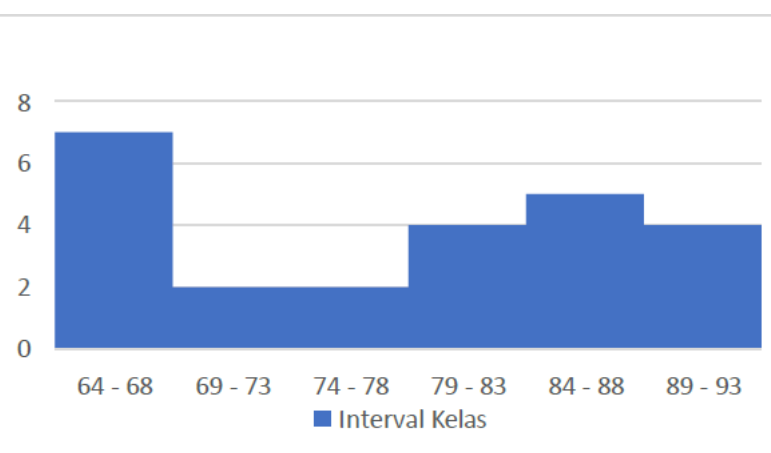


Figure 2. Histogram of Speaking Skill Scores (Y)

Most reading frequency scores clustered in the 63–69 range, while most speaking scores clustered in the 74–78 range. Both distributions were approximately bell-shaped.

Table 4. Normality Test Results (Lilliefors)

Variable	L-count	L-table ($\alpha=0.05$, n=30)	Conclusion
Reading Frequency (X)	0.142	0.161	Normally distributed
Speaking Skills (Y)	0.143	0.161	Normally distributed

Since L-count was smaller than L-table for both variables, the data for both reading frequency and speaking skills were normally distributed.

Table 5. Linearity Test Results (ANOVA of Regression)

Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F-count	F-table
Regression (a)	1	181274.100	181274.100	—	—
Regression (b/a)	1	1629.691	1629.691	—	—
Residual	28	888.175	31.703	—	—
Deviation from linearity	17	504.709	29.689	0.85	2.68
Error	11	383.467	34.861	—	—

Since F-count (0.85) was smaller than F-table (2.68) at df (11,17), the regression relationship between reading frequency and speaking skill was linear.

Table 6. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Result

r (calculated)	r-table ($\alpha=0.05$, n=30)	N	Interpretation
0.804	0.361	30	Strong, positive, significant correlation

The coefficient of determination ($r^2 \times 100\%$) showed that 64.7% of the variance in speaking skills could be explained by reading frequency, while the remaining 35.3% was attributable to other factors.

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing (t-test)

t-count	t-table (df=28, $\alpha=0.05$)	Decision
7.16	1.70	H0 rejected, H1 accepted (significant)

Since t-count (7.16) exceeded t-table (1.70), the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming a statistically significant positive relationship between the frequency of reading English texts and students' English-speaking skills.

The results of this study show that the frequency of reading English texts is significantly and positively related to the English-speaking skills of eleventh grade students at An Nur Aliyyah Senior High School ($r = 0.804$, $t = 7.16 > 1.70$, $p < 0.05$). Students who reported higher reading frequency tended to achieve higher speaking scores, and reading frequency alone explained 64.7% of the variance in speaking performance. This finding can be explained through input-based theories of second language acquisition. Frequent reading exposes learners repeatedly to vocabulary, grammatical structures, and discourse patterns in meaningful context. Over time, this repeated exposure strengthens learners' internal representation of the language, making retrieval faster and more accurate during real-time oral production, which explains why a receptive skill such as reading is able to statistically predict outcomes in a productive skill such as speaking (Riyanti, 2021; Setiawan et al., 2023).

This finding is consistent with, and extends, previous research on reading and speaking in Indonesian EFL contexts. Wardana et al. (2021) found that reading interest significantly correlated with elementary students' speaking skills, while Nindriani (2019) reported a comparable positive relationship using reading aloud ability as the predictor. Haryadi (2020), working in a comparable Jakarta senior high school context, found reading habit positively associated with speaking outcomes, though using a broader and less isolated

variable definition. The correlation found in the present study is notably stronger than those reported in these earlier studies, supporting the argument that reading frequency, isolated from interest, habit, or reading-aloud ability, may be a more precise predictor of speaking performance. This is the main contribution of the present study: by measuring frequency alone rather than a composite construct, it offers a sharper empirical basis for understanding how much of speaking performance can be attributed specifically to how often, rather than how well or how enthusiastically, students read. It also aligns with research on extensive reading, which has shown that sustained reading volume improves reading fluency and, by extension, provides more consistent linguistic input for oral development (Beglar et al., 2012).

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the view that receptive and productive language skills are not separate systems but draw on a shared underlying competence. They suggest that the frequency of input exposure, not merely its quality or the learner's attitude toward it, is a measurable factor in second language development, supporting models of acquisition that treat the quantity of comprehensible input as a meaningful predictor of output ability. This extends input-based theory by demonstrating its applicability to a specific, quantifiable behavior, reading frequency, rather than treating input exposure only as a broad and unmeasured background variable.

Practically, these findings carry two implications. First, English teachers should treat reading and speaking as complementary rather than separate components of instruction. Integrated activities, such as reading a text and then summarizing, retelling, or discussing it orally, can help students transfer input acquired through reading into active oral production. Second, the findings support the value of extensive reading programs in schools, including access to graded readers, magazines, and digital texts, alongside dedicated classroom time for silent reading and follow-up speaking tasks. For the specific context of SMA An Nur Aliyyah, where reading frequency was found to be moderate and largely driven by academic obligation rather than personal interest, combining guided reading with structured, low-anxiety speaking practice is likely to produce stronger gains than increasing reading frequency alone.

It is important to note that correlation does not establish causation. Motivated students may simultaneously read more and practice speaking more, meaning motivation could act as a confounding variable behind both. Language aptitude, exposure to English media, and support from teachers and parents may also shape both variables independently. Future research using experimental or longitudinal designs is needed to determine whether deliberately increasing reading frequency causes measurable improvement in speaking skill, rather than merely correlating with it.

5. Conclusion

This study found that the frequency of reading English texts among eleventh-grade students at An Nur Aliyyah Senior High School was at a moderate level and appeared to be driven more by academic obligations than by intrinsic reading motivation. Students' speaking skills also varied considerably; while some students demonstrated good performance, many still experienced difficulties with fluency, pronunciation, and confidence when speaking English. The analysis revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between reading frequency and speaking skills, indicating that students who read English texts more frequently tended to demonstrate better speaking performance.

These findings address the research objective by showing that reading frequency is an important, although not the only, factor influencing speaking performance among EFL senior high school learners. The contribution of this study lies in highlighting reading frequency, rather than reading interest or general reading habits, as the primary variable of investigation, providing a more focused basis for pedagogical implications. Teachers are encouraged to integrate reading and speaking activities instead of treating them as separate language skills, while schools may benefit from incorporating structured extensive reading programs into the curriculum. Future research is recommended to employ experimental or longitudinal approaches with larger and more representative samples, and to further examine how reading frequency interacts with other factors, such as vocabulary mastery, motivation, and classroom speaking practice, in shaping students' oral proficiency.

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