

THE USE OF EXTENSIVE READING TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS' READING ABILITY

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of extensive reading to encourage students' reading skill as well as students' attitude toward it. Descriptive qualitative research design was employed in this study. The data obtained through classroom observation, questionnaire, and interview. The participant of this study was a class of first semester students of the university in Ponorogo. The findings showed that extensive reading is useful in teaching reading. It is known that the students' extensive reading improves their vocabulary and their reading comprehension. To monitor students' extensive reading, the lecturer asked the students to write a reading report once a week. Therefore, group discussion also implemented in the extensive reading class to activated students' critical thinking. Besides, the result also showed that extensive reading assist students to comprehend new terms in several fields such as law, economics, health, politics etc. Overall, extensive reading help students to open their mind toward current issues and also boost students' reading ability.

Keywords: *English linguistics, English literature, English teaching, Article, Journal.*

Introduction

Reading is one of the important skills that should be mastered by the students since it has many advantages for them. A good reading competence is a necessity for students for those studying English. By reading, students are able to update current information and knowledge that will be benefit for their language improvement. However, students often find difficulties in reading since they do not understand the meaning of the sentences or words in the text. It is due to the position of students as L2 learners. Thus, it needs more effort for them to comprehend the meaning of the text. This is one reason why students are likely to be hesitant readers (Cahyono and Widiati, 2006) because reading in a foreign language is not easy. Moreover, students need more time to understand the text given by the lecturers in the class. Sometimes the time used in the class is not enough for students to be able to comprehend the book or passage well. It is in line with Ruzin (2019) that students reading a book or text in the classroom usually only have short time, so it causes students not able to figure out what they read, such as the content or the information from the text. Therefore, lecturers need to find appropriate teaching technique to encourage students' motivation and interest in reading. There are many teaching techniques that can be used for teaching reading, one of them is applying extensive reading in the class.

Reading is one of English skills that need to be mastered by language learners. Reading can be defined as a process to understand the meaning of a written text (Richards and Schmidt, 2010). As we know, the position of English language in our country is as a foreign language. It means, it needs certain learning method to comprehend it well. Since it is not our mother tongue, so it tends to difficult for us to comprehend what we read directly. Reading receives a special concentration in many second and foreign language teaching situations (Richard and Renandya, 2002). In the classroom context, students also stated that reading an English text is difficult to be understood. Then, it affected their reading performance in the class. To make them familiar with English texts, they have to build their reading habit and forced to read as many as English books.

The existence of extensive reading is different from intensive reading. In intensive reading, students are accustomed to read short texts with close guidance from the teacher. It is closely related to reading in the class or reading for academic purposes. Then, the main goal of intensive reading is to develop students' reading skill. According to Renandya (2007) the aim of intensive reading is to help students obtain detailed meaning from the text, to develop reading skills such as identifying main ideas and recognizing text connectors and to enhance vocabulary and grammar knowledge. On the other hand, to facilitate students' need in reading, students need reading activity that can make them happy and enjoy the activity of reading itself. Here is the role of extensive reading. The aim of extensive reading based on Extensive Reading Foundation (2011) is to help the student become better at the skill of reading rather than reading to study the language itself. However, extensive and intensive reading should not be separated because both of them have complementary goals.

Furthermore, extensive reading is one of right method to improve reading skill Ruzin (2019). Through extensive reading, students are able to choose their own books or passages. Thus, it will make them enjoy the reading activity. Extensive reading is a technique in teaching reading which is defined as a situation where students read a lot of materials in their level in a new language; they read for general, for overall meaning, and for information at one with enjoyment (Day and Bamford, 2004). Furthermore, Richards and Schmidt (2002) state that extensive reading is intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and encourage a liking for reading. The main purpose of implementing extensive reading is to motivate students to read more. Besides, it is expected through extensive reading activity, students are also able to improve their English skills. Therefore, the principal goal is to motivate students to read and enjoy reading in order to develop their reading ability (Meng, 2009). Because of this, reading is a pleasurable activity for students, promoted as much as possible by the teacher. According to Nation (2005), during extensive reading, students should be interested in what they are reading and should be reading with their attention on the meaning of the text rather than on learning the language features of the text.

In extensive reading activity, students are free to choose their own reading materials. One of the reasons why students take pleasure in extensive reading program is that they can choose what they want to read (Day and Bamford, 2004). Besides, students also able to do this activity outside the

class hour. Although students assigned to read outside the class, this activity should be monitored by the teachers. To keep track with students reading, teachers should encourage them to report back their reading in certain ways (Harmer, 2007) for example by employing reading journal. Moreover, the benefit of reading journal or reading report is it can be used to know how far the progress of students' reading. Another activity that can be utilized by students to do extensive reading is by discussing the text. This activity requires the students to actively engage in the discussion with their classmates. They can share their personal thought, opinion, or ideas toward the extensive reading materials they have read. It is in line with Sweet (2000) who suggests that student should be involved in group discussion where critical readers and learners are more likely to happen; students engage in daily discussions about what they read. Subsequently, students can share the result of their discussion to a classroom.

Method

This research was a descriptive qualitative study. The design fits with the requirements stated by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) that it has actual settings as the direct sources of data. The researcher functions as the key instrument in the study. This study is descriptive in nature since the data were in the form of words recorded in the interview transcript, field notes, and personal documents. The researcher used descriptive method in order to collect information and give description of the use of extensive reading to encourage students' reading ability. The participants of this study were 17 freshmen from a private university. The researcher also will use triangulation technique to avoid bias. It aims to examine the truth of the data. Furthermore, there were three instruments in collecting the data used in this study; classroom observation, questionnaire, and interview. Classroom observation was done four meetings in this part. Observation sheet and field notes were utilized to record notes about participants' behavior and performance during the observation (Creswell, 2012).

The reading class held once a week. In the first meeting, the observation sheet was not used because the lecturer directly gave a text and asked the students to had discussion. It means the lecturer did not implement extensive reading activity. On the other hand, in the second, third and fourth meeting lecturer used extensive reading activity in reading class. In the fourth

meeting, after the class is over, the lecturer gave questionnaire to the students. The questionnaire used open-ended questions to collect the data and it consists of 10 questions. The questions on the questionnaire covered students' attitude toward extensive reading activity, students' motivation in reading, students' opinion toward group discussion in reading class, and students' favorite reading activity.

The interview also done to clarify the findings. Besides, the lecturer also gave reading report to be filled by the students. It aimed to know about students extensive reading material. The reading report included information about the title of the book, passages or article, summary, list of new vocabularies, and moral value of the text. The interview also used to complete the findings in this study. It was done to the representative of the students. Seven from seventeen students interviewed to obtain more information toward their attitude of extensive reading.

Table 1. Instruments and variables

Instruments	Variables	Date of Data Collection
Class Observation	Students' perspective on extensive reading, reading activity in the class, classroom atmosphere in reading class	20 August 2020 and 27 August 2020
Questionnaire	The Students' perception on reading class, students' perception on extensive reading, students' opinion toward the use of reading report, students' reading preferences	3 September 2020
Interview	Students' perception on reading class, students' opinion toward the use of reading report, students opinion on the benefit of extensive reading activity, students' difficulties in reading	10 September 2020

Discussion

The findings from classroom observation showed that students had positive opinion about extensive reading. In the first meeting of reading class, the students might feel bored because the lecturer only asked them to read the text and after that she asked the students to discuss about the text they have read in the class. Sometimes the lecturer also gave several questions to the students related to the text. However, in the next meeting, the class atmosphere was different from previous meeting. The students more enthusiast in learning in the class. The reading class began with reading the students' reading report one by one. After that they asked to make a group

consisted of four members. Then, they discussed about the text that they have read one by one in the group. The other members were given freedom to ask questions or add more information about their friends’ report. They looked more enthusiast in reading class because they can share their opinion with their friends. The result of the observation also showed that students’ perception or opinion toward extensive reading changed to positive way. The data from observation were also supported by the close-ended questionnaire.

Table 2. Percentage of Students’ Questionnaire

No	Statement	Percentage for Each Statement			
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	I enjoy reading outside the class	23 %	69%	8%	0%
2.	Extensive reading improves my vocabulary	69%	23%	8%	0%
3.	Extensive reading activity improves my reading comprehension	23%	77%	0%	0%
4.	I enjoy writing the reading report	0%	100%	0%	0%
5.	Group discussion encourages me to share the information I have read	0%	100%	0%	0%
6	Extensive reading motivates me to read more reading materials	54%	46%	0%	0%
7.	I agree if extensive reading used as a regular activity in my class	15%	85%	0%	0%
8.	Extensive reading helps me to understand new terms in several fields (economics, politics, health, etc.)	54%	38%	8%	0%
9.	Extensive reading helps me to improve my knowledge	77%	23%	0%	0%
10.	I enjoy sharing my opinion and ideas form the text I have read through group discussion	23%	77%	0%	0%

Furthermore, the finding from questionnaire reveals that the students enjoy doing extensive reading activity because they can choose their own reading text or passage. The students seemed very enthusiast when they asked to present their opinion or ideas to their friends. This finding is in line

with Day and Bamford (2004) statement that students take pleasure in extensive reading program because they can choose what they want to read. It means that giving freedom to students for choosing their own reading materials is important. Besides, it also gives benefit for students to build their reading habit easily by choosing their own reading materials. From the interview, it also obtained information that students can add more vocabularies through extensive reading.

On the other hand, while using extensive reading, lecturer should able to monitor students' reading progress. The statement about the use of extensive reading to boost their vocabulary mastery, took 9 students or 69% strongly agree with this statement while three of the students or 23% agree and 8% disagree about this statement. The findings of the observation revealed that students enjoy doing extensive reading since they asked to write reading report related to their text that they have read. It makes them more motivated in reading the text or passage. Through the reading report, it is also known that students enjoy the extensive reading because they can learn new vocabularies. Richards and Schmidt (2002) state extensive reading is intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and encourage a liking for reading. After they found new vocabularies then they directly found the meaning of those words. From the interview, it also obtained information that students can add more vocabularies through extensive reading. This is the result of interview with the students.

Kalau lagi baca bacaan Bahasa Inggris sering nemuin kata-kata baru dan ga tau artinya. Tapi kalau kita disuruh baca santai gini jadi ada waktu untuk buka kamus dan cari tau artinya. (When I read an English text, I usually found new vocabularies and I don't know what the meaning. But if we asked to read for pleasure, we have more time to open the dictionary and find the meaning of those new vocabularies). [Students 3]

The next question was about the role of extensive reading related to students' reading comprehension. Based on the result of questionnaire, three students or 23% strongly agree about this and 77% of the students agree that by extensive reading they are able to improve their reading comprehension. It is in line with Suk (2016) that extensive reading increases students' reading ability such as reading comprehension, reading rate, and vocabulary acquisition. By implementing extensive reading, it is expected that students will read more books or articles, so they will be more familiar with English text and they can understand it easily.

The result also revealed that students also enjoy having discussion with their friends related to the text they have read. Group discussion also the most favorite activity in reading class since it agreed by all of the students in the class. Sweet (2000) suggests, student should be involved in group discussion where critical readers and learners are more likely to happen; students engage in daily discussions about what they read. Moreover, discussion also able to activate students 'critical thinking in reading because in this activity they can share their opinion or taught about an issue. They were free to ask the questions to their friends. Besides, it also able to add students' knowledge toward current issue by having discussion with their friends.

Thus, from the questionnaire it is known that extensive reading also affected students' motivation in reading. Extensive reading also motivated students to read more reading materials. Seven students or 54% strongly agree about this statement wrote 46% agree. They said that they were motivated in reading because it is fun activity and they reading for pleasure. This builds confidence and motivation which makes the learner a more effective user of language (Rahmawati and Nasir, 2018). Whereas for the reasons why they were motivated and fairly motivated to reading English in general were because the texts were interesting, learning method and activities were enjoyable, there was reading homework and reading journal, and there was an opportunity to know English more (Meng, 2009). It is clearly stated that reading a lot of various reading sources make students more motivated in learning especially reading. It is due to reading usually claimed as boring activity for the students. However, when they asked to choose their own reading materials, they will be more enthusiast and they said they want to read more because there is no burden in doing that. They just read for themselves and the bonus is they can add their knowledge also obtaining new terms or vocabularies.

Furthermore, related to the continuity of extensive reading activity, it is better if it can be done regularly, for example every meeting or once a week. Moreover, students also agree that extensive reading used as a regular activity in reading class. Eleven students or 85% of the students agree while 15% or two students strongly agree about this statement. The regular reading activity will build students reading habit. The more our students read, the

better readers they become (Rasoli). On the other hand, students also agree that extensive reading assist them to comprehend new terms in several fields such as economics, politics, etc. It showed that by implementing extensive reading activity in the class, students able to open their mind wider toward several fields.

To be specific, from the result of questionnaire it showed that students enjoy extensive reading activity since it can boost their knowledge especially in English. The last statement was about extensive reading to help students to improve students' knowledge. As many as 77% or ten students strongly agree and 23% or three of them agree about this statement. It is in line with Ruzin (2019) statement that extensive reading has been proven as an appropriate way to upgrade students' reading ability in many aspects. When the students interviewed about this part, they also said that the like this activity because they can read various reading materials from several sources.

Saya suka bacaan tentang hukum. Maka dari itu ketika mendapat tugas ini saya cari bacaan tentang hukum. Dari situ saya jadi tau banyak tentang istilah-istilah yang digunakan dibidang hukum yang saya belum tau sebelumnya. (I like reading about law. That's why when I assigned to read, I directly chose the reading materials about law. From this activity I know about new terms used in law field that I did not know before). [Student 5]

Moreover, the result of questionnaire and interview also showed that students enjoy sharing their ideas and opinion through group discussion. In this part, students asked to discuss their reading experience to their friends in a group. Then they can tell everything related to the text or passage that they have read to their friends. It aims to activate their critical reading by having discussion with their friends. They also given freedom to ask questions to their friends related to the text. The students encouraged sharing what they acquired from their group discussion because they had read the text before and they also had group discussion related to the text (Ferdila, 2014). This suggests that several benefits from repeated reading exposure are "more positive attitudes toward reading, increased reading time and more active in-class participation" (Guo, 2012).

Conclusion

This study triggered from class observation in reading class. Most of the students might feel bored to the reading activity in the class. Thus, this study intended to know about the implementation of extensive reading in encouraging students' reading ability. This study also aimed to obtain

information about the role of extensive reading in assisting students' reading ability. Not only that, this study also tried to dig more information from students' attitude about extensive reading activity.

The study found that students really enjoy extensive reading activity and it can change their perception about reading into positive way. All this time, they always have perception that reading is a boring activity and it caused them reluctant to join reading class. It is due to reading class usually have monotonous activity. They only asked to read and then answer the questions. From the interview it is revealed that this activity cannot really help them in boosting their reading ability. However, by implementing extensive reading they are very enthusiast to read and report what they have read.

The most important thing is students able to improve their vocabulary mastery from extensive reading activity. It is because they are given freedom to choose their own reading materials. This is also become the main reason why they really enjoy this activity. Before that, the lecturer always utilized intensive reading only as their main activity in the reading class. By choosing their own reading materials, they can read as many texts, articles or books as they want. It turns out that they were more enthusiast in learning when they interested in that certain theme or field. Besides, students also argued that through extensive reading activity they can develop their reading comprehension. It is because they were assigned to read more than usual.

Furthermore, in extensive reading activity, the group discussion also raised to activated students' critical thinking. Besides, the atmosphere of the class will be different if the lecturer used discussion in the reading class. The students more enthusiast because they have chance to speak up to deliver their opinion or ask questions to their friends. Through group discussion the students also able to exchange their opinion to other members of the group. On the other hand, the lecturer also used reading report to monitor or keep the track students' reading progress. According to students, they enjoy writing the reading report since it can help them summarize the content of what they have read.

Thus, extensive reading also motivates students to read various text since they are given freedom to choose their own reading materials from

several sources. It is also affected their reading frequency because they can read more from different sources. Then, students also agree if the extensive reading activity used as regular activity in their reading class. It aimed to make them more familiar with reading and able to build a better reading habit. They realized that by read more texts or books, it can open their eyes wider toward the current issues or information. Not only that, by reading various topics from several sources such as economic, health, law, politics etc. They become more familiar with new terms from those fields.

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