



THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EXTENSIVE READING TO FOSTER STUDENTS' READING SKILLS

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Abstract

This paper aims to review some previous studies and theories related to the effect of extensive reading to boost students' reading ability. Moreover, good reading ability is an important skill that should be mastered by students. It is used to enhance students' knowledge and reading ability. However, students face several difficulties in upgrading their reading skills, such as limited time to read, uninteresting reading materials given in the classroom, and an unsupportive reading environment. Thus, this condition made students have the low reading ability. Extensive reading is chosen as a method to overcome students' reading problems and difficulties. It is implemented by asking students to read as much as possible what they like outside the classroom. The purpose of this activity is to create a supportive reading atmosphere for students. Furthermore, this paper will describe students' difficulties in reading, the definition of extensive reading, and the advantages of implementing extensive reading in teaching reading. Extensive reading is also proven by some experts as an effective method to assist students with reading challenges.

Keywords: extensive reading, reading skill, students

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the prominent skills that should be owned by learners since it contributes a lot of benefits for them. By reading they can expand their knowledge and open their mind toward many knowledge and information around the world. The position of English as a foreign language forces students to master English skills well. Loucky (1996:1) states that reading as one of the four language skills is a complex and multi-faceted activity in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Besides, reading itself is one of the English skills that is considered a difficult skill to be understood by students. They found difficulties in comprehending English words and sentences. Reading English is challenging, thus the students need more effort to understand the meaning. In the classroom reading context, the students usually deal with time allocation for reading subjects. As it is known that the time use for reading subject is very limited. In addition, students need extra time to comprehend the text or passage given by the teachers. It is in line with Ruzin (2019) that students reading a book or text in the classroom usually only have a short time, so it causes students not able to figure out what they read, such as the content or the information from the text. It is also supported by Pearson & Fielding (1991:816) that spending time on reading in class is important since readers—the students—can get a lot of advantages from the time to apply reading skills and strategies and acquire new knowledge. Thus, to overcome students' problems in reading, lecturers need to provide suitable teaching techniques to boost students' interest in reading. Hence, understanding all types of information in the whole text requires either reading activity or the ability to understand the content (Miftah, 2013). In teaching reading, many reading techniques can be implemented in classroom reading, such as extensive reading.

Reading can be defined as a process to understand the meaning of a written text (Richards and Schmidt, 2010). It needs a certain method to make students able to absorb the whole information of the text. As English is not our mother tongue, so it is difficult for students to get the meaning of the words or sentences directly. Bamford & Day (2000) claim that in general, EFL reading is a difficult process. As a result, it is also affecting students reading performance in the classroom setting. Then, building students' reading habits should be a

priority of every lecturer who teaches the class by asking the students to read as many as English books. The role of the teachers is very crucial in training the students to have good reading ability through various teaching methods, techniques, and activities.

The emergence of extensive reading is one of the reading activities that can be implemented in classroom teaching and learning to boost students' reading skills. It is because extensive reading provides longer time and various materials that suit the student's needs. The aim of extensive reading based on the Extensive Reading Foundation (2011) is to help the student become better at the skill of reading rather than reading to study the language itself. The goal of extensive reading is to assist them to expose their reading skill. Carrel & Carson (1997:49-50) state that extensive reading is a reading activity involving the rapid reading of large quantities of material or longer reading (e.g., the whole book, texts, etc) for general understanding generally focused on the meaning of what is being read rather than on the language. By implementing extensive reading, students are free to choose their reading materials. It is expected that extensive reading makes students enjoy the reading activity.

In extensive reading, besides students can choose their reading materials independently, they are also able to read outside the class hour. In other words, extensive reading is also known as reading for pleasure. Thus, it means that students can decide the genre of their books and also when they want to read their books. However, it should be under the lecturer's supervision and the content of the book should be screened by the lecturers to avoid misinterpretation and misunderstanding in reading. Another activity that can be implemented by the students in extensive reading activities is by discussing the text that they have read with their friends. They can share their experiences and ideas, and be personally taught about the texts or books they have read. It is supported by Sweet (2000) who suggests that students should be involved in a group discussion where critical readers and learners are more likely to happen; students engage in daily discussions about what they read.

RESEARCH METHOD

This library-based research reviewed some previous studies, research, or literature that discuss the definition of extensive reading, the benefits of implementing extensive reading in teaching reading, how extensive reading can boost students' reading skills, and reading techniques. The articles were analyzed and synthesized to obtain the relation among those theories.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Extensive Reading Definition

The term extensive reading refers to reading for pleasure. There are many different terms for extensive reading, including pleasure reading, self-selected reading, free voluntary reading, and wide reading (Ng, Renandya & Chong, 2019). Extensive reading is a technique in teaching reading which is defined as a situation where students read a lot of materials at their level in a new language; they read for general, overall meaning, and information at once with enjoyment (Day and Bamford, 2004). Furthermore, Richards and Schmidt (2002) state that extensive reading is intended to develop good reading habits, build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure and encourage a liking for reading. Besides improving students' knowledge, McLean et al (2017) also said that extensive reading is an effective and efficient method to improve students' reading rates. 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 many cases, students tend to read what they like. Thus, it is very important to always motivate them to read more.

Extensive reading is projected to expose students to an input-rich and enjoyable environment, with the intention that their language knowledge will improve and their enthusiasm to learn will develop naturally (Hedge, 1985, cited in Sheu, 2003). Furthermore, Harmer (2002:210) asserts that extensive reading is an activity that can be applied by teachers to encourage students to choose what they read and to do so for pleasure and general language improvement. Thus, extensive reading activity should be supported by various reading materials for enjoyment, enrich their knowledge, and language development.

Students' Challenges in Reading

In teaching reading, students often found difficulties in comprehending reading text or books. It is because the position of English in Indonesia is served as a foreign language. Thus the students face several challenges in learning English, especially reading. Satriani (2018) states that there are 3 reasons why students are reluctant to read: low motivation in reading; do not have sufficient background knowledge; poor grammar and vocabulary. While according to Carvalho (2001), students have difficulties performing the tasks they are assigned. These difficulties concern mainly three aspects: reading and selecting suitable content, organizing and

synthesizing information obtained from various sources, and making use of conventional forms adopted by the academic community. Moreover, Joseph (2001) says that difficulties in understanding text can be derived from not knowing the meanings of words or concepts, not capturing factual information, not inferring about content, and not forming relationships among content presented in the text. In other words, students' difficulties in reading emerge from various factors.

Advantages of Implementing Extensive Reading

Extensive teaching is an activity or method that can overcome the above reading challenges faced by the students. There are several benefits while implementing extensive reading according to Levy, 2016, they are:

1. Broad content exposure

Extensive reading has several benefits both for teachers and students. As it is known, students' reading comprehension is consistently improved through extensive reading. Essentially, extensive reading provides wider reading materials for students. Extensive reading also does not give limitations on the volume of reading materials that students can read as long as it accommodates broad exposure. Besides, students also develop wider and deeper knowledge about the world, which is essential in relating and connecting with the text and other people (Renandya, 2016). It means that the more they read, the better comprehension they will have.

2. Improved Fluency with Vocabulary

Another benefit of extensive reading is it can improve students' vocabulary. Through extensive reading, learners can develop good reading habits, build up vocabulary knowledge and enhance positive reading attitudes (Liu and Zhang, 2018). By reading often, it is believed that students can enhance their vocabulary mastery. Related to the role of extensive reading in vocabulary growth, Grabe (2009) states that about 10% of all new vocabulary is learned via reading exposure. The reason why students gain new vocabulary from reading is that they read more English texts or books.

3. Enhanced Students' Reading Motivation

Besides improving students' reading comprehension and vocabulary, extensive reading is also able to motivate students to improve their reading skills. Learning a foreign language won't be successful without motivation. Brown (2007) states that motivation is a star player in the cast of characters assigned to second language learning scenarios around the world. In other words, motivation is an essential factor for students to be able to enhance their reading skills. Moreover, Takase (2009) points out that reading material works as a critical factor to motivate learners to read extensively.

4. Autonomous Learning

As extensive reading is an individual activity, the success of this project depends on students' willingness to read the books or texts. According to Bell (1998), the idea of giving students autonomy to choose the genre of material to read, as well as the pace at which to read, is in itself motivational because it addresses the needs and interests of individual learners. Since there is no restriction in reading the materials, students can adjust the reading sources to their needs. Besides, it also gives benefits for students to build their reading habits easily by choosing their reading materials. Although the teacher gives autonomy in selecting the reading materials, however, the teacher is responsible to monitor students' reading materials and also their progress.

The use of Extensive reading

According to Day and Bamford (2002), there are 10 principles of extensive reading that teachers should comprehend, they are:

1. The reading material is easy

Extensive reading provides easy reading materials to make the students enjoy the reading activity. By implementing easy reading materials, it is expected that students will always read and makes them enjoy the reading.

2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics is available

The advancement of technology makes them easy to access reading materials easily from various resources on the internet.

3. Students choose what they want to read

The reading materials used in extensive reading suits the students' need. They can choose their reading materials by themselves according to their interest. Since it is an independent reading activity, they are free to select their reading genres.

4. Students read as much as possible

Reading often will make students able to open their eyes wider and enlarge their knowledge. By reading the students are also able to know information from all around the world. As it is known, the more students read, the better they will be.

5. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information, and a general understanding

In the reading process, students should feel enjoy absorbing better knowledge. It also will cause students more motivated in reading because they feel that reading activity is an enjoyable activity for them.

6. Reading is its reward

After the students enjoy the reading activity, they will read more to make them become better students. They will always remember that reading is a must for them and it will give a positive impact and it will be beneficial for their self-improvement.

7. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower

In extensive reading, usually students read the text as fast as possible. It will be easy for them to read because they choose the text by themselves.

8. Reading is individual and silent

Extensive reading is an individual project, so in this activity, they must read the text silently. They have to do this activity without any interference from the teacher or their friends.

9. Teachers orient and guide their students

Although teacher does not have intervention in students' activity in extensive reading, they are responsible for managing and controlling students' reading materials and their progress. A teacher, have to filter the students' reading materials.

10. The teacher is a role model for a reader

Before the teacher assign the students to do extensive reading, they have to give example to the students about how to do it. It is expected that by giving a reading example, both teacher and students can improve their reading skills together.

In conducting extensive reading, the teacher should consider those 10 principles above to reach the extensive reading goals. Moreover, this activity can be done inside or outside the classroom to provide various reading atmospheres for the students.

Previous Studies Related to Extensive Reading

Several studies were conducted by many experts related to extensive reading. The result of those studies showed that extensive reading can enhance students' reading ability. Thus, it can be concluded that extensive reading is one of the activities used in teaching reading. The data from several studies are explained below.

The first study is conducted by Ruzin (2019) entitled *Implementing Extensive Reading to Boost Students' Reading Ability*. The purpose is to review some theories and studies on the use of extensive reading in improving students' reading ability. This paper also discusses students' difficulties in reading, reading materials, extensive reading definition, and the implementation of extensive reading.

The second study under the title *Extensive Reading in English as a Foreign Language/English as a Second Language Contexts* carried out by Levy (2016). This article examines the role of extensive reading in the foreign language and second language context. It covers the usefulness of extensive reading in language acquisition, the effectiveness of extensive reading in language acquisition in specific contexts, and sustained silent reading.

The third study is conducted by Liu and Zhang (2018) entitled *The Effects of Extensive Reading on English Vocabulary Learning: A Meta-analysis*. This paper discussed the existence of extensive reading to upgrade students' language proficiency, including reading proficiency, vocabulary mastery, and grammar awareness. This study synthesized the data from 21 empirical studies. The results revealed that: (1) extensive reading has a significant effect on English vocabulary learning; (2) one semester (less than three months) is the most appropriate length of extensive reading instruction for vocabulary learning; (3) Graded Readers, comprehension questions and vocabulary exercise play significant roles as reading materials and education methods in promoting the vocabulary learning of EFL learners.

The fourth is carried out by Ng, Renandya, and Chong (2019) with the title *Extensive Reading: Theory, Research, and Implementation*. The purposes of this study are to discuss the theory and principles of extensive reading, a critical summary of research on extensive reading that has been published over the last five years will be presented, and provide directions for future research which believed could fill critical gaps in this study about extensive reading.

Several previous studies above show that extensive reading has a positive impact on students' reading ability. By implementing extensive reading, it is proven that students can enhance their reading ability, including

reading comprehension, reading fluency, reading habit, etc. It can be concluded that extensive reading is an appropriate activity that can improve students' reading ability.

CONCLUSION

This paper aims to review some previous studies of extensive reading that have been done by many researchers. It has been discussed in this article that extensive reading can boost students' reading comprehension, reading fluency, reading habit, etc. It can be summarized that extensive reading has an impact positively on the reading process for both students and lecturers. From the previous studies, students can broaden their knowledge through extensive reading since they can choose their reading materials. Applying extensive reading, makes students love to read English texts or books and accustomed to their reading habits.

Considering the above elucidation, the writers expected that the lecturer or teacher implement extensive reading to teach reading to their students. The writers expected that extensive reading can assist the lecturer or teacher to create an interesting atmosphere to read, so their students can comprehend the text better.

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