

Students' Effort for Independent Learning Through Voluntary Extensive Reading

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Abstract

This study was aimed at analyzing students' effort for independent learning through voluntary extensive reading in which it was viewed from students' reading motives and materials. This study was designed in the form of qualitative study by involving 30 junior high school students and the data were gained through observation, interview, and survey. The instruments were the researcher, observation sheet, interview guide, and questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed by using qualitative data analysis. The findings revealed that; 1) the English reading materials read by the students are the materials related to the school materials, fiction (story, novel), and news, 2) students have their motives in reading extensively, namely to gain experience and skills in English language, to learn new things, to be confident and to improve ability in using the language. This study suggested that teachers to encourage extensive reading in classroom.

Keywords: *extensive reading, reading motives, reading materials*

Introduction

English has been widely perceived as an international language as it is used world widely as the medium for communication. The era of globalization needs a lingua franca and English has been widely accepted and has become the most popular language to learn as a second or foreign language (Edwards, 2000; Chostelidou, 2011; Hariyanto, 2019). This condition leads English becomes a compulsory subject to be learnt in many countries including Indonesia. Indonesia is one of countries where English has the status as a foreign language and is taught at all levels of schools (Badriyah & Rahmawati, 2020).

Of the four language skills, reading has a significant role towards English mastery as far as the foreign language status is concerned. Students can be expected to acquire a foreign language

through reading from they learn the linguistic and cultural information through the text provided in foreign language (Almendo, 2020). Yunus and Ubaidillah (2021) define reading as a cognitive process of forming new knowledge by negotiating a meaning. Reading is also recognized as a basic skill for comprehending the meaning of a written text and obtaining a lot of information (Day, 2015). It can be seen that reading is an essential skill in the form of active process for comprehending meanings and helps students for improving their language mastery. Since reading is important, EFL teachers are suggested to establish reading into the learning process. It is not an easy task for teachers in emphasizing reading in their classroom, especially during the era of the Covid-19 pandemic with regard to the new learning system. Meinawati et al (2021) state that online learning is selected to prevent the rapid spread of Covid-19. This condition causes many problems particularly in EFL classroom where the students could not get direct supervision and facilitation from their teacher. Consequently, they have a difficulty in understanding the reading text during online learning process (Badriyah & Rahmawati, 2020). This phenomenon leads teachers to be adaptive and attempted other appropriate reading approach that helps students have a better reading comprehension.

Voluntary reading is perceived as a way that assists students in enhancing their reading skills and vocabulary size (Krashen,2003). Voluntary reading can be implemented by applying extensive reading in which it is defined as an approach that engage students to have a pleasure through reading extensively (Day, 2015). Waring, (2019) states that extensive reading is purposed for building students' reading speed, general comprehension, and their fluency towards a reading text as the practice of their reading skills. Extensive reading is beneficial to be applied for teaching reading particularly during online learning considering that extensive reading provides independent learning allowing students to select their reading preferences and materials (Fatimah et al., 2020; Muchtar, 2019).

Based on the preliminary observation at SMP N 1 Selemadeg Timur, this junior high school conducts online English classes, it is found that extensive reading has been implemented for the eighth-grade students. It is applied as a solution in handling students' low reading comprehension during the online learning in Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the implementation of extensive reading is purposed to lead students as independent learners and improve their reading comprehension. The implementation of extensive reading has been proven effective in EFL context in which it is supported by several previous studies. Anindita (2020) conducts a qualitative study which shows that university students have positive perceptions towards extensive reading where they enjoy the English subject through extensive reading without limitation. It is continued by the finding that shows reading skills improvement and higher learning motivations caused by the implementation of extensive reading (Singkum & Chinwonno, 2021). Bui and Macalister (2021) investigate the implementation of online extensive reading toward first year university students which show that the implementation has a significant impact towards students' reading fluency development.

From those previous studies, it can be seen that extensive reading has a positive impact towards students' reading skills particularly in EFL context. On another side, there is no recent study which investigates how extensive reading can lead students to be independent learners

viewed from their reading motives and materials. Therefore, this study is aimed at analysing students' effort for independent EFL learning through extensive reading viewed from their motives and learning materials.

Method

The study employed qualitative research design proposed by Ary et al (2010) in which the implementation of extensive reading was observed. It was conducted in SMP Negeri 1 Selemadeg Timur involving 30 students of the eighth grades. In order to collect the data, four instruments were applied in this study, namely the researcher as the main instrument assisted with observation sheet, interview guide, and questionnaire. In addition, three techniques were used to gather the data, namely 1) observing was used during conducting observation; 2) interviewing was used to ask some questions to the students; and 3) survey was used to know students' responses. Moreover, seven steps were done to collect the data, namely a) doing observation and asking permission to the principal, b) meeting the eighth-grade teachers, c) discussing about the implementation of extensive reading, d) preparing the instruments, e) distributing the instruments, f) analysing the obtained data, and g) finally, triangulating the data. In this study, the data were analysed using Qualitative Data Analysis proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994) covering data reduction, data display, and conclusion and Triangulation proposed by Heale and Forbes (2013) covering Methodological Triangulation and Data Sources Triangulation.

Findings

Teachers implemented voluntary extensive reading by providing a chance for students to have their space to read several reading books or sources in each meeting. Discussion section was provided by the teachers in the learning platform as the facility for checking students' understanding towards the books that they have read. Students were requested to share their reading with other students in the discussion forums. Based on the questionnaire distribution, there were two main results found. First, the findings regarding the students' English reading materials and reading motives that could be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Students' English Reading Materials and Students' Reading Motives

Aspects	Indicators	Percentage
English material for extensive reading	English learning materials	86.7%
	English fictions	13.3%
Motives for extensive reading	Personal needs	27.9%
	Learning needs	73.1%

Based on Table 1, students' English reading materials and reading motives were identified. In terms of reading material, 86.7% consisted of English learning material and 13.3% consisted of English fiction. The motives for extensive reading were categorized into personal dan learning needs. The results show that 73.1% students had motives of learning needs while 27.9% had motives of personal needs.

Extensive Reading with Learning Purpose

The results of close ended questionnaire showed that most of students read the reading materials related to the English learning. It was found that students read the existing learning materials that are easily accessed surround them and relevant to the English learning materials at school. This reading preference reached the percentage of 86.7% where students confessed that they read English materials, such as; dictionary, and reading materials given by teachers. The students read some words and found grammar pattern of English in the dictionary. In addition, they also read dictionary to find out the meaning of the words. It was supported by the statements given in the open-ended questionnaire; “*I read English formulas/pattern in the dictionary*” and “*I read dictionary to know its meaning*”. Students also read English reading related to their school material given by the teacher during teaching and learning process. Most of students stated that they read textbooks given by teachers as learning source; “*I read English reading from textbook*”, “*I usually read textbooks given from school*” and “*I read the textbook given by the teacher*”. The students also read textbook given by the teacher at school. It consisted of English materials covering some different topics for each chapter. Students could get information both close information related to daily activity and academic exercise.

In addition, the result of close-ended questionnaire indicated that 73.1% of students did extensive reading for learning needs. Students decided the English reading materials that they read based on several motives, such as; improving English skills, increasing English knowledge, improving English reading ability, and developing English vocabulary. Improving English skills and knowledge became the most frequent motives stated by students in the open-ended questionnaire, they frequently stated that; “*I want to my English skills can be better*” and “*I want to improve my speaking, writing, and reading skill to be fluent*”. It was added that they wanted to have reading experience for increasing their knowledge for their own purposes; “*I want to increase my knowledge in English because I want to go abroad*” and “*I want to increase my knowledge because I don't understand English*”.

The students read some English readings because they wanted to get better experience in English exposure. The students wanted to have reading experience and collect vocabulary to expand their ability in using English; “*my reason is, I want to quickly be able to understand vocabulary in English correctly and fluently*” From the motives and reading materials read by students, it indicated that students did extensive readings for learning purposes. There was no recent motives that shown whether students were demanded to do reading by the teachers. The open-ended questionnaire and close-ended questionnaire showed that students did reading due to their willingness proved by 27 students who chose “yes” for the indicator which was they decided the reading material that they read based on their wants.

Extensive Reading with Personal Purpose

The close-ended questionnaire results revealed that there were 13.3% students read fiction materials, such as; fairy tales, short story, and English comics. It was proven by the statement written by students in open-ended questionnaire frequently, such as; “*I read fairy tales, short story, and English cartoon*”. It was also added that students read existing reading materials surrounding

which was not relevant to the English learning materials; news, and magazine. It was reflected from the statement; *“I also read news or magazine from internet”*. In addition, students showed that they had personal needs in doing reading activity shown on the percentage of 27.9%. The open-ended questionnaire indicated that students did reading because they had personal reasons such as; English as an international language, learning new things, and improving their confidence. English as an international language became the motives of students’ reading since it was perceived as a requirement to go abroad; *“it is because English is an international language. In this millennial era, at least we are required to master one international language (English) to be able to get along with the international community and keep up with world developments. By getting used to reading English books, we will have additional vocabulary and a better understanding of the language context, I can go abroad”* and *“I read English textbook because I want to be able speak English for going abroad”*

Other results showed that students read because they wanted to learn new things by knowing the recent issue or phenomenon by reading the existing texts around them; magazine and news and they also wanted improve their confidence. It was proven by the statement found in open-ended questionnaire; *“I read news and magazine for knowing the recent issue or condition and learning new things from it”* and *“I want to feel confidence by improving my reading skills through reading several texts”*. From the results, it could be seen that students had their own motives related to personal purpose in conducting extensive reading. From the motives that had been shown in open-ended questionnaire, there was no statement that indicated teachers’ invention.

Discussions

The findings of the present study cover two main discussions, namely; extensive reading with learning purpose and extensive reading with personal purpose viewed from the types of reading material read by students and students’ reading motives. In reading material, students can read material related to their surroundings, school materials, fiction, and news in English. The students are given chance to choose their own reading materials to be read. It is in line with the characteristics of extensive reading as stated by Jacobs (2014) in which it allows students to choose learning materials based on students’ interest. Not only their interest, Mardiana and Hidayat (2019) state that students can choose their own reading material to promote fun and enjoyable learning situation. Students can read materials based on their interest. In addition, Sakai as cited in (Takase, 2009) finds out that in reading material, it can be started with simple story. The pictures of the story can attract students’ attention in illustrating the information. Moreover, Puspitasari (2019) also finds out that students can access story for their reading materials since it suits the students’ level. It makes students enjoy the reading activities. Furthermore considering the use of technology, students can access reading material from internet to get various materials including authentic material for adding students’ knowledge (Rahadhiyanti et al., 2016; Khusniyah, 2021)

Relating to the motives in extensive reading, there are four motives found in this study, namely students’ interest, skills improvement, knowledge, confidence, ability, and vocabulary. The students can read the topic that they are interested in due to their personal reasons such as; English as international language and learning new things, including improve their confidence.

Moreover, they read material extensively in order to develop students' skills and knowledge. It is proven by a study conducted by Mermelstein (2014) and Aida and Widiyati (2020) in which it find out that extensive reading influences significantly students' writing skills. It can be seen the aspects of writing that is better after implementing extensive reading. Furthermore, Do (2017) and Celik (2019) find out that extensive reading can foster vocabulary and grammar. Students can experience the structure of sentences as well as acquire more vocabularies. Syamsuddin (2021) states that extensive reading can increase students' motivation to do reading activities. This study imply the importance of integrating extensive reading in classroom. Teachers are encouraged to apply many kind of reading to raise students' awareness towards the importance of enhancing students' knowledge through reading.

Conclusions and Suggestions

This present study concludes that the English reading materials read by the students are the materials related to the school materials, fiction (story, novel), and news. In addition, students have their motives in reading extensively, namely students' interest (personal reasons), to improve skills, knowledge, confidence, and ability. The extensive reading provides opportunity for the students to explore their insight as well as train their reading skills. Based on the reading materials and reading motives, it indicates that extensive reading is conducting for learning purpose and personal purpose. It is suggested for the teachers to consider the implementation of extensive reading in learning activities. It can enhance student's independent learning. In addition, other researchers are suggested to conduct experimental study to see its effectiveness in the learning activities.

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