

EXPLORING STUDENTS' PURPOSES FOR READING BOOK

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Abstract

Stating a purpose for reading may help shaping the way the students read. It could save time and improve understanding. This qualitative study explored the university students' purpose for reading book. The participants were a class of law faculty students learning English as a general purpose in a state university in Jambi. The main source of data was the document in the form of students' reading report. The document was analyzed using qualitative approach. To clarify the data gained, semi-structured interview was applied. It is revealed that students' purposes for reading book was for content and they use low order thinking verb such as *to know* to realize it. For more comprehensive book reading, it is suggested that the students use different verbs such as *to interpret, to classify, or to explore* for stating their purposes.

Key words: *book reading, comprehension, purposes*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the academic skills needed by university students. In their academic life there are lots of text to be read with understanding such as academic book, journal articles, or novels. Certain skills are needed to choose an appropriate book to read among many sources. One of them is that students should have purpose in mind. The purpose will guide them in getting what book to be read, where to get the book, and how it will be read. Therefore, having or stating a purpose in reading help readers to accomplish what they read effectively (Linderholm, 2006). Without a purpose reader can easily lose the train of thought and get to the end of reading without ever knowing what they have read.

Kamhieh (2018) wrote that book reading is no longer attracted university students. Braguglia in Wijayanti (2019) reported that college students are not strong readers and they do not like to read. The students prefer reading short caption in Instagram or other social media applications than reading a long text such as an academic book or novel.

Information about book reading purpose would be useful for both the lecturer and the students. For lecturer, they can choose suitable strategies in teaching the student, and for the students themselves, having purpose before reading will enhance the way they read in a more positive manner. The ability to read well is then an inarguably indispensable skill for university students.

Learner Autonomy: Students' choice in reading

Scott, Furnell, Murphy, and Goulder R (2015) argued that promoting learner autonomy and creativity is part of the solution to develop higher order thinking skill. An example of an attempt to introduce learner to autonomous learning was the study of Iimuro and Berger in 2010. They let the first-year English students to take a degree of control over their own learning. Student can develop

their own English study goals and plan, work toward their own goal and plans, use time outside class, and find study materials suited to their own need. The usual assumption being that an autonomous learner will be a “good learner” and that learning is best achieved if students play an active role in the process (Holec 1987 and Rubin 1987 in Alvarez, 2012)

Abundant of choices of authentic reading sources are provided online or offline such as online news or printed advertisements along the road. This might help increase students’ autonomy to be independent readers. However, spending uninterrupted chunks of time out of their days to read book-length material and having the attentive mind-set that such reading requires more and more elusive for students. Kamhieh (2018) urged that lecturer have an obligation to ensure their students reading books of their own choice.

Nowadays university students are so captivated by social media and other online attractions. They become parts of the students’ academic and leisure times. They give the students autonomy to choose to do or to read anything they wish, literary or non-literary text, short caption or longer text.

Challenging book is important. The students’ self-efficacy will be improved by providing students with choices to facilitate perceived autonomy to be successful (Neugebauer in Orrico, 2017). It will increase their confidence in personal skills, which leads to increased motivation to pick up a newer (possibly harder) book and read.

Reading Strategy: Setting a Purpose for Reading

Readers use strategies in reading to read effectively. Nunan (1999) as cited by Medina (2012) listed some strategies in reading.

STRATEGY	COMMENT
Having a purpose	Knowing what you want to gain from the text
Previewing	Making a quick survey of the text, identifying the topic, main idea
Skimming	Getting the author’s point of view
Scanning	Looking for specific details
Predicting	Anticipating what is coming next
Inferring	Getting the ideas that are not explicit
Cohesive devices	Identifying functions of conjunctions
Guessing word meaning	Using context, word structure, cognates
Background knowledge	Using what one already knows and applying it to new ideas in the text

Table 1: Some reading strategies (Nunan, 1999 in Medina 2012)

The strategies should be tailored to suit the reader with the reading purposes. An active reader analyzes the purpose and adjust their reading speed. By setting a purpose for reading readers know what they want to gain from their readings. It helps the readers to understand the value of tapping into their prior knowledge. It shapes the way they read.

Reading Skills and Law Students

Among the language skills, reading is a skill that law students significantly needed. Why? Because in their academic life and later in their professional life reading is their indispensable part. For examples, they need to read references for their research report. Students are often expected to interpret or amend long commercial contracts drafted in English. They receive emails or messages written in English. Nievelstein (2009) notes that Legal professionals look up rules, annotations, or court judgments, while reasoning about cases. They rely heavily on external information sources, such as law books and databases. Therefore, reading is crucial ability for students to have.

Furthermore, using those sources could be a daunting task when students are lack of reading skill. Finding suitable information to apply to a case is difficult when knowledge of the organization of the sources has not been mastered. Critical reading is one of the skills needed in the 21st century law students. Interpreting the information found in the source and to apply it to the case need correct conceptual and ontological knowledge (Sullivan et al., 2007).

METHOD

This study employed descriptive qualitative research design in exploring the students book reading purposes. The participants were a class of law faculty students in a state university in Jambi who took *Bahasa Inggris* subject. One of the authors was the lecturer of the subject.

There were two ways in collecting the data of this study. The first way was student written statement in the form of reading report. In this study reading report was a strategy used by lecturer to make sure that the students read. The students had to write a reading report of whatever book they wish to read. This reading report consisted of book identification, the source of it, the main idea of the book, and the important point the students got. The second one was an oral semi-structured interview with the students while doing the teaching learning process.

The data were analyzed in the following steps:

1. Written statements were categorized to the students' choice of book and their purposes for reading.
2. The choice was divided into sources and forms, while the purposes were grouped based on the verb the student used to state their purpose.
3. Oral semi-structure interview was used to clarify the data gotten from the written statement.
4. The data were described verbally, and the conclusion was drawn from the description.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Two main groups of findings are obtained. The first group is about students' choice of the book: the source of the book, whether online or printed book and the forms, whether literary or non-literary book. The second is about the students' purposes for reading the book.

Online source is the main source for the students to obtain books to read. It means that most students read digital books than printed ones. Digital reading is the students' favorite because it deals with the ease of access. The next reading source is borrowing printed book from faculty library, and there is a slight number of students who borrow printed books from family or relation. The latter group of students are those who do not have access to internet mainly due to financial problem. However, this group argues that by reading the hard copy version, they can have more interaction with the book such as circling important point or drawing sign question when they

do not understand the book content. Thus, from the data, information about students' reading habit can be drawn.

There were 51 students involved in the study. They were given autonomy to read individually or collaboratively in pairs or group. Two students read individually two different books. Three students work collaboratively and read one similar book. The rest of them work in pairs. Because of that, there were possibility of accessing and reading the same book.

The following table list the example of the book title and the students' purpose of reading it.

No	Book title	Students reading purpose
1	Law of Success	To be success in the world of law
2	Wheaton's element of international law	To deepen legal science again about international law
3	An Introduction to Indonesia Constitutional law	We can know and understand about constitutional law in Indonesia
4	Commercial Law	To understand the legal standing of the commercial law
5	International law aspects of Countering Terrorism	Strengthening the legal against terrorism -make me more deeply involved in law
6	Basic of Administrative Law	To know about history of admin laws, theories, agency enabling statute and all about constitution and admin law
7	The Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Perspective of national and International Laws	To increase knowledge about the protection of culture in the view of national and international law to better understand conflicts like what law gives to the culture
8	The Progressive Prosecutor's Handbook	To see the performance of a prosecutor How to take responsibility for a position as a prosecutor To know the first step to decide a case as a prosecutor
9	The Progressive Prosecutor's Handbook	We can figure out how the risk of punish an innocent man when he became a prosecutor. To determine the responsibility of an attorney
10	Guide to family law	Maybe we can understand and know the book in general and apply it in life. Applying cooperation because it is made group of two people. As a life lesson
10	Letters to a law student	To know how to be a law student by teaching how to read law books, how to find difficulties in reading, and how to practice law
11	The law and the word	I choose and read this book to add insight and

		knowledge and can extend thought
12	Code of civil procedure	My goal was to read the code of civil procedure because I wanted to study civil law courses. I have just entered the world of law that does not know much about the laws of law.
13	English for Specific Purposes: Law	This book was written with the aim of meeting the needs of English textbooks that refer to a basic science outside the field of English language and literature
14	Allatra: Cry of an Angel Clad in Clothes	To learn the views of law from other countries

Table 2: Law students' reading purpose

Almost all students choose law book to read, both online and printed. The title of the book is about kinds of law such as *Law of success*, *Law and Politics*, *Administrative Law*, *Guide to Family Law*, *Criminal Justice in America*, *Commercial Law*, etc. Based on the title of the book they chose, the possible key word the students used for googling it was the word 'law book'. This is affected by their knowledge of how to access online source. They did not try to use different general key word.

There were three books which has no law word in its title. They were chosen by 'distinguished' student. The student who wanted to be a prosecutor someday in the future chose *The Progressive Prosecutor's Handbook* to read. The student who are interested in literary work chose a literary book. Their choices were affected by their interest and their future dream. Thus, there are three reasons identified that account for students' book choice.

Two students chose literary book to read. These two students read the same book. The book was entitled 'Cry of an Angel Clad in Clothes' written by Anastasia Novykh. The students stated that their purpose to read this book is to learn views of law from other countries. They further add that the book is about crime in Russia. Apparently, the book was not about crime. Even it was not a law book. It was a philosophical literary book. Unfortunately, both students wrote the same purpose, the same main idea, and the same points of interest. In fact, a student copied other students' work. The student was not autonomous in making sense of what he read. Moreover, this is not the purpose of doing collaborative activities for student. By having collaborative reading the students were intended to increase their motivation to read and to improve their reading proficiency. The fact that when collaborating on group assignments, some peers contributed most, while others worked less, and some did not even put in effort when completing their own task could be described by the research finding of Le, Janssen, and Wubbels (2017). They had identified in their study that there were four common obstacles in collaborative activities. They were students' lack of collaborative skills, free-riding, competence status, and friendship.

Stating a purpose in reading help readers to accomplish what they read effectively. Without a purpose reader can easily lose the train of thought and get to the end of reading without ever knowing what they have read. The purposes for reading the book stated by the law students are varied: for one or more purposes. Most students stated their purposes for content and not for language. However, there was a student who did not write her purpose for reading. Instead, she copied the purpose of the author in writing the book.

A student with one purpose who chose to read a book entitled 'Law of Success' wrote that his reading purpose is 'to be success in the world of law'. He stated that '*the book teaches us to be able*

to be success in the world of law'. He added that it could *'bring us be successful, could be a legal expert, could be people who are assertive in making choice.'* This was a highly general purpose in reading a book. To be success in the world of law were affected by several factors, not only by reading the one book. It would be useful for him to set a more specific purpose like *'to define success according to the author of the book.'*

Other student with more than one reading purposes chose a book entitled Law and Politics to read. The book was about the interdisciplinary connections of the study of law and politics. She said, *"I read this book because I want to know about law and politics, deepen politics and law, what is in politics, and whether the law with politics has a relationship and that is what makes me read books"*. She stated both the reason and the purpose to read the book. Her curiosity is the reason. The verb she used to state the purpose is *'to know'*. The verb *'to know'* show that the student read for general ideas. This will lead her only to glance the book for a few ideas related to the purpose she stated. It will be different if she used the verb *'to understand'* or *'to analyze'*. The way a reader read will be affected by the purpose he has in mind.

The students reading purposes were not only about the book content, but also about task they are going to accomplish. One student wrote his purposes as follows: to complete the work of the lecturer, to get the score for this week learning discussion, to find out what is in the book. The way he stated his purpose show points he got with reading. He did the work given by the lecturer, he got score for what he did, he was involved in the classroom discussion, and he got ideas from the book. It was shown by his statement: The interesting thing is that this book discusses the trial and Indonesia takes important step in this trial, discussing mass murder and other crimes. This student chose a printed book entitled *'Final report on the international people tribunal on crimes against humanity in Indonesia 1965'*. He got the book in the library of law faculty.

Two students who chose the same online book *'The Progressive Prosecutor's Handbook'* but with quite different purposes and different interesting points. Student A stated that her purposes are: 1) to see the performance of a prosecutor, 2) How to take responsibility for a position as a prosecutor, 3) to know the first step to decide a case as a prosecutor. The interesting points that she got from the book was: *I think the interesting point in this book have a vision and mission. The vision is a modern and professional prosecutor service that support national goals and aspirations of peace and good governance. And the mission is to deliver a fair and independent prosecution service committed to the rule of law.* While student B stated her purpose in slightly different way. They were: 1) We can figure out how the risk of punish an innocent man when he became a prosecutor, 2) To determine the responsibility of an attorney. She found a paragraph in the book interesting. She quoted it as follow: *'imagine you are defeated an incumbent you successfully argued was too tied to the past- too much a champion of harsh, racially disproportionate punishment, too heedless of the risk of convicting innocent people, too protective of the police, too lackadaisical in supervising his or her own staff.'* However, both student A and student B stated the same main idea. Both wrote that the book tells how the progress of being a prosecutor and how government views the prosecutor. This data informed that both students worked collaboratively in pairs.

In the discussion about the book, the students' choice, and their purposes in reading, the facts that being free to choose book can assist law students to increase their autonomy in study namely it enables students to comprehend general ideas and obtain more useful ideas from their reading. Working in pairs helped them to share their ideas. However, not every student was eagerly involved in reading the book. *"Kami ndaksukobacobuku, Buk(We do not like book reading, Mom).* Some of

them honestly said that they just copied their friends' reading purpose without understanding the ideas and the interesting points of the book.

CONCLUSION

Appropriate reading strategies are needed by law faculty students to read various law books, especially the strategy that involve the students to read eagerly. Students self-chosen book and having a purpose in mind are the example of the strategies. The educators should help the students to read efficiently and effectively. Effective instructional practices and interesting book activities are needed.

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