

## THE ROLE STUDENTS' LOCUS OF CONTROL TOWARD READING SKILL IN GENERAL ENGLISH COURSE

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### *Abstract*

*The main objective of the research is to explain about the role of students' locus of control toward reading skill in general english course. The descriptive quantitative method was employed in this research. The population of the research was the students of first semester secretary of Polytechnic Pajajaran ICB Bandung. To collect the data, the writer used questionnaire to find out the students' locus of control and reading test to know whether the final test score of the students have a significant progress or not. The students with high locus of control will be encouraged if the teacher gives a chance to them to involve actively in teaching learning process. Their control, of course, influences their achievement, especially in achieving reading skill. On the other hand, students who have low locus of control believe that they have little control or power to affect personal outcomes. They usually do not have any interest in joining the learning process. It can be seen that students who have high locus of control were encouraged to be actively and motivately in learning process. Based on the reserach finding, it can be conclude that students' locus of control have role in teaching learning process. Therefore, it is suggested that: (1) it is better to know students' locus of control to improve student's reading skill; (2) this result of the study can be used as a beginning step to conduct a further research.*

*Key words: high locus of control, low locus of control, reading skill, general english*

### **Abstrak**

Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan tentang peran *locus of control* siswa terhadap keterampilan membaca dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris. Metode kuantitatif deskriptif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Populasi penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa jurusan sekretaris semester 1 Politeknik Pajajaran ICB Bandung. Untuk mengumpulkan data, penulis menggunakan kuesioner untuk mengetahui *locus of control* siswa dan tes membaca untuk mengetahui apakah nilai tes akhir siswa mengalami kemajuan yang signifikan atau tidak. Siswa dengan *locus of control* yang tinggi akan terdorong jika guru memberikan kesempatan kepada mereka untuk terlibat secara aktif dalam proses belajar mengajar. Penguasaan mereka tentu saja mempengaruhi pencapaian mereka, terutama dalam pencapaian keterampilan membaca. Di sisi lain, siswa yang memiliki *locus of control* rendah percaya bahwa mereka memiliki sedikit kendali atau kekuatan untuk mempengaruhi hasil pribadi. Mereka biasanya tidak memiliki minat untuk mengikuti proses pembelajaran. Terlihat bahwa siswa yang memiliki *locus of control* tinggi terdorong untuk aktif dan termotivasi dalam proses pembelajaran. Berdasarkan temuan penelitian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa *locus of control* siswa berperan dalam proses belajar mengajar. Oleh karena itu, disarankan agar: (1) lebih baik mengetahui *locus of control* siswa untuk meningkatkan keterampilan membaca siswa; (2) hasil penelitian ini dapat digunakan sebagai langkah awal untuk melakukan penelitian selanjutnya.

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## INTRODUCTION

The role of the teacher in the class determines the success of student learning. Understanding and knowing the characteristic of students is one form of teacher's attention to students. One of psychological characteristics possessed by students that must be understood by teacher is locus of control. The term locus of control refers to how individuals tend to explain their successes and failure. Some students believe that achievement in learning is not under their personal control but rather is under the control of powerful others. According to Baron (2008:8) locus of control refers to the way people see themselves in control of the events that happen to them, and the power they have to change them. The concept categorizes individuals into one of two groups: those who believe that good things happen to them because they work hard (internal locus of control) and those who believe that what happens to them is the product of luck or destiny (external locus of control) (Baron, 2008: 8)

There are five skills in general English course one of them is reading skill. William (1996: 2) who defines reading as a process whereby one looks and understands what has been written. Nuttal (1996: 4-7) defines reading as a way to get meaning (message) from a text. It means that reading is process of obtaining meaning from written text. The aim reading skill in general English course is students are able to understand vocabulary, deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items, identifying main points and identifying pronouns in the text.

As a lecturer of English course in Polytechnic Pajajaran ICB Bandung, the writer

knows that students' reading skill is low. Most students are still afraid and assume that reading is difficult especially in mastering new vocabulary. They depend on the teacher, lack of language practice, and some students believe that their success happens because they work hard (internal locus of control) while some of them believe that their failure is because of luck or destiny (external locus of control). Therefore, the writer proposes that locus of control is one of factors that may affect the students in teaching and learning process in the class.

## RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Reading

Reading is about understanding written texts. It is a complex activity that involves both perception and thought. Reading consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension. Word recognition refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one's spoken language. Grabe and Stoller (2002: 9-10) state that reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately. Further, Urganhart (1998: 15) states that reading involves processing language message. He considers reading as the language activity involving at the same time or other all the cognitive processing related to language performance. It means that reading reflects the ideas that reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning. William (1996: 2) defines reading as a process whereby one looks and understands what has been written. Nuttal (1996: 4-7) states that reading as a way to get meaning (message) from a text. It means that reading is process of obtaining meaning from written text. Other

definition comes from Adams (1990: 74) reading is acquisition of the multiple acts, skills, and knowledge that enable individuals to comprehend the meaning of text. Grellet (1998: 7) defines reading as a constant process of guessing, and what one brings to the text is more important than one finds it. It is not only an activity involving printed material as the media in order to process and gain information but also the comprehending process. Based on the definition above, it can be concluded that reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning. Readers typically make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand written text. Further, Aebersold and Field (1997: 15) state: In general sense, reading is what happens when people look at a text and assign meaning to the written symbols in that text. The text and the reader are the two physical entities necessary for the reading process to begin. It is, however, the interaction between the text and the reader that constitutes actual reading. Granted, the meaning the reader gets from the text may not be exactly the same as the meaning the writer of the text wished to convey.

It can be inferred that reading is not only involving the text and the reader as the physical entities required in the reading process but also the interaction between them which happens when the reader tries to look for meaning of the text. Meanwhile, strategy of reading is necessary in process reading to understand what they are reading to their own knowledge and to other parts of the text. Richard (2002: 289) states the aim of reading strategies as follows:

- (1) Strategies help to improve reading comprehension as well as efficiency in reading.
- (2) Using strategies, students will be reading in the way that expert readers do.
- (3) Strategy help readers to process the text actively, to monitor their comprehension, and to connect what they are reading to their own knowledge and to other parts of the text.

In other words, it can be concluded that strategies of reading help students to improve their performance on test of comprehension and to build framework for connecting words to get main idea in a text.

## 2. Locus of Control

Locus of control refers to the way people see themselves in control of the events that happen to them, and the power they have to change them (Baron, 2008: 8). Another definition is proposed by Good & Brophy (1990: 380) who state that locus of control refers to how individuals tend to explain their successes and failures. The same ideas proposed by O'Brien (1986: 52) who states that locus of control is a generalized expectancy about the extent to which reinforcements are under internal or external control. Based on the definitions above, it can be concluded that locus of control is psychological concept that identifies an individual's beliefs about the degree of personal control that can be exercised over his or her environment to explain his or her successes and failures.

There are two types of students' locus of control as follows:

### 1) Internal Locus of Control

Rotter in Grimes (2004: 131) states that internal locus of control individuals believe that "reinforcements are contingent upon their own behavior, capacities, or attributes. According to Grimes, et al. (2004: 130) students with an internal locus of control readily assume self-responsibility for their own

performance and are more active learners who do not rely on others to determine the outcome of their course experience. Meanwhile, O'Brien (1986: 52) finds people who have internal locus of control believe that reinforcements are determined largely by personal effort, ability, and initiative. In other words, students who have internal locus of control believe that their successes or failures result from their own behaviors and they tend to attack stressful situations with problem-solving strategies.

2) External Locus of Control

Grimes, et al. (2004: 130) state that students with an external locus of control maintain a passive attitude toward their grades, assigning responsibility for their performance to others, such as the instructor, rather than accepting the responsibility for themselves. According to Rotter in Grimes (2004: 131) external locus of control individuals believe that "reinforcements are not under their personal control but rather are under the control of powerful others, luck, chance, fate, etc." Another definition is proposed by Cassidy and Eachus in Grimes (2004: 131) that external locus of control was associated with apathetic learning approaches. Students who have external locus of control respond to stress emotionally or attempt to remove themselves from the situation.

In other words, students who have external locus of control believe that their successes or failures are determined largely by other people, luck and fate. They believe that the outcomes are independent of their own behavior and attribute outcomes to chance, social structures, fate or powerful other people.

**METODE PENELITIAN**

The research was conducted at Ppolytechnic Pajajaran ICB Bandung located

at Surapati Core. The descriptive quantitative method was employed in this research. The population of the research was the students of first semester of first semester secretary of Polytechnic Pajajaran ICB Bandung The samples of the research were secretary A which consists of twenty seven students and secretary B which consist of twenty seven students.

O'Brien (1986: 52) defines that locus of control is a generalized expectancy about the extent to which reinforcements are under internal or external control. People who have internal locus of control believe that reinforcements are determined largely by personal effort, ability, and initiative.

Meanwhile, external locus of control individuals believe that reinforcements are not under their personal control but rather are under the control of powerful others, luck, chance, fate (Rotter in Grimes, 2004: 131). Based on the definition above, to collect the data the writer used questionnaire to find out the students' locus of control score and reading test to know the score of the reading.

The questionnare and reading test was distributed to twenty seven students of class A and B. There were 25 items were asked in the questionnaire and 50 items were asked in reading test.

**FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

**Table1.1 Descriptive Statistic Locus of Control (LoC) and Reading Skill**

Reading LoC	N	Range Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean
	High Locus of Control	27	16	67	83
Low Locus of Control	27	20	63	83	69.05



**Table 2.1 Students' Locus of Control (LoC) and Reading Skill score**

No		LoC	Reading Skill
1	Student A	51	63
2	Student B	54	66
3	Student C	60	71
4	Student D	58	74
5	Student E	56	63
6	Student F	60	74
7	Student G	70	81
8	Student H	66	83
9	Student I	55	65
10	Student J	58	77
11	Student K	60	73
12	Student L	54	68
13	Student M	70	70
14	Student N	72	78
15	Student O	55	66
16	Student P	66	79
17	Student Q	55	69
18	Student R	52	64
19	Student S	74	80
20	Student T	72	77
21	Student U	68	68
22	Student V	72	72
23	Student W	65	65
24	Student X	78	78
25	Student Y	71	71
26	Student Z	76	76
27	Student 1	66	66
28	Student 2	67	67

29	Student 3	80	80
30	Student 4	75	75
31	Student 5	64	64
32	Student 6	81	81
33	Student 7	72	72
34	Student 8	67	67
35	Student 9	82	82
36	Student 10	70	70
37	Student 11	83	83
38	Student 12	76	76
39	Student 13	67	67
40	Student 14	64	64
41	Student 15	58	71
42	Student 16	60	74
43	Student 17	54	63
44	Student 18	70	74
45	Student 19	72	81
46	Student 20	55	83
47	Student 21	66	65
48	Student 22	58	77
49	Student 23	52	73
50	Student 24	74	68
51	Student 25	72	70
52	Student 26	65	78
53	Student 27	72	66
54	Student 28	70	79

Based on the descriptive analysis of the data shows that the mean of reading skill score is 76.40 for students who have high locus of control and 67.85 for students who have low locus of control. The highest and the lowest score of students who have high locus of control is 78 and 60. The range of reading skill score of students having high locus of control is 12. Meanwhile, The highest and the lowest score of students who have low locus of control is 59 and 51 . The range of reading skill score of students having low locus of control is 7. It can be seen that the students having high

locus of control have higher reading skill than the students having low locus of control.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, It can be concluded that the students having high locus of control have higher reading skill than the students having low locus of control. Students who have high locus of control will comprehend the material easier than the students having low locus of control. They believe that their successes or failures are determined by themselves. Therefore, teachers ought to consider that locus of control is one of factors that affect the students reading skill in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, teachers should always encourage students to get involved actively in a teaching learning process, especially for students having low locus of control who tend to be passively engaged in the English class. Last, hopefully this result of the study can be used as a beginning step to conduct a further research.

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