

A STUDY OF EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS EXTENSIVE READING ACTIVITY AT UNIVERSITAS ISLAM MALANG

Bella Rianita Sari

(Mahasiswa Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP UNISMA)

ABSTRAK

Extensive reading is an approach to teaching and learning a foreign language by reading texts or books which are selected personally by the students. This study aimed to investigate and describe the EFL students' perceptions towards extensive reading activity at the Universitas Islam Malang. The design of this research is descriptive qualitative research and the subjects are 12 students from the 8th semester of the English Department at Universitas Islam Malang from the 2018 academic year. The researcher used an online interview as the instrument to collecting the data from the participant. The findings of this study showed the students' perceptions towards extensive reading activity were positive. Besides, the participants reviewed the benefit of extensive reading activity, which could improve their English language proficiency, develop imagination, increase English skills, general knowledge, and reading interest.

Key words: EFL Students, Students' Perception, Extensive Reading.

INTRODUCTION

Reading ability is a basic foundation in academic reading or writing that every student must have. Grabe and Stoller as quoted by Demiroz (2010) stated that reading is one of the inevitable mediums for independent learning, whether the goal is performing better on academic tasks, learning more about the subject matter, or improving language abilities. Furthermore, the objective of the reading activity is to help readers understand what they read.

In Indonesia, there is still a significant lack of reading enthusiasm among EFL students. As a consequence, it may limit their learning and comprehension of the material. Schleicher (2019) found that Indonesian EFL students' reading interest was on level 1, indicating that they had a low level. In reality, students must be motivated to read to succeed.

Reading has been classified into two types: intensive and extensive. According to Brown (2007), there are two types of reading performance: extensive reading and intensive reading. Intensive reading may be defined as the weekly exercise of exceptional reading

abilities and intensive linguistic analysis of literature, including reading journals. Extensive reading, on the other hand, can be defined as reading a large amount of text and being happy to explore reading content, where reading confidence and fluency are prioritized, such as reading a novel for enjoyment to gain information. Nuttall (2005) stated that extensive reading is the easiest and most effective way to increase students' skills and claimed that it is easier to teach people to read better if they are learning in a favorable condition.

The principles of extensive reading for EFL students has been compiled by Day & Bamford (2002) as follows:

1. The reading material is easy
2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be available.
3. Learners choose what they want to read
4. Learners read as much as possible.
5. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and a general understanding
6. Reading is its own reward
7. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower
8. Reading is individual and silent
9. Teachers orient and guide their students
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader

Based on the ten principles above, it could be concluded that extensive reading is an activity that will not depress the students. It is line with the definition of extensive reading as an approach to teaching and learning a foreign language by reading texts or books which are selected personally by the students (Day & Bamford, 1998). Moreover, extensive reading assists students to deal with all of the problems in the reading activity.

There are several studies conducted by researchers related to this article. The studies by Lien (2010) focused solely on self-selected resources by students who intended to undertake the lengthy reading activity, Anindhita (2020) who had done the research entitled "*Efl students' perception towards extensive reading practices in higher education level*" with 10 students at Universitas Negeri Surabaya, and also Lindawati (2021) entitled "*Students' perceptions towards extensive reading in EFL contexts*" but did not discuss it in more depth, which was only explained in general terms about what are the students' perceptions toward the use of extensive reading in EFL Context.

According to those previous studies, there is still a lack of information on students' perceptions of the benefits of the implementation of extensive reading activity. Besides, because everyone can give a different perception, so the researcher conducted research in English Department at the Universitas Islam Malang. With a lack of motivation to read and difficulties learning English, the researcher conducts a study about a study of EFL students' perception towards extensive reading activity at Universitas Islam Malang to know how their perception and how they perceive on the benefit of extensive reading activity.

Related to the background of the problems which already mentioned above, this study has two research problems as follows:

1. What are EFL students of Universitas Islam Malang perceptions towards the implementation of extensive reading activity?
2. How do EFL students of Universitas Islam Malang perceive the benefit of extensive reading activity?

METHOD

In this study, the researcher used descriptive qualitative as a research methodology. The descriptive qualitative technique is chosen because it allows for a more in-depth comprehension of the student's perceptions. According to Hancock et al (2007), descriptive qualitative focuses on the report of experience and view on the data which cannot be adequately expressed numerically. The researcher conducted a semi-structured interviews with 12 students of D, E, and F classes to get the answer of their perception towards extensive reading activity.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Data were collected from 12 students consist of 10 females and 2 males that had a good academic scores in an extensive reading activity in the second semester. The data were collected from the students' answered on online interview and the results are shown in the following table.

Table 4.1 Summary of Transcribed Interview

No.	Participants	Optimize	To Upgrade	obstacles	Benefit
1	NRL	doing it regularly	choosing different levels of language	lack of language proficiency	increasing English skills, general knowledge, reading speed, and reading fluency

2	RR	doing it regularly	choosing different levels of language	keeping the mood	upgrading speaking skills, increasing vocabulary, upgrading grammar
3	DN	choosing familiar topic	choosing different levels of language	lack of language proficiency	increasing reading interest
4	RNY	doing it regularly	setting a goal	keeping the mood	increasing English skills (speaking) and general knowledge
5	IK	doing it regularly	choosing different levels of language	-	increasing language proficiency (vocabulary and grammar skills)
6	LV	doing it regularly	choosing different levels of language	keeping the mood	increasing vocabulary and reading & writing skills
7	ILM	choosing familiar topic	stuck	lack of language proficiency	Increasing vocabulary and developing English skills (writing)
8	NZR	doing it regularly	choosing different levels of language	lack of language proficiency	Increasing reading fluency and getting enjoyment in reading
9	ZKR	doing it regularly	choosing different levels of language	lack of language proficiency	grow the imagination
10	DZ	doing it regularly	choosing different levels of language	lack of language proficiency	getting enjoyment in reading and increasing general knowledge
11	NS	choosing familiar topic	stuck	lack of language proficiency	getting enjoyment in reading
12	SNA	choosing familiar topic	choosing different levels of language	lack of language proficiency and keeping the mood	increasing general knowledge

1. What are EFL students of Universitas Islam Malang perceptions towards the implementation of extensive reading activity?

According to EFL students answered in the interview, most of them stated that the way they optimize their reading effort is by doing the activity regularly. Reading will therefore become a habit for EFL students if it is practiced as the primary course of their learning activity. According to Iftanti (2015), good reading habits for EFL students refer to the act of reading various types of English reading materials on a regular and purposeful basis, which has become a daily activity for EFL students.

The majority of participants answered news, short stories, and novels as the reading material they chose. Like the sixth participant who uses novels to develop his imagination, the eighth participant uses the news to upgrade his reading material to a higher level, and the eleventh participant uses short stories to get pleasure. According to Ferrer & Staley (2016) and Day and Bamford (2000), it does not matter what type of book the students are reading as long as they enjoy it, it implies they are already performing their extensive reading activities.

Furthermore, the majority of participants mentioned the difficulties in doing the extensive reading activity are difficult to understand the content of the reading material because of the lack of language proficiency. The most dominant aspect is vocabulary and grammar. Students must have strong language skills in terms of vocabulary and grammatical expertise. For students who like reading, a lack of basic language skills might be a barrier. According to Waring et al. (2006), a student who has a large vocabulary, good grammar, and a thorough knowledge of the language will have no difficulty reading a large amount of literature. This means that students must expand their vocabulary and gain more grammatical understanding.

2. How do EFL students of Universitas Islam Malang perceive the benefit of extensive reading activity?

As stated by the participants, extensive reading gives some benefits such as increasing English language proficiency. They stated that from the extensive reading activity they got a lot of new vocabulary because they read different reading materials which have many pages containing unexpected vocabulary. According to Renandya and Jacobs (2001), extensive reading assists in the development of general vocabulary, specific vocabulary, and understanding of the target language.

In addition, they also said that extensive reading increased their grammar. This is based on the grammar that they often read, providing knowledge about grammar indirectly.

According to Mason (2004) the result of his study confirmed that extensive reading could expand vocabulary and grammar.

Based on the unfamiliar vocabulary they encounter in the reading material, they can speak using richer vocabulary. Jain (2013), in her study, mentioned that by keep practicing and performing the words, they would improve their speaking skill. The seventh participant mentioned that extensive reading gives her benefit in her English skills. In her writing skill, she might be able to know how to write creative writing even though it is only a little and gets some writing references. According to Park (2016), extensive reading can help students improve their writing sub-skills such as content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. She also gained new vocabulary from the stories she read, which she could employ in her writing.

Furthermore, extensive reading gives EFL students general knowledge that they got from the selected reading material. As the fourth, seventh, and twelve participants mentioned, reading material that they choose such as novels (fiction), history books, news, etc, give them new information whether about moral values or daily information around the world. This finding is consistent with the findings of Day and Bamford (2002) who found that the aim of reading is typically connected to enjoyment, information, and general understanding.

Related the next student answered for benefit of extensive reading is increasing reading interest. According to Farrés C. A. (2021), students who participated in the extensive reading sessions were more motivated to read, both in school and in their own time, than students who did not participate in extensive reading practices, since they could grasp the texts, work independently, and gain both English and information from the books. Some students said that they choose the reading material because they are interested in it. A novel for example, from a novel they get enjoyment because of the plot or the story itself that makes students happy reading it. The curiosity itself gives the addiction to reading more and more.

McLean & Rouault (2017) argued that extensive reading could construct reading fluency, support vocabulary knowledge, increase students' motivation to read and help to sharpen the use of reading strategy. It is in line with the eight participants who said that extensive reading activity helps him to increase his reading skill. A diverse choice of reading resources, such as books of various genres, magazines, and newspapers, should be offered to encourage student reading enjoyment.

The last benefit from the implementation of extensive reading is growing imagination. As the ninth participant said that the reading material he chose made him imagine the story. While reading the reading material, he will imagine the plot and the action in his mind.

According to Tanaka and Stapleton et al. (2007), reading large amounts has resulted in greater improvement in reading comprehension such as developing imagination.

CONCLUSION

The first findings of this study showed the students' perceptions towards extensive reading activity were positive. Most of the students mentioned that doing the extensive reading activity regularly is the way they optimize their reading effort, choosing different levels of language as a way to upgrade reading material. They also mentioned the problems they faced while doing the activity because of a lack of language proficiency.

Furthermore, the second finding showed that the participants reviewed the benefit of extensive reading activity, which could improve their English language proficiency and develop imagination. Furthermore, the benefit they mentioned is increased English skills, general knowledge, and reading interest. After all, they said that through an extensive reading activity they could find an interesting way to learn English.

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Advisor 1,

Diah Retno Widowati, S.Pd., M.Pd

NPP. 151201199032231