



DEVELOPING EXTENSIVE READING STRATEGIES: A Case Study of Ten Indonesian EFL Learners

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Abstract

This study investigates how extensive reading strategies affect tertiary level EFL students' English reading attitudes, reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. A case study of ten Indonesian EFL learners at STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor Teacher Training Institute who followed an extensive reading program for 12 weeks is presented. Students' attitudes to the extensive reading strategies implemented were collected using qualitative data using documentation and interviews. Factors affecting motivation to read, such as time management, interest level and ease of reading material will be discussed. The study showed that the proficiency level of Indonesian EFL students in extensive reading is particularly affected by time management and the appropriateness of the level of reading materials. Students responded positively to extensive reading for a variety of reasons and extensive reading can motivate them to read more widely in English. The findings support Day and Bamford's (2002) ten principles for extensive reading.

Keyword: *Developing, Extensive reading strategies, EFL, Learners of ten Indonesian*

Introduction

Reading is one of the four skills that should be learned by Indonesian EFL students at university. In fact, understanding texts in English is difficult for EFL students. However, reading in English is critical since many English materials are necessary to tailor students' ability in comprehending the text. In addition, EFL students are required to read English resources because they need information from articles, journals, books, newspapers, and online sources to acquire knowledge whether for academic or non-academic purposes. According to

Lyutaya (2011), extensive reading motivates learners to read a large number of texts on a wide range of topics. They select the reading material based on its relevance to their interests, knowledge, and experience.

It is undeniable that extensive reading is very critical for both for ESL and EFL students. The importance of extensive reading is in the term of a self-motivation from students to read based on their interests. However, little empirical research has been conducted to explore the difficulties of students in reading and the different responses among gender groups. Tamrackitkun (2010) investigated reading comprehension, reading fluency and attitudes of EFL Thai students after exposure to extensive reading (ER). The study used a mixed methods approach, both qualitative and quantitative research. The assessment of reading comprehension used three narrative texts for written recall protocol, and translation tests; multiple choice questions with twelve texts in timed reading to assess reading fluency; and a survey questionnaire as well as an in-depth interview to gather data on attitudes towards extensive reading. It was concluded that extensive reading has positive effects on Thai learners' reading comprehension. The research also provided evidence of reading fluency improvement together with a positive student attitude towards extensive reading. This study will explore the difficulties faced by students in their reading activities and students' perceptions of extensive reading in a 12 week extensive reading course.

The difficulties of reading and students' perceptions of extensive reading have not been explored. Leonardi (2011) investigated the integration of extensive reading in the learning process at the University of Surabaya. Leonardi used quantitative research methodology in investigating the implementation of extensive reading and suggests that extensive reading succeeds in improving students' motivation to build positive attitudes and create confidence. Leonardi did not focus on the students' difficulties and perception on extensive reading. Nakanishi and Ueda (2011) investigated the effects of extensive reading and shadowing on performance on reading comprehension of 89 Japanese university students majoring in human science. The researchers used both quantitative and qualitative research methodology. According to Kadota and Tamai (as cited in Nakanishi and Ueda, 2011) shadowing is as an act or task of listening in which the learner tracks the target speech and repeats it immediately as exactly as possible without looking at a text.

Nakanishi and Ueda suggest that the shadowing or the combination of ER-and-shadowing might motivate students more than ER-only instruction. Students in the ER-and-shadowing class read more, even though they had less time for reading in class due to the time they spent on shadowing. They utilized their time outside of class to read, and the effort was apparent to the teacher through observations and during individual consultations in each class. The research demonstrated several advantages of shadowing. In addition, students can

familiarize themselves with the English phonological system due to extensive exposure to the language. Another finding, students develop speed by repeating sounds. Furthermore, shadowing helps students concentrate on listening and helps them feel a sense of achievement by being able to produce the original sounds. However, the study was focused more on the phonological system related to extensive reading and the speaking aspect notions collaborated with extensive reading.

Macalister (2007) implemented extensive reading in a pre-university EAP programme in New Zealand using experimental action research. It was found that the integration of reading reflected teacher and learner differences, and supported the belief that the way in which extensive reading is included in a program should be determined by the specific language learning environment. However, the study did not focus on the students' dynamic process in reading. Furthermore, the book selection by students was guided teacher choice and institution, not based on their free selection of books.

Nishino (2007) investigated learners' experience of reading English extensively with a focus on the development of reading strategies and motivation. Nishino conducted the research by using a case study with two Japanese secondary-school students. The findings of the research demonstrate that there were significant individual differences in the use of reading strategies. In contrast, this study with five male and female at tertiary-level students was chosen with a focus on the perception of extensive reading among different gender groups.

Rezrae and Nourzadeh (2011) investigated extensive reading in improving bottom-up and top-down processing capacities employed by advanced learners of English as a foreign language when reading a second language (L2). They used an experimental study for the research and found that participation in an extensive reading course supported Iranian advanced EFL learners' bottom-up and top-down processing capacities. Overall the findings have implications for L2 reading comprehension and assessment. This study aims to investigate the difficulties of reading faced by students with 5 male and 5 female participants in a 12 weeks extensive reading course and students' perceptions of extensive reading.

Most universities in Indonesia that have an English department include extensive reading in their curriculum. The English Education Department at STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor includes extensive reading in semesters 5 and 6. Extensive reading is taught after students have taken four levels of pre-requisite courses in reading. Extensive reading provides the students with opportunities to choose and read poems, fables, fairytales, folktales, and short stories for children at the pre-intermediate level. It aims at developing good reading habits, building up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and encouraging an enjoyment of reading. Extensive reading requires the students to respond to what they have read and to carry out a variety of classroom activities in order to share what they have learned from their reading materials with another one. In fact, students in the English Education Department of STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor still have problems with their reading performance. The students' achievement is low with

final exam average score 60.88, their reading habit is inadequate, and they are unmotivated to read English books. These problems have emerged during the researcher's teaching experience. Therefore, this study focuses on students' difficulties in and perceptions about extensive reading. This study addresses the following questions: (1) What are the difficulties faced by students in extensive reading based on gender?; (2) What are the students' perceptions about extensive reading activities?.

METHOD RESEARCH

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study and multiple methods for data collection. The research was conducted at STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor since extensive reading is taught as a subject for 4 credits and it was found that there was a performance problem in extensive reading among students. Thus, from this perspective, undertaking research at STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor was appropriate. The research was conducted over 12 weeks from April to June 20..... There were some important considerations when selecting STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor for the research data collection: The researcher has been employed for six years by the institution and has explored the vision and mission of the institution.

The participants were ten students taking an Extensive Reading course in Semester 6 STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor 2013/2014 academic year. The study took twelve weeks, from April to June 2014. The researcher acted as an observer and participant in the study. The reasons for choosing 5 female and 5 male participants were: (1) The researcher had prior knowledge of students' reading; (2) They were willing to be participants; (3) They understood the purpose of the research; (4) They had sufficient time to be interviewed; and (5) They had an accessible place to be observed and documented. Forty letters of consent were distributed to participants in extensive reading classes. In the letter of consent participants provided identification details and consented to participation in the research process the research purpose. There were ten participants selected based on their interest in extensive reading.

Interviews and Book Conference. An interview was used as the main data instrument to investigate the research questions and used to attain data from the participants in the interview. The interview was conducted face-to-face with participants. A semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was used and conducted with individuals based on participants' time availability. Hence, the interview was conducted at a time and place based on each participant's time availability. In addition, data was collected from the book conference activity conducted after the interviews. The book conference was conducted to acquire information about the books participants had read. The book conference presented the book's title, the author, reasons for choosing the book, the characters in the story, the series of events or plots, and general comments about the book.

The second data instrument was documentation in the form of participants' journals. Data was taken from participants' journals in which they recorded

thereading process. Since the study is qualitative, data involved a detailed description of each participant's individual response in the interview and each participant's journal. Data was gathered using triangulation methodology. Participants were provided with pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality and were interviewed in a location distant from the classroom and staff room. The data was analyzed using Cresswell's (2003) recommendations for the research process.

- Step 1 The textual data from the participants' journals were tabulated.
- Step 2 The excerpts from interviews and participants' journals were tabulated to highlight the emerging themes.
- Step 3 To implement the coding process, text data was classified into categories. The coding process highlighted the key words related to themes.
- Step 4 Emerging themes were analysed from interview data excerpts and participants' journals.
- Step 5 Data was analysed into several themes as an adjunct to the discussion.
- Step 6 Since the study is qualitative, the interpretation is not presented in numerical or statistical format, but in thick description.

The participants selected four books of graded readers with simplified language based on their interest in the reading material. Graded readers are designed for EFL students. The participants were required to complete their reading of one book in 12 weeks and were provided with journals to record their reading activities. A book conference was conducted at the end of the reading process followed by an interview to record participants' comments about the extensive reading process.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1

Difficulties Faced by Students in Extensive Reading

| Themes | Interview Excerpt |
|------------------------|---|
| Managing time, mood | EN: The difficulty that I found is <i>managing time</i> . I faced the difficulty in finding appropriate time, <i>mood</i> to start reading. |
| New vocabulary | KA: <i>New vocabulary</i> , there are many places that the story take places so hard to remember |
| Understanding the plot | LU: Time, new words, and <i>understand the plot</i> |
| New words, busy | NU: I get <i>new words</i> and I do not understand. I don't have much time because I am <i>busy</i> |
| Vocabulary, idioms | ER: Some <i>vocabulary</i> and <i>idioms</i> in sentence that I don't understand the meanings |

| | |
|---|---|
| New words, not much time | AS: Finding <i>new words</i> , have <i>not much time</i> to read |
| Hard to understand, sleepy, disturbance | YE: There are some difficulties that I found in my process of reading. First, the story is <i>hard to understand</i> . Second, <i>sleepy</i> . Third, my young brother always <i>disturb</i> me |
| Time, other activity | RI: About <i>time</i> and my <i>other activity</i> |
| New word, mood, time, way of story | RE: The difficulty I found new word, mood, and time because I have many activities and the way of story is difficult |

As can be seen in Table 1, the emerging themes are time, vocabulary, and mood. According to extensive reading principles, the reading material is easy and the purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding (Day and Bamford, 1997). It was found that from ten participants, 70 % of students had difficulties with words, and 30 % with time, situation, and plot of the story. Mood is a psychological state or condition where someone is willing to do something. It is also important in reading because the reader should benefit from their reading activities or gain pleasure from reading. It depends on what the purpose of the reading activities are. A learner who has mood in reading will read more than others who do not have mood in reading. Mood plays an important role in successful second or foreign language reading (Nishino, 2007). In addition, it is important in extensive reading to select suitable books for the students to read. A suitable book for students makes them more motivated to read.

Table 2
Themes of Extensive Reading Benefits

| Themes | Interview's Excerpt |
|--|--|
| Information, reading skill, vocabulary | EN: To get information, improve my reading skill, and enrich my vocabulary EN: I am sure would get many things from reading. One of them is information EN: extensive reading enables us to read everything, every book in every genre |
| Reading ability | AC: it is increasing our reading ability |
| Vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, reading skill | KA: In vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, writing, reading skill |
| Read, pronunciation | LU:...in the way how I read or pronunciation |
| Motivation | NU: I think because ER make motivation to read more |
| A good reader, experience | ER: To get the experience in reading process, it is motivate to be a good reader ER: ... I get the experience how to be a good reader |

| | |
|--|--|
| Useful | AS: I think ER is very useful for me |
| Refreshing, knowledge, ability, useful | YE: My purpose to read is refreshing, increasing my knowledge, my ability and I think that ER is useful for me |
| Useful | RI: It is very useful for me because I can find the words that I didn't know |
| Useful | RE: . ER is useful for me, for my future |

Table 2 shows that students perceived extensive reading to benefit them by *improving reading ability, mastering vocabulary, increasing motivation, expanding reading experience, developing good readership, getting information, preparing for future skill, and improving pronunciation.*

Improving Reading Ability

The essence of extensive reading is to stimulate or improve student's interest in reading. In this way, the students will have a sustainable and continuous reading activity that derives from their intrinsic motivation. They read what they enjoy without any pressure. This finding IS supported by participant YE, who recorded in her journal, "I didn't find any difficulties, and I enjoy every chapter I read, because the story makes me wonder. Therefore, I have finished my reading in this session."

Mastering Vocabulary

Since extensive reading material is easy to understand, the students are very interested in reading the books they have chosen. They also can acquire new vocabularies from their contextual understanding about the story. Participant RE stated in her journal, "In this session, I found new words: extra-terrestrial, spaceship, scientists, and heart-light shone, and I try to search in dictionary for the meaning. I stopped read because I am sleepy." Participant NU also stated about her vocabulary improvement, "...The process of reading I feel interested with the story, I found new vocabulary, when I am sleepy I stop read." From the interview, participant EN stated the same feeling about her vocabulary benefit from her reading activities, "The book is easy for me because the words used are not hard and they are commonly used." Participant KA commented in his interview about searching for meaning, "Looking for the dictionary if the problem new words." Furthermore, participant ER commented in his journal:

I don't get a difficult reading process in this chapter, I only get new vocabulary like: chains, badly, flew, quieter, weak. Most of the word, I have understood. Before I start to read I need the empty room and play music with microphone, it makes me enjoy in process reading I get a difficulties to understand the meaning of sentence. "A fruit seller in the street in front of Carl turned his head away from his fruit for a minute and a beauty young woman quickly took some. But the fruit seller's hand was on her arm before she could run. I get a new word: sailing, worst, caught, skull, trip, giant.

Participant AS responded in the interview, "...Because the book is easy to read, the word and the sentences in the book is easy to understand. Actually, the book is to base for students. I think the book is easy, because the story in this book easy to understand and easy to get the point or meaning."

Increasing Motivation

Students will be motivated to read when they have an appropriate level of reading activities. Participant AC stated, "...This is the last pages, I imagine to be a Jack's Darrow, in this chapter I feel interesting to read this book, I don't get a difficult reading in this chapter. And the end of the story is Kong will never to have Ann Darrow, Kong die by airplane." Participant YE also commented, "I didn't find any difficulties, and I enjoy every chapter I read, because the story makes me wonder. Therefore, I have finished my reading in this session."

Expanding Reading Experience

Reading extensively also expands the students' reading experience. Some participants stated that extensive reading added to their reading experience. Participant AS stated that:

"Because the book is easy to read, the word and the sentences in the book is easy to understand. Actually, the book is to base for students, I think the book is easy, because the story in this book easy to understand and easy to get the point or meaning... I think the book is easy, because the story in this book easy to understand and easy to get the point or meaning KA. ...because I am a university student and I found a little new vocabulary. I think this book is easy, because I get a point in every chapter and simple in semantic. For experience..."

Participants ER and KA also stated that by having extensive reading they acquired the experience in reading process and motivation to be a good reader.

Developing Good Readership

Students like reading based on their interest. In this way, students will have good readership. Good readership covers time management to read, self-selection of the books, and self-planning to read. Some students referred to good readership in their journals. Participant NU stated that "The process of reading, I know about the rule, problems in the story, when I feel tired and I stop read." Participant AC also stated "This is the first time I read novel and the story is good. I did not feel bored when I read the story, reading this story made me get some new things."

Getting Information One of the main purposes for reading is to get information. Participant S EN, NU, AS, RE and AC responded in the interview that they read to:

"...To get information, improve my reading skill, and enrich my vocabularies. ...". (EN)

"To get more information and imagination..." (NU)

“To add information and know the story. Searching the information.”
(AS)

“My purpose to read is to know much information and comprehend well.”(RE)

Preparing Skills for Future

Extensive reading equips students with the better future preparation and prepare their career. Participant RE stated that extensive reading is useful for his future. By participating in extensive reading, the students will have contextual reading skills.

Improving Pronunciation

Only one participant stated that extensive reading has improved their pronunciation. Participant KA stated that extensive reading had improved his pronunciation since he practised reading aloud for some sessions, “...extensive reading helps me improve in vocabularies mastery, pronunciation, writing, and reading skill.”

Table 3
Students’ Perceptions about Extensive Reading

| Themes |
|-------------|
| Interesting |
| Enjoyable |
| Happy |
| New things |
| Imaginary |

According to participant RE’s comments in her journal about the reading process: Generally, I think this book has *interesting story* and I stopped because I have to help my mother for keep the shop. In this session, the process of reading I read from chapter I until III. Every chapter is *interesting* for me because the story tell about an alien who comes to the Earth. I did not find the difficulties process, I *like* the story in this chapter, but I stopped reading, because I have to teach. In this session, I feel *happy* after I read this book, because the end of the story is *happy*.

Participant NU stated that she liked the story in the book, and she was interested in the reading process. She commented in her journal, “ The process of reading I feel interested with the story, I found new vocabulary, when I am sleepy I stop read. The process of reading, I *know* ending this story, I get moral value and I *review* again this book.” On the other hand, participant AS and ER stated:

This is the first time I read novel and the story is good. I did not feel bored when I read the story, reading this story made me get some new thing. The end of the story is very interesting from last story I know the point of the story and reading this novel is very interesting. Before I start to read I need

the empty room and play music with microphone, it makes me enjoy in process reading. This is the last pages, I imagine to be a Jack's Darrow, in this chapter I feel interested to read this book.

According to participants AC and RI, reading the story helps them experience the sequence of the story.

This is the last pages, I *imagine* to be a Jack's Darrow, in this chapter I feel *interesting* to read this book, I don't get a difficult reading in this chapter. In the end of the story Kong will never to have Ann Darrow, Kong die by air plane. This chapter *makes me like there*. Make me *imagine* if I lived before century, very strength but *interesting*, and I am *sad* because Kong dead. *I like* the story, the story is *interesting* to read. In this session I get many vocabularies, I get the character of main character, when I have other activity I stop to read

After analyzing the time for reading activities in the reading process, it was found that female participant EN could finish the reading process less than one hour (56 minutes) and took three sessions to read. In contrast, female participant LU finished the reading process in six hours (360 minutes in nine sessions). Table 4 shows the comparison between male and female speed and time finishing in reading.

Table 4
The Rank Order of Reader Performance in Reading

| Rank | Code | F/M | Book's Title | Pages | Length of Reading | | Finish |
|------|------|-----|----------------------------|-------|-------------------|---------|----------------|
| | | | | | Session | Minutes | |
| I | EN | F | The Call of the Wild | 55 | 3 | 56' | April 27, 2014 |
| III | AC | M | Kong: The 8th Wonder | 60 | 3 | 116' | May 19, 2014 |
| II | KA | M | Don Quixote | 59 | 3 | 240' | May 18, 2014 |
| III | YE | F | E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial | 60 | 4 | 67' | May 22, 2014 |
| V | RE | F | E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial | 60 | 2 | 75' | May 23, 2014 |
| II | ER | M | Kong: The 8th Wonder | 60 | 6 | 216' | May 18, 2014 |
| IV | AS | F | The Call of the Wild | 55 | 3 | 112' | May 21, 2014 |
| IV | NU | F | The Call of the Wild | 55 | 2 | 240' | May 21, 2014 |

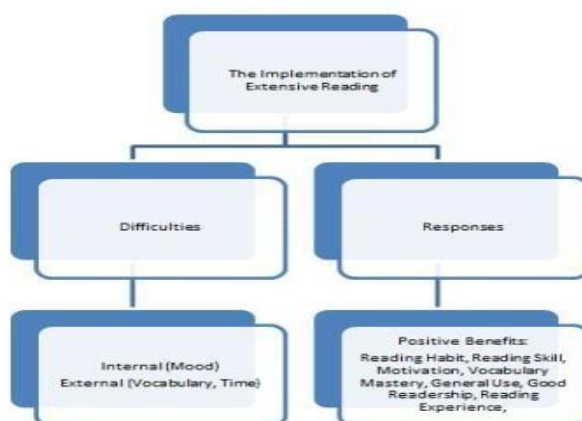
| | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|---|----------------------|----|---|------|--------------|
| VI | RI | M | The Call of the Wild | 55 | 2 | 105' | May 27, 2014 |
| III | LU | M | Don Quixote | 59 | 9 | 360' | May 22, 2014 |

Table 5
Comparison of Gender Total Reading Time

| Gender | Time | Factors |
|--------|----------------------|---|
| Male | 17 hours, 28 minutes | More activities, mood, vocabularies, time |
| Female | 9 hours, 6 minutes | Time, more activities |

It can be seen that female participants could finish the reading process faster than male participants. Female participants took a total reading time of 550 minutes (9 hours, 6 minutes) and male participants took a total of 1037 minutes (17 hours, 28 minutes) reading time.

Figure 1
The Implementation of Extensive Reading



The Response to Extensive Reading: Positive Benefits

The findings support Bamford and Day’s research (1997) that extensive reading is usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding. Furthermore, the findings confirm Tamrackitkun’s findings (2010) that extensive reading has positive effects on the learners’ reading comprehension. In addition, the students have positive perceptions of extensive reading after 12 weeks of extensive reading activities. The themes that emerge as shown in the data summaries are :*enthusiasm, higher and better motivation to read, enjoyment, pleasure, and recognition of the graded-readers level.* The four themes are related to Leonardi’s research (2011) in investigating the integration of extensive reading in the learning process at University of Surabaya (Polytechnic). Leonardi argued that extensive reading has succeeded in improving students’ motivation and positive attitudes and in creating confidence. It was found that some themes about

extensive reading: *interesting, enjoy, imagine, new things, good, interested, like, and happy*. All the participants have positive perceptions of extensive reading activities in their short stories reading. All the themes can be summarised into one theme, that is, reading for pleasure. Reading for pleasure is one of ten extensive reading principles highlighted by Day and Bamford (1997).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that that gender has little effect on extensive reading. The difficulties faced by students in extensive reading have two aspects: internal and external difficulties. The internal difficulties come from the psychological aspect of the students that is mood and time. The external factors emerge from the reading materials such as the vocabulary, idioms, and plot of the story. The research showed that the students positively perceived the benefits of reading because of improvement in reading ability, vocabulary mastery, motivation, reading experience, good readership, information, preparation for future skill, and pronunciation. This research was limited to the difficulties faced by students in terms of gender in extensive reading and students' perceptions about extensive reading activities. There are some limitations of the study. The main limitation is the very small sample size and in the way participants were chosen for the study. In addition, there is still a research gap that has the potential for further research, that is, how the students respond to the teacher's role in extensive reading.

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