

IMPLEMENTING EXTENSIVE READING TO BOOST STUDENTS' READING ABILITY

Moh. Ruzin

Universitas Islam Malang, Jl. MT. Haryono 193, Malang 65144, Indonesia

muhruzin@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to review some theories and previous studies related to the positive effects of extensive reading method to upgrade students' reading ability. As it is known, strong reading literacy is a crucial skill that has to be mastered by students to upgrade their knowledge, intellectuality, and reading skill itself. Unfortunately, students only have short time to read, and the reading material is not interesting when they are studying in the classroom applying intensive reading, so this condition caused students to have low ability in reading. Extensive reading is chosen since it is believed as appropriate method to solve students' problem in reading. It is applied outside the classroom that allowed students to read as much as possible what they like with the purpose having a great reading atmosphere consistently. Furthermore, this paper will explain challenges faced by students in reading, appropriate reading materials, the definition of extensive reading, and the implementation of extensive reading. This kind of method is also supported by many experts whose studies showed the effectiveness of extensive reading for the students. Then, it is expected that students can easily increase their reading ability as well as possible by applying this method.

Keywords: reading, extensive reading, reading ability

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the important skills that should be mastered by the learners since it has many positive impacts for them. By reading, the students are able to access much information which might have otherwise been unavailable, especially English textbook. Reading is a key of knowledge where the reader takes the advantage of the

knowledge of the text, and it is also something crucial and indispensable for the learners because the success of their study depends on the greater part of their ability to read. It is in line with Zuhra (2015), that says “the importance of teaching reading is to build the ability and knowledge of students” (p. 430). If their reading skill is poor, they are very likely to fail in their study or at least they will have difficulty in making progress. Reading is also as a process of comprehending. Reading is regarded not only as reaction to a text, but also as interaction between writer and reader mediated through the text. In other word, to comprehend the text the readers should be able to manage every part of the text because it is easy to gain the comprehension in reading when the readers are able to organize the text. On the other hand, if they have a good ability in reading, they will have a better chance to succeed in their study. Reading is the most important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also as one of way for extending the knowledge. Reading reinforces the students’ other language skills such as writing, speaking, and reading skill itself.

Reading which gives many benefits for learners is the window of the world, and it is the most important component in learning process. Students who love reading can get more knowledge and information from books, magazines, newspapers, and others. Rodrigo, Greenberg, and Segal (2014) state that by having good reading habit, learners can develop their reading. Reading is bringing meaning to and getting meaning from printed or written material. Through the reading activity, the students can enlarge their knowledge and it can also make them wise and respectful. Students’ reading ability must be developed, so teachers have duties to develop their skill and ability. The activities that teachers do in reading class should be designed to build students’ ability to understand increasingly complex content of the texts. The methods, techniques, and teaching media that are chosen and used by the teacher will influence the success of teaching learning process and students’ achievement. In the teaching reading activities, a good method, media, and strategy are needed. A good method can be an effort of teacher to make students’ reading ability better. Media and strategy also make the class to be alive during the reading lesson. By developing good method, technique, and media, students are expected to be able to have an active learning. Active learning can make the students interested in the reading lesson that is given to them, not only silent or passive in the teaching and learning

process. On the other hand, the students have to become aware of the purpose or goal for reading a certain piece of written material. The students have to know for what purpose of their reading or what they want to know after they read a reading passage. The students' reading purpose depends on the information that they need, whether they read for enjoyment, or to gain information, or to enhance knowledge of the language being read, or to critique writer's ideas. For example, the students who read poetry for enjoyment need to recognize the words the poet uses and the ways they are put together, but they do not need to identify main idea and supporting details.

In reading learning process, the students must understand the content of text to get the information from it. According to Iwahori (2008), it will be easy for the students to understand the text when they are familiar with the words in the text. Reading is process to transfer the science from book to brain from writer to reader, and this information will not be received by the readers if they did not understand the content of the text. It can happen to the students due to the materials are too difficult for the them and not interesting. Other problem in reading is that the students have no enough time to read, for example in the classroom. Students reading a book or text in the classroom usually only have short time, so it causes students not able to figure out what they read, such as the content or the information from the text. From these problems, they will have an opinion that English learning is a difficult in particular the reading skill. The students know from their test result that they always failed in the reading text. This matter will out from the goal of teaching learning.

The solution of these problems is that the teacher should know more about approach, method, and strategy in learning English especially reading. As it is known that the right method will support the teacher way to make his/her teaching learning more effective. One of the method that can be implemented by the teacher in teaching reading is extensive reading. Extensive Reading (ER) is one of right method to improve reading skill. It is in line with Yoshizawa, Takase, Otsuki (2018, pp. 1-2) propose that "Extensive reading (ER) plays a prominent role in EFL classrooms as it provides learners with English input in various contexts. ER provides EFL learners with not only linguistic input, but also opportunities to engage with reading processes repeatedly by themselves."

Because of the reality above, the writer will review some theories and previous studies about extensive reading that can increase students' reading ability. Then, it is expected that students can easily boost their reading ability by applying this method.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1. Challenges Faced by Students in Reading

According to Heick (2018), there are 12 common reasons why students do not read.

1. Students haven't found the right book or type of book

To make students love reading, they need the appropriate book or type of book to read. When the book is not suitable for them, they will be lazy to read since they do not enjoy the reading activity.

2. Students need general reading strategies that they can turn to from time to time

When students read a book or text, they need the right way so that they will be motivated to always read. It will also help the students to maximize their reading activity.

3. Students need specific reading strategies that they can self-select from based on context

The method applied by the students in reading must be specifically in accordance with the activities they do. When the strategy is not suitable, students will face the difficulties in reading.

4. Reading can be intimidating

Reading can intimidate the students if the reading materials are not according to their level. This kind of situation will cause the students to have an assumption that reading is complicated and boring.

5. The reading space or vibe is not right

The comfortable place is one of the requirement that can help the students to read effectively. When they are in noisy place, it will disturb their reading activity.

6. Students need a reason to read

If the students are inert to read, it might be because the students do not know the advantages of the reading. Here, teacher has duty to tell the students that reading a book or text will help them to broaden their knowledge.

7. Students have too much else to do

One of the reason why the students do not read is that the they have some activities. It can happen since they have another activity to do.

8. Reading is not a habit

Students must set the reading activity as their habit, so they can fell that reading is fun. By this activity, they will like the reading itself.

9. Students have problems with phonemic awareness

It is better for the students to read silently without any sounds, so they can read easily their reading text. It will also ease them to avoid any problems in reading.

10. Students have limited sight word vocabulary

When students read the text, they must read as fast as possible. They must not read in slow reading speed since it can decrease comprehension.

11. Students struggle with their own identity as a reader

Students need to realize that they will have an opportunity to be better students by reading. In the reading process, they will also find new ideas the will be useful for them.

12. Students need to know all of the incredible things about reading-topics, knowledge, genres, authors, etc.

In this part, teacher has accountability to show the students that book or text has a lot of information, not only knowledge, but also other aspects such as topics, authors, etc.

2.2. The Step to Choose Appropriate Reading Materials

The positive result and effectiveness of extensive reading program will be easily achieved by the students if they know the right reading material they must read. There are some ways proposed by extensive reading foundation (2011, p. 4) to choose the suitable reading materials.

1. Read some of the book itself

The first way that students must do is to read book as much as possible. The students have responsibility to read the book not only its title or cover, but also all texts or passages in the book.

2. Choose something interesting to read

The students must choose the book according to their interest. It is one of step for the students to love reading, so they can enjoy the reading process. If the students find the difficulties in their reading text being read, they must stop reading and choose other reading book or material.

3. Find something they can read at about 150-200 words per minute

When the students select a book or text, it must be easy to read, so they can read it as fast as possible without any problems. This is a way that can increase not only students interest to read, but also reading fluency.

4. Choose something they can read without a dictionary

One of the top ten principles of extensive reading is that the reading material is easy, so the students must choose the book which is suitable for their level. For instance, when they are reading book, they do not need a help of dictionary to understand it.

5. Be able to understand almost everything in the book

This point is almost same as the previous point. When the reading material is easy, it will ease the students to understand a whole book.

2.3. The Definition of Extensive Reading

There some experts stated the definition of extensive reading. Grabe and Stoller (2002) argue that extensive reading is a method to teach reading which allows the learners to read as much as possible, and the text must be suitable for their level. According to Jeon and Day (2016), “Extensive reading is a way of learning a language through a great amount of reading for pleasure. It is sometimes called as pleasure reading, free voluntary reading, and sustained silent reading” (p. 246).

The next definition of extensive reading is proposed by extensive reading foundation (2011) which state that “When students read extensively, they read very easy, enjoyable books to build their reading speed and reading fluency. The aim of Extensive Reading is to help the student become better at the skill of reading rather than reading to study the language itself. When students are reading extensively they READ: Read quickly and Enjoyably with Adequate comprehension so they Don’t need a dictionary” (p. 1). Furthermore, Bamford & Day state that “extensive reading is an approach to language teaching in which learners read a lot of easy material in the new language” (2004, p. 1).

Based on the definitions above, it can be concluded that extensive reading method is an activity which requires the students to read many easy texts as much as possible.

2.4. The Implementation of Extensive Reading

To implement extensive reading method, teachers should know the 10 principles of extensive reading (ER) by Day and Bamford (2002, pp. 137–141) as follows:

1. The reading material is easy

In extensive reading, the materials read by students must be easy to make them enjoy the reading. Therefore, it will lead the students to always read and finally love reading activity itself. Since extensive reading is done by the students independently, they must understand almost all the content of reading material or text.

2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics is available

The various topics of reading material are required to create the students interest in reading. The text with different genres will help the students to find their suitable book or text for them. By advance of technology, it will be easy for the students finding reading materials from many resources in internet that will help them to get texts or materials they need.

3. Students choose what they want to read

Students are free to select reading materials without any intervention from their teacher, so it will allow the students to determine the materials depend on their interest.

4. Students read as much as possible

By reading as much as possible, students can improve their ability and enlarge their knowledge. It is known that the more students read, the better they will be. When they read many books, it will help them to get a lot of new information that they do not know before. This kind of condition will make them become better students.

5. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding

The way to be a good reader is loving reading itself. Therefore, students must have an enjoyment when they are reading, so it will cause the students to be

more motivated in reading since they feel that the reading activity is enjoyable and fun.

6. Reading is its own reward

The students will read more and more because they know that by reading they will be better students. They will keep on their mind that reading is a must for them, and they will be beneficial from that kind of activity.

7. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower

Reading activity in extensive reading program is that the students read the text as fast as possible. The students read the text sentence by sentence not word by word. They will easily understand the text since it was their responsibility to choose the text.

8. Reading is individual and silent

Students read the text silently without any kind of sound. They are also doing this activity independently without any intervention by the teacher or their friend.

9. Teachers orient and guide their students

Although teacher does not have any interference in students reading activity, he/she has responsibility to lead their students getting the goal of extensive reading program. It is expected the students can enlarge their knowledge and develop their ability as well as possible.

10. The teacher is a role model of a reader

The students need appropriate reading materials and the right way to be a good reader. Therefore, teacher must give them a good example of reading materials and good way to read effectively.

Extensive reading program can be applied both inside and outside the classroom. The teachers or lecturers who want to apply this method have to consider all of the principles presented above so that the reading activity can run smoothly and reach the target.

2.5. Previous Studies Related to Extensive Reading and Reading Ability Development

A number of studies were conducted related to extensive reading program by many experts. The result of the studies shows that extensive reading can boost students

reading ability, so it can be a proof that extensive reading is one of the appropriate way in teaching reading. The data of some studies are presented below.

The first study is conducted by Rahmawati and Nasir under the title “*Extensive Reading: A Pilot Project to Change Students’ Perception of Reading*”. This study is carried out in 2018 with the purpose investigating the effects of Extensive Reading course on English Education Study Program students in a university in Bandar Lampung, Indonesia. The researchers take two classes of fifth semester to be participants. In addition, the data are collected from weekly reading logs, students’ book report, and students’ questionnaires. This study represents that extensive reading is able to improve students’ reading ability.

The second study entitled “*The Effects of Extensive Reading on Reading Comprehension, Reading Rate, and Vocabulary Acquisition*” is carried out by Suk. This study, which is carried out in 2016, is conducted at a national university in southern Korea. The total of participants is 171 Korean EFL university students which are divided into four classes: two control (n = 88) and two experimental (n = 83). The study aims to prove that extensive reading has positive impacts on language learning in second- and foreign-language settings. The result indicates that extensive reading increases students’ reading ability such as reading comprehension, reading rate, and vocabulary acquisition.

The third study is carried out by Tran, and it is conducted in 2018. This study with the title “*The Benefits of Extensive Reading for Vietnamese EFL Learners*” aims to browse the positive effects of extensive reading in upgrading Vietnamese EFL students’ reading fluency. The participants are 68 students which are chosen randomly. The samples are separated into two groups: the control (33 students) and the treatment (35 students). The data are collected during the experimental program from the students of English program for English majors. The result of this study shows that extensive reading program upgrades reading rate of the students and their reading comprehension.

The fourth study entitled “*How Does Extensive Reading Help Japanese EFL Learners Develop Grammatical Knowledge and Reading Fluency?*” is conducted by Yoshizawa, Takase, and Otsuki. The participants of this study are 431 Japanese university students: 247 in ER classes and 184 in the control classes with the

implementation of textbook-focused teaching. There are two main purposes of this study, grammatical knowledge development and reading fluency. This study is carried out in 2018 which shows positive result. The result indicates that students' grammar scores and reading rate scores applying extensive reading are increasing.

The last study is conducted by Hadiyanto. with total 116 samples which consists of 4 teachers and 112 students. The four teachers are interviewed to investigate teachers' feedbacks about reading model and teacher modeling to increase students' motivation to read. This study is carried out in 2018 with the title "*Teacher Modeling to Motivate Extensive Reading Students in an EFL Context*" which aims to investigate teachers' and students' point of view on teacher modeling as a motivation tool in Extensive Reading (ER) classes. Although the findings indicate that teacher modeling is not students' biggest motivation to read, students feel very positive toward teacher modeling in extensive reading program.

A number of studies presented above indicate the positive result of extensive reading program. Based on previous studies, it has been proven that extensive reading can increase students' reading ability. By applying extensive reading, students' can improve their reading skill such as reading comprehension, reading rate, and reading fluency, etc., so it can be concluded that extensive reading is an appropriate method to boost students' reading ability.

3. CONCLUSION

The focus of this paper is to review some theories and previous studies of extensive reading that have been conducted by many experts. It has been presented in this paper that extensive reading can improve students' reading ability such as reading comprehension, reading rate, and reading fluency, etc. The writer has found many studies of extensive reading method conducted by many experts show the positive result. Extensive reading has been proven as an appropriate way to upgrade students' reading ability in many aspects, and it also helps the students to have a better reading activity since they have freedom to choose their own reading materials. All the proofs indicate that extensive reading is successful for the students especially in reading context.

Based on the facts above, the writer hopes the teachers and lecturers will apply extensive reading method in their reading course. It is expected that by applying this method they can maximally help their students to succeed in their reading.

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