



Exploring Undergraduate Students' Perceptions Toward Extensive Reading Course

Basri^{1*}, Basikin²

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta

Corresponding Author: Basri basri0217fbs.2022@student.uny.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

The importance of extensive reading is undeniable. Through implementing extensive reading, students can obtain many benefits toward their English proficiency. Although much research has been conducted towards implementing ER, few study underlying the students' perceptions as the subject of ER implementation. Thus, this research aims at exploring the students' perceptions towards their ER course. Further, this research also aims at exploring the students' outcomes gained from the ER course. This study used qualitative descriptive design, the participants in this study are undergraduate students who have experience on extensive reading course at private university in Makassar. The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling involving 7 participants. In-depth interview data collection technique was used in this study and the results obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis. The results show that the extensive reading course improved the students' reading fluency, reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, writing ability, and reading motivation, among other five areas. The way ER principles are applied throughout the training has an impact on those benefits. Easy reading materials, a variety of available materials, authority in material selection, frequent reading, speed reading, silent reading, meaningful reading, enjoyable reading, teacher direction, and the teacher as a role model are the concepts that are put into practice

INTRODUCTION

It is indisputable that reading is important. People are exposed to a wealth of reliable information through reading, which is helpful in sustaining their lives (Mason & Krashen, 1997). Furthermore, reading in English has been a major issue in Indonesia. It is anticipated that Indonesian students will be literate, meaning they will be able to read English literature with proficiency (Chang & Renandya, 2017). This is consistent with the definition and principle of extensive reading. It is thought that reading extensively benefits pupils' knowledge (Robb, 2022). According to Nuttal (1982), residing among native speakers of the language or reading a lot of literature are the two best ways to improve one's proficiency in it.

ER was characterized by Palmer & Redman (1969) as reading a sizable quantity of simple reading material at their own pace and ability level. Reading widely has many advantages. First, reading widely gave pupils the chance to experiment with different text genres that could influence how well they read (Renandya, 2007). It is improving vocabulary, writing, and reading motivation in addition to reading skills (Bamford & Day, 2004; Krashen, 1993; Nation, 1997). Additionally, the benefits of ER implementation have an impact on readers' fluency and comprehension. Because reading a large amount of content allows readers to improve their fluency in reading (Rahmawati, 2020).

Extensive reading has been widely implemented by educators. Furthermore, its implementation possesses various positive outcomes. A study conducted by Meinawati et al., (2022) reported that Students have a positive perception of the extensive reading program because they can build interest in reading and reading habits. Moreover, Husna (2019) and Waring & Husna (2019) conducted research on developing students critical thinking through embedding ER program. The result showed significant outcomes on students critical thinking improvement.

Although much research has been conducted towards implementing ER to improve reading skill and other English proficiency, few study underlying the students' perceptions as the subject of ER implementation. It is also essential to figure out the students' perceptions after experiencing extensive reading course, as inputs for better implementation. The results of prior research are mostly about experiment on extensive reading and classroom action research which intent to inhabiting the extensive reading implementation. Ng et al. (2019) suggest that qualitative research toward revealing students' perception is a need to work to. As students who conduct the extensive reading, it is a must to dig on their perceptions toward their experience after following and behaving extensive reading.

Furthermore, the ER principles are tightly undergone with its implementation. However, it is found that some research reported negative results of ER implementation since obeying the ER principles. It is also an urgent matter to validate the prior research results that possessed positive outcomes of extensive reading course that majority non qualitative research, particularly from the students' perceptions.

Amplifying the discussion rooting through paragraphs above, the researcher intent to take decision in exploring the students' perceptions on the implementation of extensive reading class. The research will be conducted by interviewing several undergraduate students from private university in Makassar. Thus, this research aims at exploring the students' perceptions towards their ER course. Further, this research also aims at exploring the students' outcomes gained from the ER course.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Implementing a comprehensive reading program is necessary because it amplifies the benefits. Numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of ER in language learning. Numerous research endeavors aim to elucidate the impact of ER in diverse settings. According to Day & Bamford (2002), S. D. Krashen (1993), Nation (1997), and Renandya (2007), increasing general language competency is undoubtedly one of the benefits of substantial reading. As a result, educators' roles in putting this into practice should be clearly recognized, especially in Indonesia. As a result, it's important to investigate the perspectives of the students as course participants. To provide the course with informed input, student voices are vital, as they are the ones who really experience its execution.

The requirements for incorporating the essential principles of ER into the implementation of ER, such as simple reading materials, learner autonomy in selecting their own reading material, availability of a variety of reading materials, silent and pleasure reading, the teacher's role as a director and guide, the teacher as a role model, etc., must also be determined. These principles apply in the context of teaching ER (Day & Bamford 2002). Even the aim of the research is to explore students' perceptions, these principles are useful as guidance. Démuth (2013) confirms that perception is influenced by someone's sensing power. Previously, Gibson (1981) notes that the differences of circumstance, previous experiences, knowledge, and natural condition contribute to individual perceptual decisions. Furthermore, it might be worthwhile to investigate how students view the advantages they felt they received from the ER program. Its purpose is to assess the ER's sustainability and identify areas where it needs to be implemented better.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative research methodology as it can identify the current occurrence by gathering data from participant experiences and analyzing participant perceptions (Cohen et al., 2017). This study was carried out for a lengthy reading course in the English department of a Makassar-based private institution. Purposive sampling was used in this study to select participants. Purposive sampling, according to Cresswell (2017), is a technique for choosing participants by establishing criteria.

Interviews were the mode of data collection that the researcher selected. The goal of the interview process was to get detailed and insightful answers about the topic under investigation to respond to open-ended research questions (Cohen et al., 2017). The ability for participants to voice their own

ideas on the matter was another justification for using interviews. In the current study, a standardized in-depth interview was employed (Boyce and Neale, 2006). The data was analyzed in three steps: member verification, coding, and data transcription (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The inductive analysis of the in-depth interviews with EFL students was done using Thematic Analysis (TA).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of extensive reading through extensive reading course can possess benefits toward students reading skill, both reading fluency and reading comprehension. The results of this study claimed that students obtain improvement towards their reading skill after following the ER course. It is aligned with the study from (Ng et al., 2019; Renandya, 2007; Tsuda et al., 2023). Students' percept that improvement on their reading skills such as reading fluency and reading comprehension is affected through the reading a lot of principle. (Januarty, 2018) claimed that through implementing ER, readers are given rooms to read a lot and to practice more on their reading fluency. Furthermore, (Meinawati et al., 2021) stated that extensive reading allows students to meet the same context of language which could help them to easily remember and understand the same meaning of texts.

In addition, this study found that the process of extensive reading helpfully assists students to get focus while reading and learning. The conditions of being in a proper place brings students into a peaceful concentration. Moreover, applying rapid reading principle also contribute to fluency and comprehension (Bell, 2001). It gives students' momentum of exercise and focus to complete their meaningful reading along with the use of the principle of easy reading materials (Day et al., 1998) which enable students maintaining their fluency and comprehending the text since the materials suits their English level.

This study reveals the role of extensive reading towards students' improvement on their vocabulary acquisition. As what happen among students' fluency and comprehension, the role of extensive reading successfully could improve students' vocabulary which align with the study by (Harimurti et al., 2023; Hsu, 2020; Jonathans et al., 2021) the amount of text that students read within the extensive reading process gives them opportunity to discover many new vocabularies. However, the accident of meeting difficult and rare words remains frequently appeared. Regarding students reading motivation, the extensive reading also can improve students' reading motivation. It is aligned toward study from (Chen, 2018; Permatasari & Kartika, 2023; Wienanda, 2023; Ramonda, 2020). The chance for students to have authority in choosing their reading materials engaged students to happily participated in the course. Students feel encouraged to read as they are given opportunity to read their interesting materials (Puspitasari, 2020). It is completed as the principle of pleasurable reading as students are excited when they know new knowledge or information after reading.

Moreover, not only getting to know with new information but the more they know and happy (Paradita et al., 2023), thus, it becomes pleasure for them to get triggered to read more (Permatasari & Wienanda, 2023; Ro, 2013). In addition, the involvement of lecturer as a good role model of a reader is one factor that affects improvement on student reading motivation (R. Day & Bamford, 2002). Students' percept that as teacher read along within the ER course. Furthermore, some students also claimed that they obtain benefits toward their writing skill as the results of following the ER course. Extensive reading assists them to express their idea into writing as they acquired many vocabularies. However, it remains toward improvement on their vocabulary acquisition.

There is no more justification that the extensive reading course specifically can improve students' writing ability. Therefore, it is irrelevant toward the study from (Aida & Widiyati, 2020; Nguyen, 2022). Aida & Widiyati (2020) stated that through implementing extensive reading, readers are allowed to comprehend structure of texts indirectly. Although, this study claims that students have limited time and room for paying attention to grammatical structure of their text while reading extensively. In addition, (Ng et al., 2019) suggested that the implementation of extensive reading should be supported with intensive reading aside to assist readers in understanding grammatical matters of their reading text.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research provides an exhaustive grasp of undergraduate students' perceptions of their extensive reading course. The results show that the lengthy reading course improved the students' reading fluency, reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, writing ability, and reading motivation, among other five areas. The way ER principles are applied throughout the training has an impact on those benefits. Easy reading materials, a variety of available materials, authority in material selection, frequent reading, speed reading, silent reading, meaningful reading, enjoyable reading, teacher direction, and the teacher as a role model are the concepts that are put into practice.

Additionally, this study reveals the fundamentals of how those applied ideas impact the advantages that the students experienced. The conclusions of this study reflect how further extensive reading course should be delivered and conducted including how the implementation of ER principles are applied correctly for better improvement.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations, so further research is needed related to the topic of Exploring Undergraduate Students' Perceptions Toward Extensive Reading Courses in order to perfect this research and increase insight for readers.

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