

Exploring Factors Affecting Indonesian EFL Students' Reading Skill through Extensive Reading Activities

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20220176>

ABSTRACT

Extensive reading in EFL context has the impact with English language skills, and language sub-skills; vocabulary mastery, reading speed rate. This research is conducted by applying This research is applied quantitative research method with ADDIE model in order to achieve the goal of increasing interest and understanding in reading English texts. The research location is in Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Universitas Muslim Nusantara (UMN) Al Washliyah, Medan, North Sumatera. In this research, questionnaire with Likert scale is used to help assess students' reading habits and critical thinking skills. According to the research result, Indonesian EFL students find the difficulties to improve reading skill, and the students also believe that ER activities will be the solution in to achieve English skill level. ER activities absolutely concern with the reading frequency, vocabulary mastery, prior knowledge, and higher order thinking. HOTs in ER activities will be more achievable because they way students understand English texts through enjoyable reading materials can be interpreted and evaluated.

Keywords: EFL students, extensive reading, reading enjoyment

INTRODUCTION

The issues of Extensive Reading or ER technique in EFL context have been discussed in order to create English students' reading behaviour and enjoyment (Bryan 2013; Nhapulo et al ,2017; Rodrigo

et al, 2007). A study conducted by Li et al (2021) reports that EFL students' reading outcomes is being higher through implementing extensive reading skill in which the students significantly completed the books during the number of days. The result of the research discussed by Sun (2021) revealed that extensive reading technique integrated with differentiated instruction becomes a very helpful for the students to control and to manage their online learning by reading the book they read during pandemic covid 19. Moreover, the use of ER also leads to English teachers' perception that they totally agree with ER bringing much benefits, building up students and teachers' attitude, and it also increases the students to read extensively without worrying about the score (Huang, 2015). In Japan, EFL students find out the enjoyment in class readers where they can not only read the books chosen but they also have the opportunity to share with their classmates for checking their comprehension (Ramonda, 2020). Research conducted by Turnbull (2015) shows that L2 reading comprehension should be combined with group discussion in language learning which the students can use both their L1 and L2 in comprehending and producing the English text. Another empirical studies reports that ER technique is feasible and desirable, in which it can improve EFL students' reading rate and speed, and it makes EFL students'

self-confidence and motivation being higher since they are no longer need teachers' guidance (Chang, 2010; Nhapulo et all, 2017). Since decade ago, several empirical studies have been conducted to reveal the positive effect of extensive reading (ER) in which ER also lead to the wider range of L2 skills, and L2 behavior, namely; reading comprehension (Bell, 2001; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Leung, 2002; Nakanishi & Ueda, 2011; Yamashita, 2008), reading fluency (Iwahori, 2008), reading strategies or skills (Hayashi, 1999; Hitosugi & Day, 2004), writing (Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Mason & Krashen, 1997), linguistic knowledge (Hedge, 1985; Yang, 2001) and positive attitudes (Constinito, 1995; Yamashita, 2013). It is commonly known that the only way to do the EFL learners to acquire the English skills is receiving numerous English written texts through reading activities. Reading activities become extremely vital for EFL learners since they have much opportunities to acquire new words, new expression, and the way sentences constructed. In order to enhance students' reading skill, the implementation of extensive reading will be very helpful, and it results a very significant effect.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The impact of reading activities directly develop English development of EFL students, several empirical studies have been conducted to reveal the positive effect of extensive reading (ER) because ER leads to the wider range of L2 skills, and L2 behavior, namely; reading comprehension (Bell, 2001; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Leung, 2002; Nakanishi & Ueda, 2011; Yamashita, 2008), reading fluency (Iwahori, 2008), reading strategies or skills (Hayashi, 1999; Hitosugi & Day, 2004), writing (Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Mason & Krashen, 1997), linguistic knowledge (Hedge, 1985; Yang, 2001) and positive attitudes (Constinito, 1995; Yamashita, 2013). One of the recommended reading activities is Extensive Reading, it is also well-recognized as ER. ER is a reading technique consisting of

activity to read a lot of easy level text reading (Suk, 2017).

In order to achieve the purpose of reading, students are given the freedom to choose the books they like so that they have chance to read a large number of vocabularies, find English expressions in which all these activities can improve reading comprehension and interest. In addition, the higher reading frequency not only increases vocabulary but also increases knowledge, and self-confidence (BR et all 2020). Continuously, the regular activities performed by EFL students will shape their background knowledge so that every material/book/article they read will be easier to understand because the students have stored previous knowledge in their schemata (Mulyani, 2017).

Absolutely, it will make EFL students easier to convey ideas because they have relevant information, so that their arguments become sharper. In other words, Extensive Reading activities touch many aspects such as; learning process, students' needs, and the availability/opportunities in the classroom (Kustina, 2018; Ikhsanuddin, 2018; Putra, 2019). ER activities is created based on four elements namely; a large number of reading materials, easy materials, faster reading rate, and reading enjoyment (Lubis, 2019; Yamashita, 2015).

The input hypothesis of Krashen has been using by ER procedures in which the essential point of is "students learn to read by reading" (Smith, 2006). English learners are required to own reading fluency through achieving large number of vocabularies so that English learners automatically improve a higher reading speed (Bell, 2001; Day & Bamford, 2002; Prawiyata, 2020; Taguchi, Takayasu-Maass, & Gorsuch, 2004). Rott, 1999; Silva, 2009). Through ER technique, the students' ER speed will be leveling up higher than conventional reading technique (Day & Bamford, 2002), and it also leads to the way the interpret through academic writing (Lubis, 2021)

Day and Bamford (1998) suggested ten principles of applying ER programs, namely;

(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) earners read as much as possible, (5) the purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and 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 (Day 2002, 137-139; Hitosugi and Day 2004, 21-22)

MATERIALS & METHODS

This research is applied quantitative research method with ADDIE model in order to achieve the goal of increasing interest and understanding in reading English texts. The research location is in Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Universitas Muslim Nusantara (UMN) Al Washliyah, Medan, North Sumatera. The population is a generalization area consisting of subjects that have the qualities and characteristics set by the researcher to be studied and conclusions drawn or in other words all components that exist in the research place. The population in this study were all classes of FKIP UMN AW. Then, 60 students of the English Education Study Program were recruited using a non-probability sampling technique and determined by purposive sampling based on certain considerations. In this case, quantitative research explains that quantitative research instruments are used to measure the variables to be studied and to measure the phenomena being observed, in the hope of completing the data. Student scores will use predetermined assessment indicators and descriptors. The instrument used is a project-based learning process for scientific writing with citations, and proper paraphrasing with digital tools

Data Collection Techniques

To obtain precise and correct data, the researchers will use data collection techniques, as follows:

a. Questionnaire

In this study, to help assess students' reading habits and critical thinking skills, students were given a Likert scale questionnaire.

According to Sugiyono (2010:142) a questionnaire is a data collection technique that is carried out by providing written statements to respondents. With the aim of knowing in more detail to know the analysis of the situation through the data.

b. Observation

The observation applied was participatory observation, where the appropriate observation used was participatory observation. Participatory observation by involving researchers (as direct observers) and students in daily activities both in class and in the environment

Data Analysis Techniques

In accordance with the data collection techniques that have been carried out, the data processing procedure is carried out through a number of stages, namely:

- a. Checking student observation sheets based on predetermined assessment aspects
- b. Give a score on the aspects that are examined in accordance with the predetermined scoring provisions, then the score obtained by each student is calculated as a value which is then tested by testing factor analysis (KMO)
- c. Recap the assessment data obtained by students for each aspect studied.
- d. Summing up the scores obtained by students in each aspect studied, then looking for the average value.

RESULT

Research Results

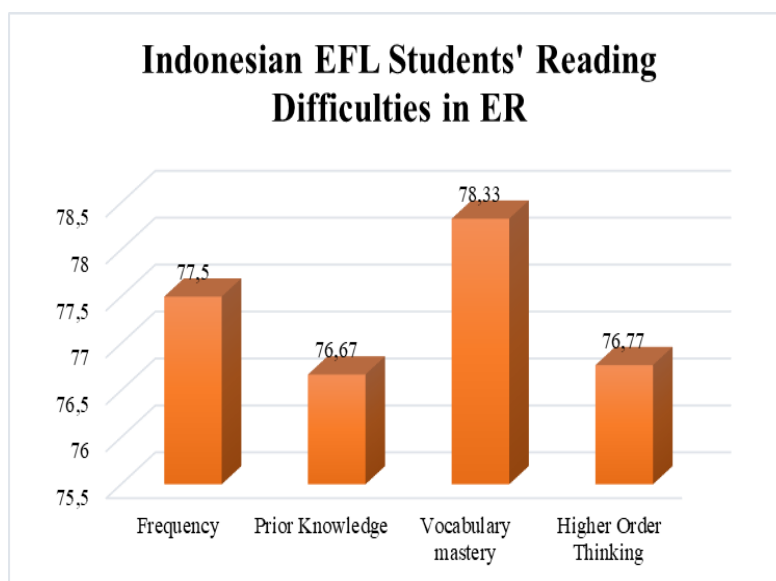
Based on the data recapitulation of the difficulty factor in reading English texts

for students in semester II, IV, and VI of English Education, the results of this study indicate that there are several main factors that cause students' low interest in reading, and it has the impact on higher-order thinking skills.

Recapitulation of Reading Difficulty Factors

To reveal the factors of difficulty in reading English texts faced by English

Language Education students, the questionnaire was distributed online using a google form based on four indicators used as parameters, namely; frequency, prior knowledge, vocabulary mastery, and higher order thinking (HOTs). In detail, the results of the recapitulation are shown in diagram 5.1

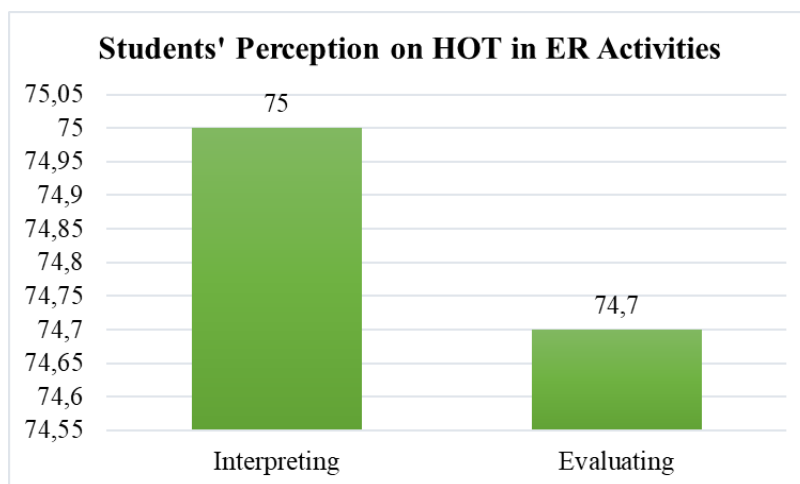


Based on diagram 5.1, the factors of reading difficulties experienced by students are; frequency with 77.5%, prior knowledge with 76.67%, vocabulary mastery with 78.33%, and HOTs with 76.77%. This shows that students still have difficulty in reading due to their low vocabulary. Then, the frequency indicator becomes a difficulty that is still faced by students. Simultaneously, prior knowledge and higher order thinking. It is a factor that is still a problem for students. Of course, students have low interest in reading, this can be seen from the relationship of each indicator. The frequency of reading that is rarely done causes students to have very little input so that their vocabulary is low. Along with this, it will cause difficulties for students to have prior knowledge, because it cannot be denied that one of the successes in reading comprehension can be achieved if the reader

has good prior knowledge. Good prior knowledge will help the reader build, or understand new knowledge from new reading sources. In other words, prior knowledge is the background of knowledge or previous knowledge possessed by the reader on a particular topic.

HOTs Factors Found in ER Activities

To investigate the role of HOTs in reading, there are two indicators used as parameters, namely; interpreting, and evaluating. Interpreting skill is needed in reading comprehension because reading is a very complex cognitive process where readers need high-level thinking to understand, capture meaning in depth and intact without reducing the meaning content. To reveal the results of the recapitulation of Hots' difficulty factor in reading, diagram 5.2 visually displays the data recapitulation;

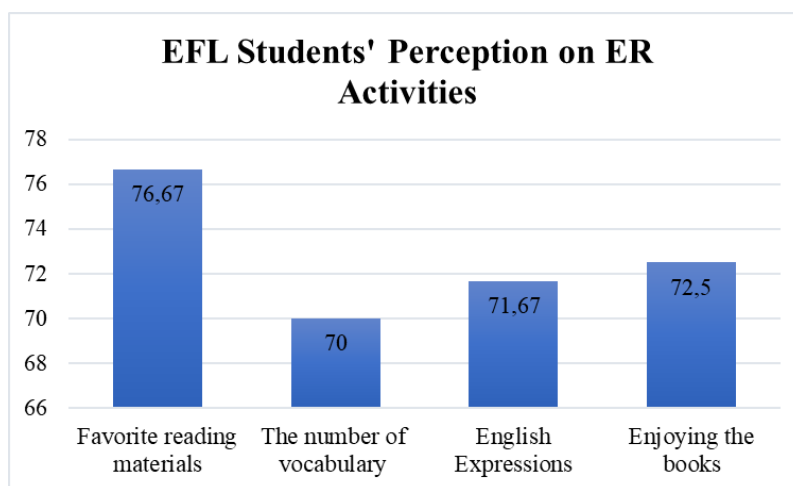


In detail, diagram 5.2 shows that students have difficulty in improving their reading skills. It is proven that 75% of students say that they have difficulty in interpreting information from reading texts, and of course this affects them to do critical reading, namely evaluating. In fact, the ability to interpret and evaluate has reached the domain of higher-order thinking.

Formulation of the Concept of Extensive Reading Activities that are integrated with HOTS to Increase Interest and Reading Comprehension

Based on the results of data recapitulation, it can be seen that students

still need solutions in reading comprehension. Reading comprehension can begin with extensive reading. Extensive Reading is related to reading books/texts that we like. In this case, the extensive reading approach focuses more on the reading material you enjoy, and how to enjoy the reading. In other words, students are trained to get used to reading their favorite books on a regular basis every day. Then, students are given feedback, so that gradually students have a higher reading frequency and, it will lead to an increase in vocabulary, prior knowledge, and behavior. So, it will be easily integrated with higher order thinking.



According to the research result, Indonesian EFL students find the difficulties to improve reading skill, and the students also believe that ER activities will be the solution in to achieve English skill level. ER

activities absolutely concern with the reading frequency, vocabulary mastery, prior knowledge, and higher order thinking. HOTS in ER activities will be more achievable because they way students

understand English texts through enjoyable reading materials can be interpreted and evaluated. Moreover, reading activities lead the students to find out the desire to read (Krashen, 2004), however the students' interest in reading is always linked to the motivation in which the student will be more challenging with the difficult reading materials (Schunk and Zimmerman 1997), so that English teachers are suggested to select reading task and activities (Gardner and Lambert 1972; Lifrieri 2005).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, this study concludes that there are four factors of low reading comprehension, namely; frequency, vocabulary mastery, prior knowledge, and HOTS. In addition, the difficulty of reading that is owned by students affects the weakness of higher-order thinking skills which can be seen from two main factors, namely; interpret, and evaluate. All indicators of reading difficulty factors are integrated with each other, which causes students' low interest and reading comprehension. To overcome this, further research will design a prototype of extensive reading activity. Extensive reading activities are very focused on fostering a love of reading with a focus on bringing the books you like and how to enjoy the books/texts you read. To achieve the research objectives comprehensively, the researcher suggests several points, namely: English education students find their favorite reading material to improve their reading comprehension of English texts, and the researchers designed a prototype of extensive reading activity. Extensive reading activities are very focused on fostering a love of reading with a focus on bringing the books you like and how to enjoy the books/texts you read.

Acknowledgement: None

Conflict of Interest: None

Source of Funding: None

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How to cite this article: Salamuddin Selian, Nazriani Lubis, Yusnita et.al. Exploring factors affecting Indonesian EFL students' reading skill through extensive reading activities. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2022; 9(1): 650-657. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20220176>
