

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH
EXTENSIVE READING ACTIVITIES AT LEVEL III OF LANGUAGE
CENTER OF UIN SULTAN SYARIF KASIM RIAU**

THESIS



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ABSTRAK

Dodi Settiawan, 2012. Peningkatan Pemahaman Membaca Mahasiswa melalui Kegiatan *Extensive Reading* pada Level III Pusat Bahasa Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau. Tesis. Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Program Pendidikan Bahasa, Program Pascasarjana Universitas Negeri Padang.

Mahasiswa di kelas peneliti pada Pusat Bahasa Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau belum mampu membaca dengan pemahaman yang baik. Mahasiswa tersebut berada di level III dan, konsekuensinya, mereka perlu meningkatkan kemampuan membaca mereka agar bisa lulus dari level itu. Oleh karena itu, tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan apakah kegiatan membaca secara *extensive* bisa meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa tersebut. Disamping itu, penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasikan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi perubahan pemahaman membaca siswa selama kegiatan membaca secara *extensive*.

Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dengan desain penelitian tindakan kelas -yang prosesnya bersiklus meliputi perencanaan, pemberian tindakan, pengamatan, dan refleksi- selama dua siklus. Pada setiap siklus, seorang mitra mengajar membantu peneliti dalam mengumpulkan dua jenis data, yakni data kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Yang berupa data kualitatif dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan lembar observasi untuk peneliti dan mahasiswa. Selain itu, catatan lapangan dan wawancara juga digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data kualitatif. Kemudian, data kuantitatif dikumpulkan dengan memberikan tes pemahaman membaca.

Hasil dari tes menunjukkan bahwa setiap indikator pemahaman membaca meningkat di setiap siklus. Oleh karena itu, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwasanya kegiatan *Extensive Reading* mampu meningkatkan pemahaman membaca mahasiswa. Selain itu, dari hasil pengamatan dan wawancara peneliti bisa menyimpulkan tiga faktor yang mempengaruhi peningkatan pemahaman membaca mahasiswa selama kegiatan *extensive reading*. Ketiga faktor tersebut adalah penyediaan beragam bahan bacaan, motivasi siswa membaca, dan mempraktekkan strategi membaca.

ABSTRACT

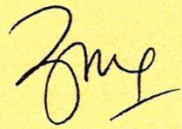
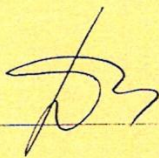
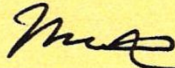
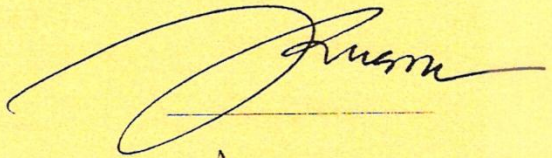
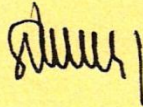
Dodi Settiawan, 2012. Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through Extensive Reading Activities at Level III of Language Center of UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau. Thesis. English Education Section, Language Education Program, Graduate Program of State University of Padang.

The students in the researcher's class at Language Center of State Islamic University of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau could not read with good comprehension. The students were at the level III and, consequently, they need to improve their reading comprehension in order to pass the level. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to explain whether extensive reading activities could improve students' reading comprehension at level three of the Language Center of UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau. Besides, this research also identified the factors that influence the changes of the students' reading comprehension when the researcher applied extensive reading activities.

This research was carried out in the design of classroom action research, - which was a cyclical process that involved planning, action, observation, and reflection-, for two cycles. In every cycle, a collaborator helped the researcher to collect two types of data, namely qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were collected by using observation sheets for the researcher and the students. Besides, field notes and interview were also used to collect the qualitative data that out of the observation sheets. Then, the quantitative data were collected by administering reading comprehension tests.

The results of the tests showed that each indicator of reading comprehension increased in each cycle. Therefore, the researcher concluded that extensive reading activities could improve the students' reading comprehension. Besides, the results of observations and interviews showed that there were three factors influencing the improvement of students' reading comprehension during extensive reading activities. The factors were providing a variety of reading materials, motivating the students to read and practicing reading strategies.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

English is a compulsory subject for all students in State Islamic University of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau. The students who are not majoring in English must take English course in the university's Language Center. In the Language Center, English is taught as a foreign language and the purpose of teaching English is helping them to be able to communicate in English. Besides, they are taught to pass the paper-based version of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). It is because each of them must have a TOEFL certificate as a requirement for graduation; the minimum score for graduation is 350. Thus, it is important for them to study English in order to have TOEFL certificate as one of the requirements to graduate from the university.

To fulfill the requirement, their language skills (writing, speaking, listening, and reading) are developed in the Language Center. Among these four skills, reading is regarded as the most vital and necessary for them. It is because, in the paper-based version of TOEFL, they are asked to answer 50 questions of reading comprehension test. They are provided with limited time, which is 55 minutes, to answer all the reading comprehension questions. For that reason, it is important for them to be able to read English texts with good comprehension in order to answer the questions correctly.

However, many students in the researchers' class could not read with good comprehension. They were majoring in System Information of Science and Technology Faculty. They were taking English subject in level three, the highest level in the Language Center, but the result of recent reading comprehension test

indicated that they needed to improve their reading comprehension. 21 students in the class were administered to the test. The selection from the reading comprehension section of TOEFL was used as the test. The test items were 25 multiple choices questions. Each question correctly answered was given 4 points. The questions which had no answer were given zero point. The result showed that their average score was 54.67. The highest score was 88 and the lowest score was 24. Five students had scores around 68 to 88; and the rest just had scores below it. Thus, 76.19% of them did not read with good comprehension. Consequently, most of them did not past the passing grade.

Some factors, which impeded the students to improve their reading comprehension, were identified. Most of them did not read a lot. This was identified as one of the factors since they could learn to read only by reading. Thus, their reading habits were explored through a questionnaire. The result of the questionnaire showed that half of the students (57.14%) liked to read English materials. The others were uninterested to read English materials. However, none enjoyed reading the difficult materials. Many of them enjoyed reading easy (at their level) materials. In addition, most of them (76.19%) did not read outside the classroom. By these results, it could be inferred that lack of practice and interest in reading caused them read slowly and did not have good comprehension. Thus, they had to be inspired being readers since “students learn to read by reading” (Smith, 2004:196).

Besides, most of them needed to improve their vocabulary knowledge. Spending a lot of time on difficult or unfamiliar words caused them unable to read with good comprehension. By the results of interview, it was concluded that vocabulary knowledge became another factor that impeded their reading comprehension. In addition, they did not use reading strategies that TOEFL test-

takers should develop. Sharpe (2005:223) argues that to answer the reading comprehension section of the TOEFL test, the test-takers should develop these strategies: previewing, reading for main ideas, using contexts for vocabulary, scanning for details, making inferences, identifying exceptions, locating references, referring to the passage, and reading faster. Previewing is intended to easier the readers understand a general idea or what the passage is about. By reading for main ideas, readers identify the point of view of the author – that is, what the writer’s thesis is. Then, using context for vocabulary help readers make a general prediction about meaning. By scanning, readers can find a place in the reading passage where the answer to a question is found. Making inferences helps readers to make a logical conclusion based on evidence in a reading passage. Identifying exceptions helps readers when they are asked to select from four possible answers the one that is not mentioned in the reading. By locating references, readers can find the antecedent of a pronoun. Next, by referring to the passage, readers can find certain information in the passage, and identify it by line number or paragraph. Finally, reading faster helps readers to answers all reading comprehension questions in a limited time.

To conclude, the students’ main problem was poor reading comprehension. The problem was caused by these factors: lack of practice and interest in reading, poor vocabulary knowledge, and undeveloped reading strategies. To solve the problem, the identified factors should be solved first. For that reason, it was assumed that designing various reading activities that helped the students read in quantity and for different reasons (e.g., information, entertainment, enjoyment) and in different ways (e.g., previewing, skimming, scanning, and more careful reading) should be taken into actions. The designed activities were attempted without annoying the ongoing teaching and learning

process. Thus, extensive reading activities were regarded as the effective way to solve the problem.

According to Bamford and Day (2004), research studies show that lack of practice and interest in reading, poor vocabulary knowledge, and undeveloped reading strategies can be solved through extensive reading. It was found many extensive reading activities in their book, a Cambridge handbook for language teachers that entitled *Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language*, which could be used to solve the problem. The activities have a variety of purposes. The activities help teachers introduce extensive reading to students, organize and introduce suitable reading material, motivate and support, and monitor and evaluate reading. Besides that, the activities are also designed to link reading with particular aspects of language learning, for example, increasing oral fluency, improving reading and writing skills, or learning new vocabulary. Therefore, it was possible for the researcher to adapt, change, modify, and adjust all of the activities to fit his own classroom, his style of teaching, and his students in order to solve the problem.

In view of the fact that developing language competence is the goal of language teaching in the Language Centre, this research was concerned with how to improve students' poor reading comprehension. Thus, the research was carried out to improve the students' reading comprehension through extensive reading activities as the way to the teaching of English as a foreign language reading that helped the students enjoy reading then facilitating good comprehension.

B. Identification of the Problem

To carry out this research, the main problem was identified to be solved. The students were in level three, around 76.19% of the students were not able to

read with good comprehension. It means most of them did not pass the passing grade. As the consequence, they needed to improve their reading comprehension in order to pass the level. Then, most of the students did not enjoy reading difficult reading materials; and most of the students needed to develop good reading habits and strategies. In brief, the main problem of reading that faced by students of the researcher's class at level III of the Language Centre was the students generally have low reading comprehension.

The problem was indicated as caused by these factors: lack of practice and interest in reading, poor vocabulary knowledge, and undeveloped reading strategies. Thus, the objective of this research was to solve the mentioned identified problem by solving the identified factors in order to improve them by implementing extensive reading activities. In addition, the factors that influenced the changed of students' reading comprehension when the researcher applied extensive reading activities at level three of the Language Center were also investigated.

C. Limitation of the Problem

Considering the researcher's time, cost, ability, and energy, it was needed to limit the problem that was going to be solved during the research. Therefore, in carrying out this research, the problem was focused on improving the students' basic reading comprehension. In order to improve it (or to solve the problem), extensive reading activities were applied. The activities were aimed to help the students find things to read that they can understand, to monitor their reading, to inspire them to be readers, and to increase their development of reading strategies.

D. Research Question

Based on the limitation of the problem, these research questions were formulated:

- a. To what extent can extensive reading activities improve students' reading comprehension at level three of the Language Center of UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau?
- b. What factors influence the changes of students' reading comprehension during extensive reading activities at level three of the Language Center of UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau?

E. Purpose of the Research

This research was carried out to answer the research questions above. Consequently, the purposes of this research were as follows:

- a. To explain to what extent can extensive reading activities improve students' reading comprehension at level three of the Language Center of UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau.
- b. To explain what factors influence the changes of students' reading comprehension during the implementation of extensive reading activities at level three of the Language Center of UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau.

F. Significance of the Research

It was believed that this classroom action research contributed something worthwhile for the researcher himself, his students, the course, and TEFL fields. First, carrying out this research was a process of the researcher's professional development. It was because the research was carried out in order to improve education practice by developing his teaching. Second, the research was strived to

improve the students' reading comprehension through extensive reading activities; so, it could give contributions to students' reading comprehension, especially in developing their reading strategies and skills. Finally, the results of this research would be useful for other researchers or teachers related to the TEFL fields, especially for promoting extensive reading as an approach to language teaching.

G. Definition of the Key Terms

After reading some literatures, the key words in this classroom action research were defined as follows:

1. Reading comprehension

The term reading comprehension in this research is defined as the interaction processes between students as the readers and printed materials (English texts) to build, to construct, or create meanings from the texts.

2. Extensive reading activities

The term extensive reading activities in this research is defined as a group of activities done by students in which they regularly read English texts that is within their linguistic competence in order to improve their reading comprehension, and also the activities are aimed to help them find things to read that they can understand, to monitor their reading, to inspire them to be readers, and to increase their development of reading strategies.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusions

The research findings during the two cycles showed that extensive reading activities improved the participants' reading comprehension. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the extensive reading activities can improve the students' reading comprehension. In addition, some factors that influenced the changes of their reading comprehension during the extensive reading activities were also concluded. The factors were providing a variety of reading materials, motivating the students to read, and practicing reading strategies. Therefore, these factors should be considered when implementing the extensive reading activities.

B. Implications

Regarding the research conclusions, it can be implied that the extensive reading activities can be implemented in language institutions because the activities can develop the students' positive attitudes and increase motivation for reading in English. As well, the activities can be implemented to make reading more enjoyable since the students are guided to read interesting and easy materials in order to inspire them to be readers. The activities can maximize the amount of the students' reading time by asking them to read both out of class and in class. Furthermore, the activities provide opportunities that can increase the students' oral fluency because they are guided to talk about what they have read to other students and to the teacher. Finally, the extensive reading activities can be considered as the good way to improve reading comprehension.

C. Suggestions

Some suggestions that related to the results of this research can be proposed as follows:

1. It is recommended that the extensive reading activities should be a necessary part of the Language Center curriculum, especially for improving the students' reading comprehension or developing their reading skills.
2. More research should be carried out to investigate the use of extensive reading activities for improving reading comprehension at different level of students in the Language Center.

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