Extensive Reading for Indonesian Learners' Linguistic Background

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Abstract

The benefits of extensive reading for EFL students majoring in English have been studied in terms of the implementation of extensive. In Indonesia, there are not so many studies in the area of extensive reading and it is difficult to find out the study about the exploration of the use of extensive reading. This article is based on background and the main discussion of extensive reading for a study about "the exploration of the EFL Indonesian students' experience in developing English competence". The study is conducted to answer the research questions; (1) How is extensive reading being taught in classrooms? (2)What are the Indonesian EFL learners' extensive reading experiences? (3) How does extensive reading develop the Indonesian EFL learners' English language competency? In order to answer these questions, linguistic background of Indonesian students is needed to be studied thoroughly, therefore, it is inspired this article. The purpose of this article is to discuss the use of extensive reading for Indonesian students' linguistic background. It will be discussed why extensive reading is expected to be experienced by Indonesian students, especially the students majoring in English. It focuses on Indonesian learners' linguistic background, extensive reading, and the use of extensive for Indonesian learners' linguistic background.

Key words: extensive reading, linguistic background, the use of extensive reading

Introduction

EFL learners in Indonesia learn English as a foreign language. Learning English implements the national curriculum. In order to gain the objectives of learning English, every body involved does any kinds of efforts. Learners learn English as a subject and teachers do any activities to improve the students' weaknesses and to increase their ability. Teachers have conducted action researches colloborating with researchers. Researchers also conduct experimental researches to find the other altinatives to improve the students' ability. Despite the learning of English as a subject in schools and some efforts done to improve the students' ability in learning English, Indonesian students can not be competent in the language. Cleophas' (2006) study found that Indonesian students graduating senior high school were still not competent in English. Similarly, Mukminatien (2007) found that one of the causes of the errors made by Indonesian students is due to the lack of understanding the content of the language. Therefore, we need to find the possible ways to improve the students' ability, like encouraging students to do extensive reading. Bamford and Day (2004) define that extensive reading is an approach to language teaching in which learners read a lot of easy material in the new language by choosing their own reading material for overall meaning, information and enjoyment.

Current studies prove how important extensive reading for Indonesian learners' linguistic background. Gustine (2013) conducted acion research in implementing a critical literacy-based approach in an Indonesian EFL secondary school. The study found that the subjects of the study had difficulties in English proficiency. It influences to the implementation of the approach. The Subjects had the perception that English was difficult. They said that it was more challenging to become critically literate in the foreign language because English was difficult. It seems that teachers need to change the learners' perception about English. They may be provided with materials and ways to make English is enjoyable before doing efforts to increase their ability.

Another study is Yusuf's (2012). He studied about the English language used by Indonesian young learners who come to US and identify their language learning strategies. He found that the participants matched variables of good language learning: aptitude, motivation, and opportunity. They were bright children and they know how to use their knowledge in learning a new language. They were also integratively motivated: they practiced their English; they were gregarious and eager to communicate. They had good opportunity to learn English in its natural setting. However, they also made systematic errors in constructing sentences. The finding reflects that the successfulness of the participants in learning English because they were in the country where they language was used. It motivated them to use the language through practice and communication. The systematic error that they made was as the influence of their Indonesian linguistic background. The opportunity they had while learning language was oral communication which was not involve individually. Different from Gustine (2013), Yusuf (2012), Tantri (2013) discusses that learning English is more than learning the language itself. It also involves things relating the language like culture. These current studies indicate that extensive reading can be as a way to increase the students' ability in English by considering their perception about English through the materials they read. The materials also provide the learners with the language compenents, language in contexts as well as culture.

EFL learners majoring in English may experience doing reading activities outside of the classroom. They may read any where; at home, the campus area or any other places. They will do reading as long as they have intention to read, especially reading English texts is very important for them. It is not only as a subject but also as an activity done in studying other English courses. The role English in Indonesia and priority for reading set the stage for the significance of extensive reading. Experiences on extensive reading of EFL Indonesian learners majoring in English are as the inspiration for this article in order to explore the use of extensive reading for Indonesian learners' linguistic background. It is based on background and the discussion of extensive reading of a study about the exploration of the EFL Indonesian students' experience in developing their ability in English competence. Therefore, article is Indonesian learners' linguistic background, extensive reading, and the use of extensive for Indonesian learners majoring in English.

Discussion

Indonesian Learners' Linguistic Background

Indonesian learners linguistic background in this article is begun with the status of English and Indonesian in Indonesia in order to present the Indonesian learners' language experiences. Linguistic background is made up of the languages and language experiences that have been parts of one's life experiences (http://www.google.com.). It is also suppossed as mother tongue (forum.wordrefere.com). English is a lingua franca and an international language that is used by many people in the world (Richards and Rogers, 2007 and McKay, Wendy, and Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). It plays the role either as a second/foreign /additional language in non-English speaking countries. In Indonesia, the role of English is as a foreign language (EFL) or International language. This means that all Indonesian learners are EFL learners. They will use English for International communication. Mckay (2002) points out that there are various characteristics of English as international language, particularly in global sense. English is learnt more individuals as an additional language. It shows that as a foreign language, English is learnt and used. Huda (2000), Renandya (2000), and Lie (2007) discuss two factors that have made English as an international language. The factors are international communication in practical fields or walks of life and as a medium through which scientific knowledge. These two factors are as reasons officially recognized. Indonesian students are not in the context that they use the language for communication and for knowledge when they learn English.

Hence, Indonesian learners learn the language for specific purposes or in this case for academic purposes. In other words, they learn English as a subject which they need to perform in the examination (Verhoeven, 2011). Similarly, teachers at schools as well as at higher institutions teach English as a subject. This is in line with the national curriculum which stipulates that the teaching of English involves teaching language aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation as content areas that will be tested in their school examinations as well as the national examinations (*Ujian Nasional - UN*). They must also pass the university English enterance test. Indonesian learners learn the language not for communication purposes.

Most Indonesian children are competent in using the local language before entering school. They use and learn Indonesian language at schools and universities. It is for teaching and learning process and it is also as a subject to be learnt. Most of the textbooks are in Indonesian. Indonesian people are expected to perceive and to appreciate the use of Indonesian language in communication. Indonesian government made the policy for the language learning. Indonesian language is as a medium of instruction in schools and in formal occasions (Quinn, 2001). Indonesian language remains a major component of the curriculum, with mastery of the language being closely related to a successful educational outcome (Fanany and Mawardi Effendi, 1999). They discuss learning Indonesian language from different point of view. They state that the Indonesian government offers class for Indonesian language is not only to teach language to learners at school but also to convey norms and values for national citizenship.

To the context of Indonesian, learners have been competent and perceive their local and national language before learning English. It is as the reflection of the Indonesian learners' linguistic background. Most Indonesian children are competent in using the local language before entering school. They have known the component of the language in the local and national language. They know words to be used, gramatical system how to use and phological system how to pronounce the language. Their competence to the languages are also supported by their environment using the language and they also use the languages. When they enter school, they also learn Indonesian as a subject because Indonesian is as a national language. Indonesian children use local language or Indonesian for informal communication and Indonesian for formal communication or to communicate with other people using different local language. Indonesian is also used for teaching and learning process and it is also as a subject to be learnt to convey norms and values for national citizenship. It means that Indonesian children are not competent in using Indonesian but also perceive why and how they use it.

The successfulness of Indonesian as a national language is not as success as in promoting the use of English for International communication. People remain handicapped by their less adequate knowledge of English. One of the factors that the government concerns is not according to English to be official second language status. It is not like Singapore and Malaysia. They have English alongside with their national language. Darwowijojo (2003) points out that it is not feasible to try and imitate the policy of other countries. However, Indonesia has not been a colony of either the U.K. or the U.S.A. in the way these countries have and there is no foundation use of English in official or public life.

Indonesian learners who are not in the context in which English is used in day and today communication can be provided with the language exposure. They should not go to English countries if they have had the opportunity. They may find the context and situation in which English is used. They can do and face the process in understanding individually through extensive reading.

Extensive Reading

Understanding what and how extensive reading is the main concern in answering the research questions of the study on "the exploration of the EFL Indonesian students' experience in developing English competence". It is also important in exploring the use of extensive reading for the use of extensive reading for Indonesian learners' linguistic background in this article.

Extensive reading is reading of longer passages with focus on enjoyment and or learning new information while reading (Silberstein, 1991, Brown, 2001 and Anderson and Nunan, 2008). Reading with enjoyment direct readers to gain the information in the process of reading until they finish reading texts. Mikulecky and Jefferies (2007) believe that extensive reading

involves reading whole books and the books are selected by the students. Day and Bamford (2004) point out that readers read a lot of reading materials for information and enjoyment. The information gained from the text is the general understanding of texts and readers will stop reading when they think the materials are not interesting or it is too difficult.

Some ways can be noticed from the description of the characteristics of extensive reading. Each writer has their own ways in describing the characteristics like Day and Bamford (1998, 2004), Malay (2009) and Aebersold and Field (2011). Day and Bamford (1998) discuss ten characteristics of successful extensive reading programs. Other writers usually refer to these characteristics like Hedgcock's and Ferris' (2009) and Aebersold and Field (2011). Hedgcock and Ferris' (2009) discuss extensive reading as what Day and Bamford (1998) while Aebersold and Field (2011) discuss nine emphasizes of extensive reading. Malay (2009) in her article discusses twelve characteristics of extensive reading. Whatever the way the writers describe about extensive reading, their focus is in order to say that extensive reading makes readers engage and compel because the texts are interesting.

The characteristics of a successful extensive reading program described by Day and Bamford (1998, 2004) are as the main concern of the study on a study about "the exploration of the EFL Indonesian students' experience in developing English competence". The characteristics are often used as refferences by researchers and other writers. Those who are interested in extensive reading need to know about the characteristics. Day and Bamford (1998, 2004) emphasize extensive reading on the number or length and the variation of the reading materials. They definitely read outside of the classroom. How, where, and when the students read are their own choice because reading in extensive reading is individual and silent. The materials are selected by students and reading its own reward because the purposes of reading are usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding. Reading speed is fast, therefore reading materials are well within the students' linguistic competence. In order to make sense for students about these characteristics, teachers or lecturers are expected to orient the students to the goal of the programs. The teachers are expected also to be role model as a readers and the members of the classroom. These are as the ten characteristics of extensive reading discussed by (1998, 2004).

The development of the concept of extensive reading by Aebersold and Field (2011) is based Day and Bamford (1998). It is in terms of the forms of report and activities done after reading. To Aebersold and Field (2011), students are required to preclude fixating on detail or translating into the first language. Students frequently read more than one texts on the same topic. The more texts students read, the more they immerse in the language aspects. The more the students immerse in the language aspects, the more they will be competent in the language use and in using the language. Texts are not only interesting but also engaging or compelling (Malay, 2009). Texts which are interesting to be read will make readers engage to continue reading the texts.

In applying extensive reading approach, MacLeod (2007) suggets three possible programs that can be done. The programs are classified into; (1) A complement to an intensive reading program, (2) An extra-curriculur activity where students read out of the class. (3) As a course for Extensive Reading as the main focus. In this program students are let to work with a class set of books, individual reading material, of their own choice, with follow-up activities such as reading logs, reading journals, book reports or projects. Day and Bamford (1998) and Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) classify the program of extensive reading into four ways. The ways are as a stand-alone course, as a part of an existing reading course, as a noncredit addition to an extensive reading course, as an extracurricular activity. The way of the program used depends on its goal. For the learners of Siak University (psydoname), the participant of the study on "the exploration of the EFL Indonesian students' experience in developing English competence". extensive reading program applied is as a stand-alone course. It is like other courses which involve a teacher, a syllabus, a classroom, materials, and time. Students are instructed to read extensively outside of the classroom and do report; written, oral presentation, and discussion.

Day and Bamford (1998) point out the goals of extensive reading program. They believe that after joining the program, students will have positive attitude toward reading in the second language. They will have confidence in their reading, they will have motivation to read in the second language, and they will read without look up dictionary. Students will know their purpose to read, therefore, they read appropriate rate for their purpose in reading. It is expected that students know how to choose appropriate reading materials for their interest and language ability and increase their word recognition ability. These goals can be gained at the end of a program. Nisdhino (2007) and Macalister (2008) found that learners have positive attitude on extensive reading. The participants said that they were satisfied after they finish doing reading. Rahim et all (2009) claim that the positive attitude of the students on extensive reading is not only in terms of language. Students who read more outside of the classroom got greater English language.

MacLeod (2007) point out the aim of extensive reading are to build the readers' confidence and enjoyment. Generally, doing extensive reading is to improve the students' reading ability, therefore, they can keep on doing reading. Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) emphasize that the goal of extensive reading program is to convince students of its value so that they will continue reading extensively on their own after the class is over. This is in line with Aebersold and Field (2011). They believe that extensive reading approach aims to improve the students' reading ability by reading for general comprehension of large quatities of texts. Ro (2013) studied that extensive reading can reduce the participant's anxiety towards reading in the target language and it can motivate to read. This is because they can learn the language and increase their reading proficiency through extensive reading.

In order to gain the goal of extensive reading program, teachers need to know how extensive reading program is designed and implemented. Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) suggest five points for designing and implementing extensive reading approach. They suggest that teachers get students on board, provide access to reading materials, help students find and select appropriate materials, design class activities; and develop accoutability or evaluation mechanism. In preparing students to work in extensive reading program, teachers are expected to make them perceive that doing extensive reading is as a pleasure activity. Students are guided to decide reading materials they read in terms of number, kinds, ways and goals of reading. In the beginning of the course, teachers can ask students to have a short presentation for summarizing research on the benefits of extensive reading. Hence, in the process of the course on going, teachers can show students the benefits of extensive reading explicitly and implicitly by talking about what they have done with the interesting reading materials they have selected. Students may share the reading materials they have read through presentations, discussions, posters, and recomendation forms.

Reading materials to be used in extensive reading need to be considered by teachers. Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) suggest that teachers are expected to provide which are appropriate for students' interest, language proficiency, and literacy skills. Teachers may consider several issues related to extensive reading as well as considering the number of reading materials they need to read and text types suggested. Day and Bamford (1998) and also quoted by Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) outline various genres of reading materials like; language learner literature, children's literature, magazines, newspapers, comic books, young adult novels, translations of works from students' first language. Teachers may provide models for making materials available like classroom or program library. It is also possible to encouraged students to have the materials, visit libraries, and conduct on line investigation. In selecting the materials, teachers are also expected to helps students to select appropriate materials in terms of their interest and difficulty level. The texts must be at or slightly below the students' current level of reading proficiency. It is expected in order they can understand the texts that they select. Students gradually may be encouraged themselves to read more challenging reading materials since the focus of extensive reading is to build confidence, motivation, and enjoyment in second language reading.

Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) offer some classroom activities of extensive reading. Firstly, teachers are expected to give students advice about extensive reading by reminding students that they have to convince themselves about their purpose in reading the materials selected. Purpose in reading will be determined by situation which makes extensive reading be enjoyable. Students should also consider speed reading and focus on meaning because students should not use dictionaries to get through the texts, however, it depends on the students' need (Bamford and Day, 19980). Students may be allowed to stop reading something that they do not enjoy and they choose other reading materials. Students may share their reading in various ways. Unlike Bamford and Day (1998), Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) think that teachers may provide class time for reading. The aims of doing this activity is to show models for students about the the importance of reading, to observe how the students progress in reading, and to promote reading community.

Teachers should also decide ways of developing accountability and evaluation mechanism in designing and implementing extensive reading program. Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) suggest that teachers decide and communicate with the students about the minimum reading requirements and reading log at the beginning of the course in a course syllabus, assignment sheet, or classroom announcements. For evaluation from extensive reading point of view, teachers can assign point values to the amount of materials or reading target (Bamford and Day, 1998 and Hedgcock and Ferris, 2009). Day and Bamford (1998) state that the students' understanding on their reading can be recognized through written report or answered to question. Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) point out that it can be assed from the component of literacy portfolio.

In doing extensive reading, EFL learners, including Indonesian learners need to know the reading materials that they are going to read is their own interest. The teachers are expected to know how to design extensive reading program because the aim of extensive reading is to make reading enjoyable for learners.

The Use of Extensive for Indonesian Learners' Linguistics Background

The use of extensive reading for Indonesian learners' linguistic background in this article is based on the use and the role of reading and the benefits of extensive reading. Reading is useful for language acquisition since it provides students with reading materials higher or lower than the students' ability (Hammer (2009). It affects on the students' vocabulary knowledge, grammar, writing, speaking in terms of talking about the idea gained from texts read. It also implies that reading can also affect on listenig since speakers and listeners in discussion about the topic from texts. Lee and Hsu (2009) emphasize that reading is the source of good writing style because learners can learn vocabulary, syntax and discource structure of the written language. The role of reading is based the general learning goals for the reading component of an English language course as offered by Hedge (2008). The goals are to be able to read a range of texts in English; to adapt reading style according to range of purposes and to apply different strategies (skimming and scanning); to build a knowledge of language (vocabulary and structure) which will facilitate development of greater reading ability. It will build schematic knowledge in order to interpret texts meaningfully; to develop awareness of the structure of written texts in English and to be able to make use of rhethorical structure, discourse features, and cohesive devices in comprehending texts, and to take a critical stance to the content of texts.

Hedgoock and Ferris (2009) conclude the benefit of extensive reading for second language readers into six ways. First, extensive reading improves comprehension skills through practice for background knowledge and reading skills to particular texts. Second, extensive reading develops automaticity through great reading. In the process of reading, learners recognize words as well as vocabulary knowledge, morphology and syntax in which the words occur. Pigada and Schmitt (2007) enhanced the students' knowledge about vocabulary in terms of spelling, meaning, and grammatical behavior of words in text. Siao-cinng Guo (2012) found that the effect on the use of extensive reading on the improvement of vocabulary aquisition in her study in Taiwan for college students majoring in English. She could not find the significant

improvement of grammar. Nwabudike and Anaso (2013) found that the students of Nigerian-Turkish International College, Kano have high stock of vocabulary although they engaged on extensive reading on their own. To that context, extensive reading program was not implemented in Nigerian-Turkish International Colleges, Kano. The students expected that their college implemented extensive reading. Third, extensive reading builds background knowledge by engaging in the texts read. The background knowledge prepares readers to the future reading. Doing extensive reading builds vocabulary and grammar knowledge by acquiring linguistic knowledge through reading.

The fourth benefit of extensive reading is the exposure of the natural use of language in the printed materials. It can make readers acquire the language for their progress in the language. Fifth, extensive reading improves productive skills through acquiring the input from reading for the output for productive skills. Siao-cinng Guo (2012) also proves that extensive reading has effects on the students' language skills. Nwabudike and Anaso (2013) specified the skill developed by doing extensive reading was listening. The last use of extensive reading is to promote students with confidence and motivation. This is because extensive is enjoyable and motivate learners to take on reading on their own in the future. This can build confidence in their own reading skills and their ability to use the second language. Yamashita (2004) found that the students had comfort self-perception reflecting on reading proficiency. It influences the performance in extensive reading.

The benefit of extensive reading has been proven by researchers and teachers. It can not only improve students' reading ability, but it has also been shown to expand knowledge of vocabulary, raise the general level of a language testing, and improve fluency and accuracy in writing. Brown (2001) claims that extensive reading component in conjunction with other focused reading instruction is highly warranted. Yamashita (2008) and Iwahori (2008) found in their study that extensive reading improve the students' reading rate or reading strategy and the general language proficiency. Yamashita (2008) believes that the students' recognition on reading strategy makes them quickly learn to apply the effective strategies to L2 reading and extensive reading is also as the form of acquiring micro level linguistics.

The use of extensive reading in the context of Indonesia is as the main concern of this session. Indonesian learners are not in the environment in which English is used when they learn the language. When Indonesian learners learn English in Indonesia, they learn just for the language. They need to perform their ability for the examination. They don't learn aiming for communication or for the knowledge. However, as language learners, they are also expected to be competent to the use of language. Therefore, they need to be involved in the context in which English is used. They can be involved from the reading materials, especially the materials selected based on their own interest. Indonesian learners need to perceive the benefits of extensive reading.

As dicussed earlier, Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) point six benefits of extensive reading for ESL readers. In this context, it includes EFL readers like Indonesian learners. First, extensive reading improves comprehension skills through practice for background knowledge and reading skills to particular texts. It means that by doing extensive reading Indonesian learners comprehend the text as the goal of reading. Their understanding to the texts they read is as their background knowledge to read the following texts. The more reading materials they read the more they master things dealing with reading. Second, extensive reading develops automaticity through great reading. The process of reading, learners recognize the components of English, like vocabulary knowledge, morphology and syntax in which the words occur. Third, extensive reading builds background knowledge by engaging in the texts read. The readers engagement to the texts they read means that they involve to the content of a text. It will be their background knowledge to read the following texts. The fourth benefit of extensive reading is the exposure of the natural use of language in the printed materials. It will prepare readers with the context of the language used. Fifth, extensive reading improves productive skills through acquiring the input from reading for the output for productive skills. When readers read texts, they acquire the language as the input they gain from reading. The input will

be as the output in which it can develop their productive skill. The last use of exstensive reading is to promote students with confidence and motivation. This is because extensive is enjoyable and motivate learners to take reading on their own in the future. They will keep on doing reading through extensive reading and gradually it will develop their ability in English. It means that doing extensive reading matches with the context of Indonesian learners' language background from the intention to read, the process in reading, and the impact of doing reading.

Conclusion

This article is to explore the use of extensive reading for Indonesian students' linguistic background. Indonesian learners who are not in the context in which English is used in day and today communication can be provided with the language exposure by doing extensive reading. It can be as a solution to increase the students' ability in English referring to their perception about English through the materials they read. The reading materials provide the learners with the language compenents, language in contexts as well as culture.

Indonesian learners in doing extensive reading need to know that the reading materials to be read is their own interest. The teachers are expected to know how to design extensive reading program because the aim of extensive reading is to make reading enjoyable for learners. The use of extensive reading for Indonesian learners are in terms of improving comprehension skills, recognizing the components of English, the exposure of the natural use of language in the printed materials, building the background knowledge, improving productive skills, promoting students with confidence and motivation. Therefore, Indonesian English teachers have to have the basic understanding about extensive reading and know how to make their students enjoyable to do reading to get the use of extensive reading as discussed in this article. It can be expected as one of the solution to improve the Indonesian learner' English ability although their linguistic background is Indonesian and they study English in Indonesia.

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