

Extensive Reading as a way to improve students' English Ability in Shipbuilding Polytechnic

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Abstract

Reading is one of skills that must be mastered by people in understanding English. A good reading competence will influence the people's ability in English. From the reality that many students feel difficult in understanding some meaning in English, another way is found out in order to improve the students' English proficiency by using and extensive reading. Extensive reading involves students in reading large quantities of books at the level appropriate for them; only one to two words per page should be unknown to a reader. The primary goal of Extensive reading is reading in order to gain information and to enjoy texts. Extensive reading (ER) has been seen as an indispensable means of developing learners' reading ability and enriching their knowledge of the language and the world. Considering that the students of Shipbuilding Polytechnic has limited time in learning English, the Extensive Reading program is one solution for them in improving their English proficiency.

Keywords: *Extensive reading, Reading competence, self-regulated reading, graded reader, reading motivation*

Introduction

Learning English cannot be separated from the process of reading, because by reading the learners' ability in using the English is developed. Among the four skills reading is one of important skill to acquire for overall language proficiency. It also said that reading is a source of learning and a source of enjoyment (Nation, 2005). In foreign language situation, a good reading competence is a necessity for those studying English for academic and occupational purposes. Hence, many curricula devote large amounts of time to reading lessons in order to achieve such competence. One process of reading which influences the learners' language acquisition is reading what they want and what they like frequently which is called as

extensive reading. Of course, there are a number of possible reasons for this, but this is partly due to the way the reading is done.

Reading is an important skill to acquire for overall language proficiency. Sustained reading skill improvement and reading motivation are needed to become a fluent reader and to develop a positive reading identity. Students can better maintain ongoing reading development by becoming autonomous and self-regulated readers. This paper explains the benefits of developing self-regulated readers through an extensive reading program, where students read many interesting books at an appropriate level of difficulty. Students and teachers made use of an extensive reading module for an open-source audience

response system. Using this system provides autonomous learning conditions that enable students to read books extensively by choosing books, monitoring, and reflecting on books read. Teachers can monitor students through summaries of the number of books read by each student, estimates of book difficulty, and popularity ratings of the books.

It can be seen that the result of applying Extensive reading (ER) in Shipbuilding Polytechnic can improve the students' reading ability and enriching their knowledge of the language and the world. Moreover, such an approach also allows students to practise strategies they learn in skill-based instruction and to experience authentic reading they will encounter in their daily lives. It is supported by Lake and Holster (2013) presents how extensive reading leads to gains in reading speed, reading motivation, and a positive reading identity.

Literature Review

Extensive reading

Extensive reading involves students reading many stories or informative texts at an appropriate level of difficulty that the readers choose themselves. As Davis (1995) explains, "pupils are given the time, encouragement, and materials to read pleasurably, at their own level, as many books as they can, without the pressures of testing or marks" (p. 320). Studies have shown that extensive reading can lead to improvements in vocabulary, writing, motivation, reading identity, speaking, listening, spelling, grammar, and, of course, reading abilities (Bamford & Day, 2004; Cirocki, 2009; Day & Bamford, 1998; Day et al., 2011; Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Iwahori, 2008; Lake, 2014; Nation, 2009). Often extensive reading is contrasted with intensive reading where students are reading short, difficult passages from a text chosen by the teacher (Waring, 2011). Even

in an academic reading program with typical reading textbooks, it is important to develop reading fluency. The "best way to develop reading fluency is through extensive reading" (Seymour & Walsh, 2006, p. 39). Therefore, it is important to incorporate an extensive reading component into the program.

In an extensive reading program, students choose books that are meaningful and interesting to them. The successful reading of many books develops positive competence beliefs about reading that leads to higher levels of reading motivation (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004; Schiefele et al., 2012). The large amount of input over time increases implicit knowledge of vocabulary and reading that also helps to develop other language skills contributing to overall improvement in language proficiency (Hunt & Beglar, 2005). In two different studies, Lake and Holster (2012) and Lake (2014) show how an extensive reading program led to student improvement in reading identity, reading motivation, and reading speed.

Fluency

Fluency has to do with reading with automaticity and comprehension (Grabe, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Automaticity in reading involves the rapid processing of text without conscious awareness. Comprehension comes from the rapid recognition of word parts, words, and greater lengths of text. There needs to be a certain degree of speed to allow complete units to be processed in working memory so that meaning can be extracted. For example, letters need to be recognized so that words and phrases can form and give meaning, and words and phrases need to be recognized so that sentences can form and provide meaning. Reading with fluency can lead to greater comprehension because it contributes to understanding of larger units of text and more cognitive resources can be employed for strategies or text

interpretation (Grabe, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2011).

Graded readers

Extensive reading programs typically make use of graded readers. These are books that are graded or leveled based on text complexity. Editors and publishers usually work with some formula that controls for vocabulary range and type of grammar allowed. Lower level graded readers will have higher frequency vocabulary with a close range of words and grammar, while higher level readers will have less frequent words in a greater range and more complex grammar.

Self-regulation

Self-regulated learning involves taking active control of learning and is often divided into phases of forethought, performance, and self-reflection (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011). Activities in the forethought phase include actions such as forming goals, planning, and building motivation. In the performance phase, activities include actions such as monitoring learning and interest, and metacognitive monitoring of learning. Activities in the self-reflection phase include such actions as self-evaluation, causal attributions of success or failure, and reflecting on positive feelings of liking or enjoying the activity.

Self-regulated reading carries over these pre-activity, during activity, and post-activity phases into the domain of reading (Guthrie et al., 2004; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997; Tonks & Taboada, 2011). Activities in the forethought phase include such actions as gauging reading ability, gauging text complexity, gauging self-efficacy, matching personal interests with texts, setting number of books per week goals, and setting time per week or scheduling goals. In the performance phase, activities include such actions as

going to the library to check out books; monitoring books for difficulty—abandon if too high, continue if not; monitoring books for interest—abandon if too low, continue if not; and monitoring for understanding. Activities in the self-reflection phase include such actions as reflecting on the difficulty, understanding, fluency, enjoyment and impressions of the book.

Problems with Monitoring ER

Ideally, students in an extensive reading program read many interesting books that they choose themselves and develop intrinsic motivation and an identity as a reader (Lake, 2014). Tests, quizzes, book reports, and other types of monitoring methods by teachers that are focused on specific details, if used with extensive reading, can lead to intensive reading and extrinsic motivation. Strict monitoring of specific details and narrow performance goals leads to problems associated with extrinsic motivation such as avoidance strategies, anxiety, and demotivation (Assor & Kaplan, 2001; Ryan & Connell, 1989; Ryan & La Guardia, 1999; Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCinto, & Turner, 2004). Strict formal assessments may make the students focus more on the assessment than reading. Formal assessments can contribute to a shift from student autonomy, choices, self-regulation and intrinsic reading motivation to teacher-regulation and extrinsic motivation (Krashen, 2004, 2011).

If students shift their intrinsic motivation to extrinsic motivation, then extensive reading may be abandoned as soon as the external regulation is removed. If intrinsic motivation can be maintained it may lead to the development of a positive L2 reading self and an even more general positive L2 self (Lake, 2013, 2014). As pointed out in first language contexts, “the real purpose of reading instruction is the development of individuals who will

engage in personal reading for pursuit of their interests, needs, recreation, practical and academic purposes, and for just pure pleasure” (Flippo, 2005, p. 21). To put it simply, in the context of second language reading, “our long-term goal is to have students who do not stop reading when the reading class is over” (Hudson, 2007, p. 29).

Methodology

Participants

Participants consist of 90 students of Shipbuilding Polytechnic from different study program who have differences TOEIC scores. All students are in the first semester and they get English subject until 4 semester. The process of monitoring the progress of the participants was done during the class meeting and outside the class meeting.

All the participants had got the TOEIC Test before actively involved in academic year. The first group consists of 30 students with TOEIC score more than 500 (Intermediate). The second group consists of 30 students with TOEIC score around 400-495 (Pre Intermediate), and the third group was consists of 30 students with TOEIC score under 400 (Elementary). Each group was given the same story book but the time to finish the book is various based on their level of proficiency.

Procedures

Students were prepared to read certain books (graded readers) and they were asked to read 5 titles of books in different time, in campus or outside the campus.

Each student who had finished reading one title of book must report it by signing book report. The book report consists of questions related to the book that they have read.

After finishing one title of book, the students get the second book and read it in certain time that can be done any time inside or outside the campus. Then they must report it to the teacher to get the signature and feedback about the book. The teacher can ask students to fill out a short record form indicating the name of the book they have just read, its level, how long it took to read, and a brief comment on the quality of the book.

It will continue until 5 book titles and the teacher give the feedback individually. The process of monitoring the students’ progress is controlled regularly

The process of monitoring students’ progress can be done directly using book report and also using on-line system in the web site. With the web site system, students can use phones or other mobile devices or regular computers to take quizzes or surveys; in this case, it was the graded reader survey. Teachers can then give feedback to individual students or classes about how many books they have read. For example, after the second week of classes a teacher could give individual feedback that a student has read “X number of books” and that “most students in class have read over 5 books” to provide students with a normative sense of where they are in relation to the group. Alternatively, a teacher could give more feedback such as “some students have

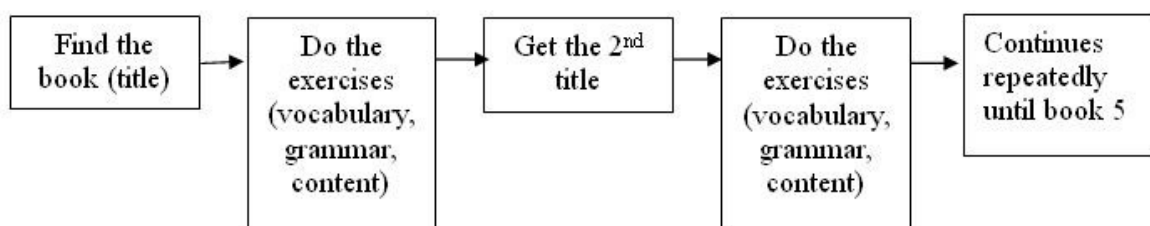


Figure 1. Research procedure

read more than 5 books" to show what some students have found possible.

Results

The discussion of the study shows that the students' reading achievement is different from some factors. The first is the difficulties in understanding new vocabulary often cause problem that influence the intension to read. The second

is the lack of interest from students in reading English book; and this caused the unsatisfied result. The third is the low motivation of students in reading English book influences the students' English proficiency.

Title of Book: The Umbrella (300 words)

LEVEL	COMPREHENSION	LENGTH OF TIME
Elementary	Poor	1 hour
Pre Intermediate	Average	50 minutes
Intermediate	Good	30 minutes

Title of Book: The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn (600 words)

LEVEL	COMPREHENSION	LENGTH OF TIME
Elementary	Poor	1,5 hours
Pre Intermediate	Average	1 hours
Intermediat	Good	50 minute

Title of Book: The Lost World (1100 words)

LEVEL	COMPREHENSION	LENGTH OF TIME
Elementary	Poor	2 hours
Pre Intermediate	Average	1,5 hours
Intermediate	Good	1 hour

Title of Book: Gandhi(1400 words)

LEVEL	COMPREHENSION	LENGTH OF TIME
Elementary	Poor	2,5 hours
Pre Intermediate	Average	2 hours
Intermediate	Good	1,5 hour

Title of Book: Jurrasic Park (1600 words)

LEVEL	COMPREHENSION	LENGTH OF TIME
Elementary	Poor	3 hours
Pre Intermediate	Average	2,5 hours
Intermediate	Good	2 hours

The process of comprehending the book was various based on the level of English Proficiency. The easiest book could be finished by Intermediate level students not

more than 30 minutes, while the Elementary level students must finish it around 1 hour. And the speed of each level

is various depend on the number of vocabulary in each book.

Overall, the table show that the students' motivation and intension in reading keep running well until they finish to the highest level of vocabulary. It can be concluded that the extensive reading program can increase students' motivation and improve the students English proficiency.

Conclusion

As part of a work-in-progress, and from previous studies (Lake, 2014; Lake & Holster, 2012), we found that autonomous learning conditions can help students develop as self-regulated readers. Through the use of graded readers in an extensive reading program, students gained in reading speed, developed a more positive L2 reading self, and increased L2 reading motivation. Students' L2 reading anxiety showed a negative relationship to a positive L2 reading self, L2 reading motivation, and reading speed. If students are to be able to read outside the classroom, they will need to be autonomous self-regulated readers, and this study shows that a foundation to develop as such can be built in an extensive reading program. This has the potential to help students in the future as they read for personal and academic interests and far into the future as lifelong readers.

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