Increasing English Reading Comprehension through Literary Text Extensive Reading Program

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Abstract
University students have to complete their reading at a different level. Yet, the observation showed that the students' Reading course scores are decreased in this last pandemic semester. The research objective is to improve reading comprehension skills through an extensive program of reading literary texts. It used a mixed method. Research participants are 5th-semester students who receive extensive reading (2) courses in the 2020-2021 academic year at Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika Jakarta as many as 70 students. There are two data used in this study, namely 1) qualitative data taken using a questionnaire. Qualitative data were analyzed using transcribed and encoded, organized, categorized, and taking concluding. 2) Quantitative data were taken from the pre-test and post-test. The test data were analyzed using a t-test. The results of the study show that overall an extensive reading program with literary texts has an impact on improving English reading comprehension. Students also have a positive perception of the extensive reading program because they can build interest in reading and reading habits.
Keywords: English, Extensive Reading, Literary Text

INTRODUCTION

Changing the teaching and learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic is not easy for students and lecturers (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020). As in many countries around the world, as part of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools are locked down and adapting learning activities (König et al., 2020; Daniel, 2020;

John Lemay et al., 2021). The learning process that switches from face-to-face to online as a transition (Lemay et al., 2021) poses a different challenge to lecturers (Mali & Lim, 2021), even though distance learning has so far been well known among college students. Some of the challenges that educators face during the COVID-19 pandemic include ignorance of digital platforms, inability to provide prompt feedback, and lack of student motivation and engagement during distance teaching (Nugroho et al., 2021). However, the current situation requires everyone with all their readiness to carry out online teaching and learning activities through video calls (Azak et al., 2021; Wargadinata et al., 2020). Schoology in blended learning in reading comprehension classes has a positive impact on students' attitudes toward improving reading skills (Rojabi & Rojabi, 2021). It means that technology as a website for learning gave a positive impact on the class and as the internet resource (Kocoglu, 2010; Mohammadian et al., 2018). Some technology application or smartphone has been the main tool in the learning process (Iyengar et al., 2020). It means that in pandemic covid-19, technology and learning concept has to adopt to get learning goals.

From the results of data analysis on learning outcomes in the even semester of the 2019-2020 academic year in the Extensive Reading course, it was concluded that the level of understanding of reading did not increase when compared to Reading courses in the odd semester. This is known from the average score that does not change and the final value of this course tends to decrease. While the evaluation results from observations when learning activities are carried out using zoom also show that students tend to wait for information from the lecturer about the content of the text that must be understood. The task of reading 1 in 1 semester was also not completed because students' reading reports only reached 50%. Meanwhile, only 20% of students completed their reading books. While the results of the interviews concluded that students tend to be difficult and do not like academic books.

Therefore, this study offers a different solution to the problem of students' reading comprehension skills, namely through an extensive reading program with literary texts. While the results of interviews with 40 students in the extensive reading class in the even semester of 2019-2020 showed that 82% preferred literary works to academic reading sources. In addition, this literary reading resource is also part of the Literature course learning. This is based on the reason that students tend to like literary works as a source of reading (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014). So far, the teaching of literature is considered to function as a gateway to extensive reading activities. Carter and Long explain that the use of literature as a reading resource offers the possibility for teachers to base language learning activities on materials that can stimulate greater interest and involvement than using other texts (Daskalovska & Dimova, 2012). Another study also found that the use of literary texts for a critical reading approach is recommended for English teachers in teaching reading comprehension to improve students' reading comprehension achievement because literary texts can help students understand the content of the text by

reading interesting texts (Nurrohmah et al., 2015). In addition, literary texts can also be considered authentic texts that can have a positive impact on students' reading comprehension (Bakhshizadeh Gashti, 2018).

Extensive reading (mostly fiction) has a positive effect on students' reading skills in other nonfiction (Abdellah, 2013). For university students, they have to complete their reading at different levels. Extensive reading is a way for students to develop their competence. However, most of the students do not read in English extensively (Niati, 2017). Whereas students who read more pages performed better in their reading comprehension and speed (Kirin et al., 2012). In addition, extensive reading activities can also increase vocabulary enrichment (Chun et al., 2012). Extensive Reading Programs (ERPs) have reached a positive conclusion, that ERP for language learners is effective in improving their language skills related to reading and promoting their motivation and attitude towards reading (Lin, 2014). The same research also shows that reading affects students' motivation (Ro, 2016). Overall, an extensive reading program that accommodates students' freedom in reading, becomes a successful alternative to foster L2 students' reading motivation if it is implemented by considering several possible meetings (Puspitasari, 2020).

Extensive reading as a means of learning vocabulary and its impact on increasing lexical knowledge of Intermediate EFL students (Ghanbari & Marzban, 2014). The results of another study showed a significant effect of the instructional reading strategy on the reading comprehension performance of the treatment group (Raissi & Roustaei, 2013). So, this extensive reading program of literary texts is also a way for lecturers to prepare students for literature lectures. Another reason that underlies this program is to build students' love of reading. If students are already fond of reading and are always motivated to read, their reading literacy and reading engagement levels can be good (Cheung et al., 2016).

Thus, this study aimed to improve reading comprehension skills through an extensive program of reading literary texts. The results of this study are expected to be considered as an alternative to solve reading learning problems so that educators can easily develop teaching skills in managing classes. In addition, students are helped in overcoming learning difficulties, especially those related to understanding English reading, students can increase their activeness in learning in class and students can directly have thoughts on the contents of the readings being studied.

METHOD

Research participants are 5th-semester students who receive extensive reading (2) courses in the 2020-2021 academic year. The research was conducted at the English Language Study Program, Bina Sarana Informatika University, Jakarta. Extensive reading classes are conducted online. The classes involved in this study were 2 classes with 70

students. It used a mixed method. Qualitative methods were adopted in this study as well as quantitative methods. Thus, it helps to understand the data subjectively.

Qualitative data is taken from the views or perceptions of students on the extensive reading program through literary texts in improving reading comprehension. This data was taken using a questionnaire distributed to students after the program was completed. The data that has been obtained was analyzed in several stages, namely 1) the data was transcribed and encoded, 2) systematically organized and categorized the data thematically, and placed them in comparable groups, 3) concluded from the results of data analysis and presented in graphical form. Meanwhile, quantitative data were taken from the tests given before and after the program intervention. Data were taken through pre-test and post-test. The test results data were analyzed using an independent sample t-test.

The implementation of the program is carried out according to the lecture schedule. The program sessions are structured as follows: (a) in the first part of the session the teacher gives instructions and provides a theoretical analysis of what is to be learned. Then it was continued with the process of implementing an extensive reading program and presenting three-level taxonomy of reading comprehension skills. (b) The second part focuses on collaborative group work. The students are guided by the lecturer in group work to achieve three taxonomic levels of reading comprehension. (c) The third part of the session is more concerned with enabling students to work independently, with each student being asked to present their reading.

The program consists of 10 sessions conducted over 10 weeks. Every week, there is a discussion session on the results of reading books. Each discussion session lasted for two hours. The first session explained the learning objectives, provided a choice of reading materials and the methodology of the extensive reading program. Nine sessions were used to carry out the extensive literary text reading program. The levels of student reading comprehension that must be mastered are: 1) Literal Comprehension: Literal comprehension, the lowest of the three levels, requires a reader to be able to retell or recall the facts or information presented in a text. 2) Inferential Comprehension: Inferential comprehension, the next level, refers to the ability of a reader to take in information that is inferred or implied within a text. 3) Critical Comprehension: Critical or evaluative comprehension, the third and highest level in the taxonomy, involves making critical judgments about the information presented in the text.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The results of the pre-test and post-test data test showed that an extensive reading program using literary texts had a positive impact on the level of reading comprehension ability. This can be seen from the test results which are quite different before being given an extensive reading program.

Table 1. The result of the t-test

Criteria	Score	
Mean	49	82,24286
Variance	41,62318841	22,21553
P(T<=t) one-tail	7,3509	
t Critical one-tail	1,667	
P(T<=t) two-tail	1,4701	
t Critical two-tail	1,994	

Result of data analysis concluded that t Stat < t-table (-34,881 < 1,994). It can be said that Ho is rejected and H$_1$ is accepted. It means that an extensive reading program using literary text is effective to increase students' reading comprehension. The average score of the pre-test was 49 and an increase in the post-test was 82. The variance score of the pre-test was 41.6 and the post-test was 22.2. The positive impact of this extensive reading program can also be seen from the results of the Pearson correlation of 0.0078. This means that there is a 78% effect of an extensive reading program using literary texts on students' English reading comprehension skills. In addition, the test results of each individual also increased, as shown in the following graph:
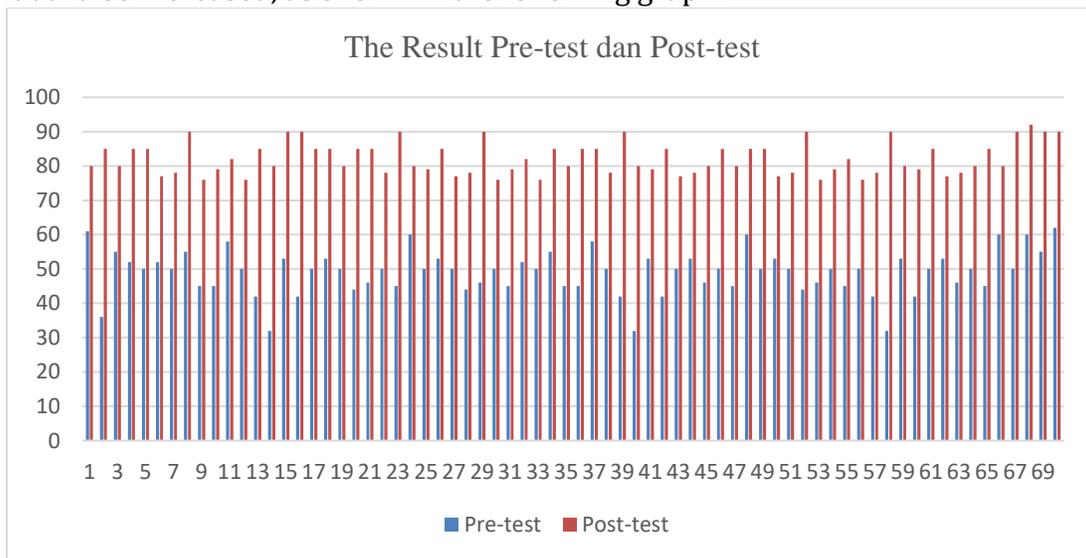

Figure 1. The Result of Pre-Test and Post-Test

From graph 1, it is known that everyone experienced an increase in scores from pre-test to post-test. The lowest score from the pre-test result was 32 and the lowest post-test score was 72. The highest score from the pre-test was 62 and the highest score from the post-test was 92. The difference in values was significant enough to determine the improvement in English reading comprehension. As for the results of the analysis of the questionnaire data that has been distributed to students, it can be concluded that literary

reading books provide a different sense to students in their desire to read. The percentage results from the questionnaire are presented in the following table.

Table 2. The result of recapitulation of students' reading comprehension

Component	Indicators	Percentage
Literal comprehension	Identify word meaning	86%
	Meaning context	93%
Inferential comprehension	Identify the main idea	83%
	Identify relation in the text	86%
Critical comprehension	Analyzing the process of text	90%

Table 2 shows that for the indicators for each component of the assessment of English reading comprehension ability, students experience good perceptions. Students have understood the literal meaning of the contents of literary readings by 86%. This also has an impact on understanding the meaning of the context with a percentage level of 93%. The level of inferential understanding also experienced very good development. Students can understand the main idea of literary reading texts by 83% and students' ability to identify relationships between sentences or between texts is also very good. From these two levels of understanding, students also can critically understand reading by 90%. This can be seen from the delivery of reporting on reading results which is quite good because it involves their critical thinking level in presenting reading results. By reading literary texts, students can understand and appreciate the world and know their abilities (Magulod, 2018), and build students' learning experience (Shamsur et al., 2018).

Reading comprehension has an important role, not only to understand the content of the text but this understanding more broadly is used for learning, the success of the educational process, and work. However, reading comprehension is also important for social life (Oakhill et al., 2015). So, the ability to read helps build people's social life. This can be seen in everyday human life which has a relationship with the reading comprehension process which is implemented in the use of email texts, reading activities, reading sources, and social media sites or social networks. Thus, a person's reading ability makes a major contribution to the activities of daily life.

The findings of this study also provide an understanding that reading is the basis of the communication process between individuals and literary texts. This means that the communication process conveys messages graphically through a series of words between individuals (Israel, Susan E, 2005), as well as meaningful symbols (Scanlon et al., 2010). The process of understanding text reading involves the process of presenting symbols that arise from words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that are equipped with a theme. While the situation model in understanding the text is an elaboration and integration of knowledge that has been possessed with the information in the text. Thus, the process of understanding reading texts requires a systematic framework for regulating the learning

process that comes from the students themselves, because the understanding process takes place or occurs when the reader can summarize and integrate various kinds of information from the text and combine it with what is already known. Learning to understand reading requires the right strategy.

Extensive Reading directs students to read many reading sources according to their interests and level of understanding. This extensive reading activity can be applied outside the classroom or at home because the extensive reading stage has led to the assumption that reading is for pleasure. Moreover, the advancement of digital technology today has made it easy for anyone to get reading resources through the internet network. Online reading sources are the right medium for extensive reading activities through literary texts. Many novels, short stories, and poems can be found online. Permatasari et al. (2020) show that Wattpad as a technology application has contributed to the improvement of students' reading skills which has an impact on writing skills as well. This is in line with the results of research from Park (2016) which shows that an extensive reading program can have an impact on writing ability as well.

Another study provides evidence that improving reading skills through extensive reading activities is quite effective and efficient (McLean & Rouault, 2017). This provides an overview of the findings that an extensive reading program using literary texts can build the concept of reading as a pleasure and hobby. The students did not consider reading to be a boring activity. Especially nowadays, technology has spoiled students to surf the internet to get the latest information from various events happening around the world. Therefore, this research has implications for the concept of teaching and learning. Teachers can use students' enjoyment of surfing the internet in an extensive reading activity program through literary texts. Teachers can also direct them to do extensive reading activities using a variety of texts or reading sources. the extensive reading program through literary texts also provides opportunities for students to build a critical level of understanding. Students can analyze the content of the text and retell the contents of the text appropriately. So extensive reading is assumed to be a pedagogic activity that provides many benefits for reading comprehension skills.

Besides that, students also have a positive perception of the extensive reading program because it can build interest in reading and reading habits. As in previous studies, it was also concluded that there was a significant effect between reading habits and students' reading comprehension. This means that the more students have high reading habits, the higher their understanding (Al Baironi Haka et al., 2015). It means that the more students who have high reading habits, the higher the understanding. Reading comprehension ability is closely related to student success in academic contexts where reading serves as the primary means of conveying content (Stoller & Nguyen, 2020). Reading is not only understanding the meaning in the text but also understanding the phenomenon of people's social life. The process of understanding the content of reading is related to how someone understands the context and has experience. Students have a lot of

knowledge about the themes in the reading. So, learning reading comprehension provides an opportunity for students to understand the social context.

CONCLUSION

The extensive reading program using literary texts provided an increase in English reading comprehension. The test results showed that there was a significant difference before students were given an extensive reading program. Individually, students also experienced an increase in test scores from before and after the extensive reading program. While the results of filling out the questionnaire showed a positive perception of this program. The level of students' reading comprehension showed a fairly good chance. In addition, students also have a fairly good reading habits.

The results of this study have implications for the concept of reading comprehension in English to understand the differences in skills and processes involved in text interpretation. Readers understand the concept of text and develop it according to the conditions or context of the reading. Meaning is formed by the mind of the reader who influences knowledge. Every reader who constructs meaning considers the relationship of the reader's abilities, rules, schemes, and models of mental abilities. Because reading comprehension is the process of managing all the desired information, feelings and thoughts to be transferred.

This study is still limited to the ability to understand reading through literary texts in an extensive reading program so the results of the study are still focused on student reading outcomes with literary reading levels. Thus, this research can still be developed to determine the level of reading habits of academic students. This means that researchers can use an extensive reading program to determine their reading comprehension skills in fields other than literature. In addition, the results of this study can also be used by lecturers as a form of developing student interest in reading and also strategies to build student motivation in reading.

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