

Students' Attitude toward Extensive Reading Subject, A Case Study by Students of Teacher Training Faculty of HKBP Nommensen University Pematangsiantar

Tiarma Intan Marpaung

(Universitas HKBP Nommensen, Medan-Pematangsiantar, Indonesia)

Abstract: *This study aims to find out the students' attitudes toward extensive reading in English Department of Nommensen University, Pematangsiantar. Therefore, the finding of this study is the answer for a research question: What are the students' attitudes toward extensive reading class?. The data of this study were collected through questionnaire that consisted of 10 statements about attitude. The participants were 40 students from English Department who took Extensive Reading Course in semester 5 2014/2015. The data from the questionnaire were calculated in percentage for the interpretation and analysis based on the theory of attitude. The finding showed that there were positive responses of the participants for the three attitude components; affective, cognitive and behavioral component. From the positive responses, it can be concluded that the participants had positive attitude toward extensive reading. Through the result of this study, it was expected to give benefits for both the students to know necessary information about their attitudes toward reading and the lecturers to encourage their students to read more. Also, it helps them to prepare more interesting reading materials and activities which suit students' needs and interests.*

Keywords: *Attitude, Extensive Reading, Reading Material*

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is important in daily life activity. Everyday people read to increase their knowledge; especially in education, reading is the duty for students. Almost 80% of their activity in every course includes reading. By reading, the students are able to know every information about science and other things. According to Pauk in Widiamartaya (1992), the skill of reading is a continual skill needed in everyday's life. That is why reading skills are not only needed at college but also at work because reading can help people to develop many useful skills.

Generally, reading is divided into two; extensive reading, where students read simplified and pleasurable books in order to make them enjoy the reading activity (Helgesen, 2005) and intensive reading, which is considered to be a language lesson since it focuses on studying text and analyzing the structure (Susser & Robb, 1990). In English Department of Nommensen University, Pematangsiantar, the lecturers teach extensive reading with the aim to introduce reading and increase the students' interests toward reading before they take the intensive reading classes. However, based on the lecturers' experience in teaching reading classes (Mambu, 2011; Sidupa 2011; Setiamunadi, 2011; Rudianto, 2010), they found that most of students have a low interest in reading. The amount of reading activities and assignments also make the students in the extensive reading class feel burdened when they take this course. Therefore, to know about the students' attitudes, it is necessary to know further information about it first.

According to Kerlinger (1984) attitude affects people to have a certain tendency toward things around them such as environment, issues, and different kind of ideas. Attitude affects

people's emotion, motivation, and cognitive response toward certain problems. In other words attitude is a special tendency, thought, or opinion that people have in facing problems or viewing certain matters. Another expert such as Ajzen (1987) stated that attitude is "a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event". He also stated that "it must be inferred from measurable respect that reflects positive or negative evaluation toward the attitude object". Since no one is the same, there must be different response or attitude of people toward something.

There are two types of attitude according to Mager (1986); the favorable or positive attitude and unfavorable or negative ones. He explained that when a person has favorable attitude he or she is moving toward stimulus. On the contrary, when a person has unfavorable attitude he or she is moving away from the stimulus. There is an example from Mager (1986) that if a person has a positive attitude toward television, then, he or she will say favorable things about it. It will be totally different if the person has a negative attitude toward the television, then, he or she will try to get away as far as he or she can from the television. The television here is an example of the stimulus.

Mathewson (1994) mentioned three components of attitude; affective, cognitive, and behavior. The first component is affective. It refers to feeling or emotion. It can be like (favorable) or dislike (unfavorable) or opinion of 'good-bad' about a thing. For instance, a student says "I like reading". It refers to the person's feeling (positive) about a certain thing; in this case is reading. We may say that sometimes people say something as the response about a thing without thinking it first but spontaneously say it. It is different with the second component; cognitive. It refers to belief, thought, or rational argument. In another words, it is a set of thought or belief toward a thing such as particular person, idea, rational arguments, and situation. People have certain responses such as negative or positive about a particular matter, when they have certain thought, belief or argument toward it. For example, when a person says "I think reading is important" which is a positive response; it means that the response of a person is based on thinking.

From this explanation about affective and cognitive components, it is obvious that feeling refers to emotion and thinking refers to ration (Wiley & Sons, 1998). The last component of attitude is behavioral response or according to Mathewson (1994) as cited in Yamashita (2004) sometimes it is called conactive. Here a person will do real reaction or show certain matter or behave in a certain way toward something when he or she has certain thought or belief. Moreover, it is also related to particular confidence as Visser et al (2004) stated that if people are sure and confident with their thought and belief toward certain matter, it will be expressed through their behavior; such as a person regularly spends time to read newspaper, magazine or a certain book every day. This is the positive act of the person's belief that reading is important. Furthermore, Rejecki as stated in Berstein et al (1991) also said that an attitude is a tendency to respond emotionally, cognitively, or behaviorally to a particular entity in a particular way toward anything whether the response is positive or negative.

Extensive reading, as Day and Bamford (1997) have suggested, is a way to advance the learners' vocabulary competence as well as their general proficiency. They further emphasized that extensive reading is an effective supplement to the English language. Day and Bamford (1998) also identified ten characteristics or principles to be applied in teaching extensive reading. The characteristics or principles are the students read fast as much as possible a variety of materials on a wide range of topics, perhaps in and out of the classroom. This is the reason why dictionaries are rarely used while reading because the constant stopping to look up words makes

fluent reading difficult. It is also individual and silent as the students read at their own pace and outside class whenever and wherever they choose. Actually, the purposes of extensive reading are usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding. The purposes are determined by the nature of the material and the interest of the students that allow them to select what they want to read and have the freedom to stop reading material that fails to interest them. Furthermore, reading materials are good within the linguistics competence of the students in terms of vocabulary and grammar.

This research used a descriptive method, specifically, survey method with a questionnaire as the instrument in collecting the data. The participants of this study were the students of the English Department of Nommensen University, Pematangsiantar who took Extensive Reading Class in Semester 5 in 2014 / 2015 comprising 40 students.

The data were gathered through a questionnaire that was adapted from the original attitude questionnaire from Davis et al (1992) about undergraduate attitudes toward the study of literature. The questionnaire had 10 statements about attitude toward extensive reading: 2 statements for affective component (number 1 and 4), 6 statements for cognitive component (number 2, 3, 7, 8, 9 and 10) also 2 statements for behavioral component (number 5 and 6). The questionnaire used a four-point Likert Scale with four options (**SA**, *strongly agree*, **A**, *agree*, **SD**, *strongly disagree* and **D**, *disagree*). The options "agree" and "strongly agree" represent a positive response while "disagree" and "strongly disagree" represent a negative response. The participants were expected to choose one option from the four options provided for one statement to represent their opinion.

The data were obtained from the questionnaires given to the participants. After that, the responses to the questionnaire were grouped according to similar category. Then, the responses calculated in percentage for the interpretation and analysis based on the attitude theory by Mathewson (1994) about the three components of attitude; affective, cognitive, and behavioral or conative

II. DISCUSSIONS

The report in this section is the description of interpretation and analysis based on the data from 40 participants. The result of the questionnaire showed the students' attitudes toward Extensive Reading Class.

The first discussion is the analysis of affective component. There were two statements in the questionnaire for affective component. The first statement was *Reading is daily activity which is extremely useful*. Mathewson (1994) as cited in Yamashita (2004), said that affective refers to feeling or emotion that can be "like-dislike" or opinion of 'good-bad' about a thing. Figure 1 below shows that there were 32 % of the participants chose *strongly agree* and 63 % chose *agree*. It means 95 % of the the total participants in this class had positive opinion or feeling that reading is daily activity which is extremely useful for them. Only 5 % of the participants responded negatively. The usefulness of reading in participants' daily activity can be diagrammed in Fig. 1 below.

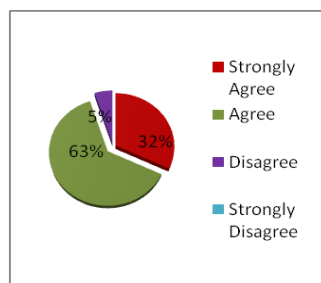


Figure 1. The usefulness of reading in participants' daily activity.

This result supported Pauk's statement in Widyamartaya (1992), that reading is a continual skill needed in everyday's life or basic on-going skill as reading skills are not only needed at college. By looking at the participants' responses in this statement, it was clear that they did not only feel or think that reading is useful for academic purposes but also in everyday activity such as reading newspaper to find information about what happen recently or reading magazines to find information about certain things that catch the participants' attention. In fact, when people watch tv and walk down the street, they do reading. That is why reading is a daily activity.

The result for the second statement, *I enjoy reading if I can choose what I want to read*, is exactly the same as the first statement. The result in the figure 2 is positive as 63 % of the participants chose *strongly agree* and 32 % chose *agree* for this statement. The pleasure of reading when reading materials suited participants' needs and interests can be diagrammed in Fig. 2 below.

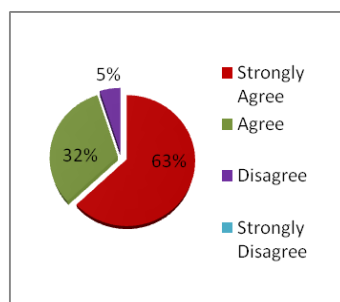


Figure 2. The pleasure of reading when reading materials suited participants' needs and interests.

The result is in line to Koch's (2006) statement about extensive reading as reading for pleasure where learners were allowed to choose reading materials which suited their interest. We can see here that the participants had a positive feeling toward extensive reading materials because they were able to choose materials based on their interest and level. The levels of the novel is meant for students to read from easy to more difficult stories. When they read a story which they can understand, they will enjoy it. This result about affective component also supported Yamashita's finding (2004) that comfort or a positive affective component has positive correlations with extensive reading among college of English as Foreign Language students in Japan. He also said that reading is primarily a cognitive act, but it is also affective. Cognitive and affective conditions are interconnected, interdependent, and interactive.

The second component of attitude is cognitive which also got the same positive response of the participants. Based on the theory of Mathewson (1994), cognitive response is a set of

thought or belief toward a thing such as particular person, idea, rational arguments, situation and thing. No wonder that people are having certain responses such as negative or positive about particular matter, if they have certain thought, belief or argument toward it. As indicated in figure 3, 11 % of the participants chose *strongly agree* and there are 84 % chose *agree*. The total responses for the statement, *I find extensive reading personally rewarding*, was exactly the same as the affective component, 95 % of the participants had positive response that extensive reading is personally rewarding, as they can read materials they like without be bounded by time, space, or even class. In this reading activity, they were the one who managed the time, chose the comfortable place and read the material for pleasure. Besides, at the same time they learned the target language in easy enjoyable way. They also had benefits such as knowing new vocabulary, having more understanding about grammar and tenses and many other. The personal reward gained from extensive reading can be diagrammed in Fig. 3 below

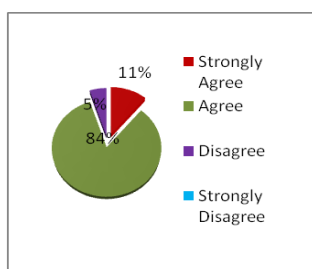


Figure 3: Personal reward gained from extensive reading.

The result for the next two statements, *I feel my reading skill is developed in extensive reading class* and *I feel my vocabulary is developed in extensive reading class*, were also positive since 100 % of the participants chose *strongly agree* and *agree* for these statements. In fact, 89 % of them believed that their ability to read in English got better through extensive reading class (*I feel my ability to read in English got better through extensive reading class*), because the books or novels that they had to read were all in English with 6 levels of difficulty. So when they got use to read books or novels in English, they enjoyed and continued to read and certainly their ability got better. It proved by Richard and Schmidt's (2002) theory who explained that "extensive reading means reading in quantity and in order to gain a general understanding of what is read. It is intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading" (pp. 193-194). Obviously, extensive reading helped the participants in developing their ability to read especially in English because they could read faster without opening a dictionary for difficult words. Besides, although they read faster, they were able to know the details of the story they had read. Besides their reading skills and their abilities to read in the target language, their vocabulary also developed as there were 21 % of the participants chose *strongly agree* and 79 % chose *agree* for the statement. It shows that the participants believed the process of reading stories helped them to meet new words, idioms, phrases, and grammar structures of the target language. They also got more understanding about how certain words, idioms, phrases, and grammar structure were appropriate for certain use in certain context in writing and speaking. In reading activities, they were not allowed to open dictionary for every single difficult word, they should find the meaning from the context or guess it. This activity improved their ability to understand difficult words from the contexts.

The result for the next statement of the questionnaires, *I feel my writing ability is developed in extensive reading class*, shows that there were 21 % of the participants chose *strongly agree* and 58 % chose *agree* that their writing ability developed in the extensive reading class. In extensive reading class, the participants should read book(s) or novel(s), write important points or summary of the story and give comments of what they think about the story for their weekly journal writing to be submitted in the following week. The theme for every week journal was different from week to week, such as for the first week the theme was *reading journal on points of the story of a book that interest me*, for the second week was *reading journal on my own personal experience*, for the third week was *reading journal on favorite parts in a book*, the fourth week was *reading journal on how I would change the ending of a story in a book*, etc. Then, when they came to class, they shared their reading journals in group discussion. Extensive reading also helped them in creative and critical thinking of how to deliver what they thought about the story they read in their journal writing and also in project presentation where they should compare the content of the story in the book version and movie version. The obligatory requirement for all English Department students to take Extensive reading class can be diagrammed in Fig. 4 below

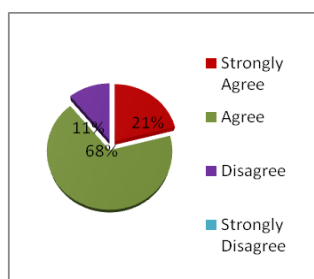


Figure 4. The obligatory requirement for all English Department students to take Extensive Reading class.

After the participants took extensive reading class and got the benefits, they believed that extensive reading should be taken by all English Department students. Figure 4 shows that 21 % of the participants chose *strongly agree* and 68 % chose *agree*. It means that they also recommended other students of English Department to experience the same benefits by taking this class, as Richard and Schmidt (2002) stated that benefits of extensive reading includes the development of good reading habits, knowledge and structure building, and encouragement of high reading interest. This result of positive cognitive supported Yamashita's finding (2004) that self-perception or a positive cognitive component has positive correlations with extensive reading among college of English as Foreign Language students in Japan.

The last component of attitude in this discussion is behavioral or conative component. There were two statements for behavioral component in the questionnaire; "*There are many different genres of reading materials (novel) in extensive reading class that is why I enjoy reading and enthusiastically produce a reading journal about the story I read every week*" and "*Extensive reading Class has interesting materials and activities that is why I read two novels (minimum) every week*". The results for both statements were positive. The total positive response for the former statement was 95 %: 37 % chose *strongly agree* and 58 % *agree*. The result for the latter statement was 74 %: 5 % of the response chose *strongly agree* and 69 % chose *agree*. According to Koch (2006), extensive reading materials should be fun, interesting,

and enjoyable. Moreover, the materials should address students' needs, tastes, and interests because the more the students are interested and enjoy the reading, the more they do the better. According to the extensive reading lecturers, English Department always tries to provide and add different kinds of books at the campus library with different genres such as non-fiction (culture, history, biography, science, etc) and fiction (humor / comedy, mystery / thriller, love / romance, adventure, science fiction, etc) for the students so that they will have a lot of varieties of books to read based on their interest and level. Therefore, they read at least two books every week along the semester. The reason was they enjoyed and got benefits from reading different kinds of materials and activities in extensive reading class, especially when it required them to write reading journals and watch the movie version of the story they read, then present their thoughts about the content for both book and movie versions in the final project presentation.

III. CONCLUSION

The results of the study demonstrated the answer of the research question, *what are the students' attitudes toward extensive reading class?*, that is the participants had positive attitude toward extensive reading class. The findings showed that all responses toward the three attitude components; affective, cognitive and behavioral or conative were positive that was represented by the *strongly agree* and *agree*. This result supported Bamford & Day (1998)'s theory that when the students read based on their interest, definitely, they will have positive attitude, confidence, motivation. Moreover, it also increased their word recognition ability and finally they knew the purpose of reading when they read because they enjoy reading when they were able to choose based on their interest which is in line with Mathewson's (1994) theory about attitude which says that a person will do real reaction or show certain matter or behave in certain way toward something when he or she has certain thought or belief.

From the result of this study, it was good to find that the participants had positive attitude that shown through their emotion, thought and behaviour toward the extensive reading class. It means that they did not feel burden with the materials and the activities during the entire semester. In fact, it is important to know that they enjoyed the reading materials and activities so that they got a lot of benefits from the extensive reading class.

Moreover, through the result of this study, it can give benefit for participants to know necessary information about their attitudes toward reading, especially extensive reading. This study can also help the lecturers who teach extensive reading and intensive reading classes to pay attention to the students' needs and interests about reading and keep giving good motivation and influence for the students to love reading by improving, developing and updating the quality of reading materials and exercises based on the students' needs and interests.

Besides, further study can be conducted considering that this study has some limitations. The first is it only had a small population of participants. The second is the number of questionnaire items were not balance for each of the attitude components, that is why it is necessary to increase the number of items that relevant to the study. The last is this study did not include observation to find out more about the participants' behavior or conative (the third attitude component). Therefore, for further study it is important to do observation and interview to get more information and better result related to the participants' behavior or conative.

REFERENCES

- 1) Ajzen, I. (1987). *Concise Encyclopedia of Psychology*. USA: Baker House Book Company.
- 2) Bamford, J., & Day, R. R. (1997). Extensive reading: What is it? *The Language Teacher*, 21 (5), 6-8.
- 3) Bamford, J., & Day, R. R. (1998). *Extensive Reading in The Second Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 4) Berstein, D. A., Roy, E. J., Srull, T. K., Wickens, C. D. (1991). *Psychology*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company
- 5) Davis, C. (1995). Extensive Reading: An expensive extravagance? *ELT Journal*, 49 (4), 329-336.
- 6) Davis, J. N., Gorrel, L. C., Kline, R. R., and Hsieh, G. (1992). Readers and foreign languages: A survey of undergraduate attitudes toward the study of literature. *The Modern Language Journal*, 76 (3), 320-332. New Jersey: Blackwell Publishing.
- 7) Grabe, W. (2009). *Reading In A Second Language: Moving From Theory to Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- 8) Helgessen, M. (2005). Extensive reading reports-different intelligents, different levels of processing. *Asian EFL Journal*, 7(3), 25-33.
- 9) Kerlinger, F. N. (1984). *The Nature and Structure of Social Attitudes*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Inc., Publishers.
- 10) Krashen, S. (1998). *Do we learn to read by reading? The relationship between Free Reading and Reading Ability*. In D. Tannen (Ed.) *Linguistics in Context: Connecting Observation and Understanding*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex
- 11) Koch, T. (2006). Extensive reading: A simple technique with outstanding result. *19th Annual EA Education Conference 2006*. Japan.
- 12) Mager, R. F. (1986). *Mengembangkan Sikap Terhadap Belajar*. Bandung: Remadja Karya.
- 13) Mason, B. & Krashen, S. (1997). Extensive reading English as a foreign language. *System*, 25 (1), 91-102.
- 14) Mathewson, G. C. (1994). Model of attitude influence upon reading and learning to read. In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical Models and Processing of Reading* (4th ed.). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- 15) Mikulecky, B. S. (1990). *A Short Course in Teaching Reading Skills*. New York: Addison-Wesley.
- 16) Putri, G. A. K., & Husada, H. S. (2008). A Study of the benefit of extensive reading on vocabulary at the Faculty of Language and Literature of Satya Wacana Christian University. *English@Edu*, 08 (2), 135-149.
- 17) Renandya, W., & Jacobs, G. (2002). Extensive reading: Why aren't we all doing it? In J. Richards & W. Renandya (Eds.), *Methodology in Language Teaching: An anthology of current practice*. (295-302). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- 18) Richards, J. C., & Schmidt. R. (2002). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. (3th Ed.). New York: Longman.
- 19) Schmidt, K. (2007). Five factors to consider in implementing a university extensive reading program. *The Language Teacher*, 31(5), 11-14.
- 20) Visser, P. S., Krosnick, J. A., & Simmons, J. P. (2003). Distinguishing the cognitive and behavioral consequences of attitude importance and certainty: A new approach to testing the common-factor hypothesis. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 39, 118-141.