

THE PROCESS OF READING OF AN ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM STUDENT OF THE TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION FACULTY OF RIAU UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: Different student has different experience in the process of reading. In order to know a student's experience relating to the use of reading, it is expected to conduct a thorough study. This case study answers the research questions about a student's perceptions on her reading experience in terms of the process of reading; (1) What did an English department student of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University experience in the beginning of the process of reading? (2) How did an English department student of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University experience the process of reading? These research questions are answered by conducting a case study. The findings of this study are; 1) An English department student of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Riau University experienced listening to the stories read by her teachers as well as her parent when she was in the kindergarten. (2) An English department student of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University experienced the process of reading as described in the process of reading; interactive process experienced by predicting the content of texts and consulting dictionary in terms of meaning, spelling, and the classes of words before reading the whole text. Purposive process experienced by the participant was based on her purpose; academic purposes; by reading the course books and interesting reading materials, skimming and scanning the texts, and telling friends about the content of texts she read and critical process experienced through what she did in interactive and purposive process. This study suggests that teachers and lecturers need to be aware of the process of reading faced by their students. The following study is recommended with more participants in order to explore the other activities in the process of reading.

Key Words: *Reading Process & EFL Learners*

INTRODUCTION

English Department students are students who have already had experience learning English in elementary school. They learn English in Junior high and senior high school as the implementation of the national curriculum in Indonesian context. The curriculum implemented is well known as genre base and it is literacy approach. Many efforts have been done by teachers to improve the students' reading ability. Researchers have also conducted action research in order to improve the students' ability in all language skills.

In the context of this study, the teaching of English at the English Study Program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University is based on the 1994, 2004, and 2010 Curriculum. One of the language skills designed in the curriculum is reading. The 2010 Curriculum states that 10 credits of reading courses needed to be taught at the university in different levels and with different focus. Six credits are offered in three semesters and the focus is on intensive reading. The subjects are Reading I, Reading II, and Reading III. The other two reading courses are Academic Reading and Writing and Extensive Reading. Academic Reading and Writing is offered at semester IV while Extensive Reading is offered at semester V. They join TOEFL test as a requirement in joining the final examination, the test used for a comprehension examination

In joining the courses, most of the students do not perform their competence in reading reflecting in other language skills and content courses. They don't have interest to read texts, like the materials from the course books or any assignments related to reading. On the other hand, they also have difficulties in other skills as well their competence in the language components. Most of the students could not pass the TOEFL test as the criteria for the minimum competence. Therefore, it is expected to conduct a study on the use of reading for English department students in order to explore how reading is useful for a student of English Study Program as the topic are of this study.

The theories related to this study are the process of reading after understanding what is meant by reading. Reading is a process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning (Anderson and Nunan, 2008). The meaning gained from reading contains alphabetic and sounds transferred from writer to readers (Nuttall, 1982). The meaning of reading is classified into: meaning and understanding, knowledge of alphabetic, and knowledge of sounds (Byrness and Wasik, 2009). Understanding meanings of texts is the important outcome of reading. Gaining the meaning of texts is the readers' responsibility in order to make sense of texts.

The process to gain the meaning of texts is begun when ones listen to the texts read by other persons before they have ability to read. The meaning gained through process by recognizing the sounds of words. This is in line with what Byrness and Wasik (2009, 173) believe. He claims that words are the basic meaning. It attracts readers' attention and interest to print materials that reading provides pleasure and information. One may recognize words

through sound before they can read the printed materials. In order to gain the meaning of texts, readers are expected to know how the words are being used (Smith, 2012). It refers to the words and how they are constructed into a sentence and how sentences are constructed to be a paragraph and how paragraphs are constructed to be a text. Therefore, understanding the meaning of texts is from understanding the meaning of words and understanding grammatical forms constructing texts.

Hedge (2008) classifies the processes of second language reading into interactive process, purposeful process and critical process. Interactive process is in terms of schematic knowledge and language knowledge. In schematic knowledge, texts will activate readers' prior knowledge by reading words or phrases in the texts. Readers will write what they remember about texts. On other hand, the language knowledge is in terms of decoding words and grammatical structure quickly and accurately. Reflecting in the ways of interactive process, readers present their prior knowledge in pre reading and recall the content of the text by writing what they understand. They write the content of the text by using their own words. Before gaining the meaning of texts, readers should be competent in the language knowledge, like vocabulary and syntactic structures. The competence in language knowledge is for schematic knowledge. Consequently, interactive process makes readers interact with writer through the process of finding the meaning or understanding texts.

The process which is in line with interactive is a cognitive process (Hedgcock and Ferris, 2009). In facing the process, readers interact to the text (the information gained) as well as to writers. Day and Bamford (1998) believe that reading from cognitive point of view is a construction of meaning from a printed or written message. The construction of meaning involves readers connecting information from the written message with previous knowledge arrive meaning at an understanding.

The second process skills as what (Hedge, 2008) means is purposeful process. In this process, readers do some activities or have reading styles in order to be competent in reading skills. The activities that readers do while reading is suggested by (Hedge, 2008). They are in terms of getting information, responding to curiosity about a topic, following instructions to perform a task for pleasure, amusement, and personal enjoyment. He points out that readers will be directed to the idea contained in the text when they do reading through these activities. Reading styles that (Hedge, 2008) means are receptive reading, reflective reading, or intensive

reading. He points out that readers will be directed to the idea contained in the text when they do reading through these activities. Readers who know what they should do in the process of reading will read texts effectively, for instance, readers who have ability in scanning do not have to read every single word and line. Texts are skimmed for getting the general idea. However, readers' concern in scanning or skimming texts depends on the kinds of texts and the information they want to get from the text whether they read for general idea or specific information. Readers may find the general information, detail information or the information of the whole information of the text. The information readers gained through the activities will develop their critical thinking. Hedge (2008) believes that critical process is shaped through the readers' perception toward ideology and unfamiliar cultural values of texts. The readers' language awareness is as the basic for critical thinking. Therefore, in the critical process, readers need to have careful analysis of the writer's language. Readers' analysis to the writers' language provide the readers in understanding the use of language.

This article aims to explore the findings of a study on a student of English Study Program of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Riau University in finishing her study as the contribution of reading. The findings of the study are based on the following research questions; (1) What did an English department student of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University experience in the beginning of the process of reading? (2) How did an English department student of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University experience the process of reading?

METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative research and the design that suits the purpose of this study is a case study. A case study focuses on a few instances of a particular phenomenon; in this case reading process and reading model experienced develop her ability as an English Department student. Martyn (2007) explores that the focus of case study is on a few instances of a particular phenomenon with a few to provide an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in the particular instance. In other words, this is a kind of research that concentrates on one thing, looking at it in detail, not seeking to generalize from it (Thomas, 2011). This study will therefore be described in the form of explanatory of how the phenomenon takes place.

The participant of this study was chosen purposively called purposively sampling. Merriam (2009) defines that purposively sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight. Similarly, Suharsimi Arikanto (2010) claims that the researchers may decide to use purposively for specific aim. For this study, the researcher wants to discover and gain insight about the students' experiences in extensive reading which may contribute to the language competence. Therefore, the participants who will be involved in this study will be the semester five learners taking the Extensive Reading course.

In order to select the participant purposively, the researcher of this study concerned some characteristics as the identification of this study. The characteristics of the participant for this study are the learner who has A and B for all courses. Merriam (2009) suggests that the number of sample to be interviewed depends on the questions being asked, the data being gathered, the analysis in progress, and the resources supported this study. Therefore, the researcher is only concerned one participant matching the characteristics for this study.

In qualitative studies, data may be gathered through interviews, observations, records, official documents, field notes, photos, recordings, emails, drawings, and informational conversation (Gay and Airsian, 2000). However, the selection of the instruments depends on "what" we want to find out from our study. The appropriate instruments of this current case study is interviews. The purpose for using these instruments is to gather insights on the participant's experiences in doing reading and how the experiences contribute to her competency as an English Study Program student. The type of interview in this case study is semi structured interview where the questions are in the form of open-ended questions. The interviews were conducted two times.

The recorded interviews of the participant were transcribed into verbatim transcription. A constant comparative analysis was carried out where the transcriptions were read and reread coding the participants' responses and classifications (Flick, 2007). Thematic analysis involves analysing the transcripts, identifying the themes.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The result of the analysis of interviews proves the findings of this study. The process for reading English texts of the participant began before being able to read in Indonesian and to use English when she was at kindergarten. She said that she was told a story by her parents “Telling the story, yes sometimes, for example, the story about my village, *Sedanau*” and she also said sometimes the teacher at kindergarten also read stories for the students “The teachers also told us the stories, not we read the stories but the teacher read it for us.” What the participant experienced is in line with what O’Donnell and Wood (2004) states in which the process to gain the meaning of texts is begun when ones listen to the texts read by another person. It is the process in which the meaning gained by recognizing the sounds of words.

The first process or interactive process faced by the participant in doing the activity of reading was the efforts in understanding the texts. When she read a text, she tried to predict what the text is about by referring to the title of the text. If the text is long which consists of subtitle, she also paid attention on the title for the prediction. She did prediction before reading the whole text. For the first reading, she just read without doing other things. To her, reading is for reading and to find the idea and writing is also for writing. When she found words which were interesting for her, she would write the words. It means that she thought that she needed to study the words. She said “I rarely write something because for me reading is reading. I just read and understand something if I find there is a nice and there is a good wise word, something like that, I write the word but mostly I just read.” In the process of reading, she also consulted the dictionary if she found the difficult words. She consulted words in terms of meaning, spelling, and the classes of words. She said “If I found a new word, I looked at how it spells, the meaning, and the class of words whether the words are verbs, noun, or adjectives.”

This process is as the reflection of what Hedge (2008) that interactive process is in terms of schematic knowledge and language knowledge. In schematic knowledge, texts will activate readers’ prior knowledge by reading words or phrases in the texts. The language knowledge is in terms of decoding words and grammatical structure quickly and accurately. Before gaining the meaning of texts, readers should be competent in the language knowledge, like vocabulary and syntactic structures.

The second process faced by the participant is based on her purpose. The participant’s purpose in reading was for academic purposes. She had intention to improve and increase her

academic ability. She could perceive about her own ability. This made her do what she needed in improving her study from one semester to the following by reading the course books. She also spent her time for reading in spending her time by reading any reading materials that she likes. On other hand, she often tells her friends what she understands from texts she read. The participant also applied what she learnt about reading like skimming and scanning. She did skimming and skimming and scanning in order to understand and she knows when she should applied. She said “In understanding texts, I have learnt how to skim or how to scan the text and how to make the organization of the text and I applied this, especially in skimming and scanning. When there is very long text I just skim the text so I just find the important information so when I have to read again I just read the point that I just got.” The activities in this second process are as what (Hedge, 2008) means. He states that readers will be directed to the idea contained in the text when they do reading through the activities. One of them is by doing skimming and scanning.

The participant's effort in finding the meaning of words for the meaning of texts is as the process for critical thinking of readers. The participant experienced in this process is in line with what she did in interactive process and purposeful process. It refers to the ways how the participant understood the language components and have the purpose for what she reads. Hedge (2008) states that readers need to have careful analysis of the writer's language in the critical process,

The experience faced by the participant as the beginning for the process of reading is the answer of the first question “What did an English department learner of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University experience in the beginning of the process of reading?” The finding for this question is “An English department learner of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University experienced listening to the stories read by her teachers as well as her parent when she was in the kindergarten in the beginning of the process of reading. “

The participant experienced all kinds of the process; interactive process, purposive process, and critical process. The first process or interactive process experienced by the participant was the efforts in understanding the texts; she predicted the content of texts and consulted dictionary in terms of meaning, spelling, and the classes of words before reading reading the whole text. The second process or purposive process experienced by the participant

was based on her purpose; academic purposes; by reading the course books and interesting reading materials, skimming and scanning the texts, and telling friends about the content of texts she read. The third process or critical process experienced by the participant was through what she did in interactive and purposive process. These processes are as the answer for the second question of this study “How did an English department student of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University experience the process of reading?” The finding shows that interactive process experienced by the participant is by predicting the content of texts and consulting dictionary in terms of meaning, spelling, and the classes of words before reading the whole text. Purposive process experienced by the participant was based on her purpose; academic purposes; by reading the course books and interesting reading materials, skimming and scanning the texts, and telling friends about the content of texts she read and critical process experienced by the participant was through what she did in interactive and purposive process.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This case study explores the processes of reading experienced by an English Study Program student of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University as well as the experience in the beginning of reading process. It reflects on her competence as an English Study Program student in learning English. The processes of reading make readers interact with writer through the process of finding the meaning or understanding texts: the meaning of words, the meaning words in sentences, the meaning of words in the texts. These meanings are constructed by grammatical structure. Therefore, English Study Program students of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University are expected to experience the process of reading, especially having experience relating to reading before learning to read. This is useful in order to attract the students' interest to reading before learning to read. Consequently, in facing interactive and purposive process, they can interact with writer through the process of finding the meaning or understanding texts. The more, the students face the process of reading, the more they can build their critical thinking as the process they face in critical process. The findings of this study suggest that teachers and lecturers need to be aware of the process of reading faced by their students. This study also recommends the following study with more participants in order to explore other activities in the process of reading.

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