



Original Research Article

Reading Experiences of Nonnative-English-Speaking Students Majoring in English Language Teaching

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to synthesize the findings of an Indonesian case study on reading experiences of nonnative-English-speaking ELT students. The researchers examined 36 students of bachelor program students using a descriptive qualitative design. The finding revealed that 55.6% of the students spent 2-3 hours reading, 27.7% spent 1-2 hours reading, while the rest 16.7% spent less than an hour reading. In term of genre, 69.4% of the students preferred scientific reading genre while 30.6% preferred fiction. Regarding the mode of reading materials, 86.1% of the students used printed material and the other 13.9% used digital reading material. The finding of this study presented that 75% of the students liked to read materials in their first language while the rest 25% preferred to read reading materials in English. About the students' preference of reading activities, the data showed that 63.89% of the students chose activities such as a combination of doing preview, giving keywords, scanning, skimming, giving clarification, asking and answering questions, and making conclusions while 36.11% preferred reading activities involving a combination of brainstorming, conducting survey, reciprocal teaching, doing evaluation, making inference, re-reading, thinking aloud, and having discussion as the reading activities. In term of the place to read, 50% of the students read at home, 27.8% read in the classroom, and 22.2% read at the library. About the reading experience, 63.89% of students were satisfied while the other 36.11% thought that their reading experience was insufficient.

Keywords: reading experience, nonnative-English-speaking students, English Language Teaching (ELT)

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1. Introduction

For nonnative-English-speaking (NNES) students who are foreign language learners, the limited access or exposure to the language itself plays a significance role in determining whether or not they will become a successful learner. Bachelor program students majoring in English Language Teaching must have already been aware that they cannot just depend on the exposure they get in the classroom to gain knowledge of English. Reading on their own is suggested as a great option to give them an abundant amount of exposure in gaining knowledge of English as well. However, students can always find an excuse to escape from reading activities. Some of them may simply do not like reading, while some others blame the limited time and material they have to do any reading activity.

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It is an indisputable fact that reading is a matter of habit. If one is accustomed to read, he will unconsciously enjoy reading no matter what activity he has, what strategy he uses, what materials he reads, or what mode he prefers, even if he has no intentional purpose. Let's say it seems hard to start but there is nothing that is not worthy to try. This reading habit affects greatly on someone's reading experience. The reading experience of students majoring in ELT is expected to be excessive in both quantity and quality.

A study on Reading Experiences of Nonnative-English-Speaking Pre-service English Teachers: A Turkish Case conducted by Bektas-Cetinkaya (2012) involving 105 pre-service English teachers at a state university showed the results of questionnaire distribution to the respondents. Almost 50% of the pre-service teachers are notified that the time spent reading was less than 1 hour a day, whether for course work or for other objectives, almost all spending their time less than two hours for reading and no one read for four hours or more per day. On average, although participants are reported to be able to read continuously for more than 1.5 hours in Turkish, in English the average was less than an hour; contradictory those participants showed that they spent longer time in reading books written in their native language. Similarly, they were claimed to be able to read printed materials (nearly 92 minutes on average) for almost twice as long as online materials (nearly 48 minutes on average).

The findings of the study by Bektas-Cetinkaya highlight that NNES preservice English teachers were pronounced to enjoy reading in general, which is in accordance to another study which was conducted involving pre-service English and German teachers in the same context conducted by Ögeyik, M. C., & Akyay (2009). Those findings are successful to contradict the results of previous related studies performed in Turkish context (Arici, 2008; Atakli, 2000; Oguz, Yildiz, & Hayirsever, 2009) which present an indication that in-service pre-service elementary school teachers and Turkish and foreign language teachers tend read less due to their limited time; the fact that they are not used to read, over-job, minimum access, and unaffordable price of books.

By pocketing up the findings of study conducted by Bektas-Cetinkaya (2009), the researchers conduct a related study with broader coverage of reading experiences of nonnative-English-speaking Bachelor Program on ELT students in Indonesian context. The researchers put how much they read, the purpose, the genres of reading materials, the preference on mode of the reading materials, the language choice, the reading activities/strategies, and where it takes place as the aspects to be observed in this study. At the final stage of the research, the

researchers try to formulate the implication of the reading experiences on the students' belief on teaching reading.

2. Methods

This current study employed a descriptive qualitative in which the researchers were the main instruments. To help them out revealing the data, the researchers used structured interview and questionnaire as the supporting instruments. The interview for this study only includes nine question items; students can choose one out of two options for nine items and students can choose five options from fourteen options). The items appeared on the questionnaire were the same as the questions for the interview as they were formulated to lead to the consistent answers regarding how much time the student read, the purpose they have, genres of reading materials, preference on mode of the reading materials, language choice, reading activities, and where it takes place.

The developed structured interview and questionnaires were distributed to thirty six Bachelor Program on ELT students studying at English Department, IKIP Budi Utomo Malang. Sixteen of them were male and twenty students were female. They came from different areas with different native languages. Some of them just focused on studying and some others had works.

3. Findings and Discussion

In term of reading length, the result of interview showed that twenty students read for 2-3 hours, ten students read for 1-2 hours, and six students read for less than an hour for the work/course purpose per day. For the activity of reading for pleasure, nine students spent 2-3 hours, seven students spent 1-2 hours, and twenty students spent less than an hour per day. None of them were reported to spend 4 hours or more per day to read both for work/course and pleasure purposes. This was a bit contradictory with the finding of Bektas-Cetinkaya (2012). The difference might be caused by the reading assignment given by the extensive reading teacher. On the other hand, Bektas-Cetinkaya's subjects were not given specific reading assignment. The implication of these findings is that since the subject of the study are majoring English and in the future they have to teach English as well, they are suggested to read more to be able to increase their knowledge through written input. It is because it will be impossible if they just depend on the spoken input they get from classroom. In addition, it can be concluded that giving reading, especially self selected reading assignment, can motivate students to read

more; this is in line with Worthly et.al (1998) in Creel (2015: 12) who put that a well directed reading assignments can contribute positive impact on students' reading attitude.

Talking about the genre, it was revealed that twenty five students preferred fiction materials to read while eleven students chose non-fiction as their preference of reading materials' genre; they prefer non-fiction as they gained new vocabulary and knowledge. What we assume from these findings, students tended to read fictions as they got some benefits from the readings; new vocabulary (36 students), pleasure (25 students), and moral value (16 students). This finding is accordance with Cape's statement (1997 in Creel, 2015: 11) ...trusting students to choose literature they can connect with will grow their potential as a life-long love of reading. It implies that students preferred reading for pleasure instead of reading to merely gain knowledge.

Regarding the mode of reading materials, thirty one students were found to be more fond of printed reading materials while the other five students answered they used digital reading materials. The expected explanation is that printed reading materials are more comfortable to their eyes compared to the digital one. Reading speed rate may vary for one student to another. But, if they are required to read a lot of materials, it means that they require much time as well. For the big time allotment to read, printed materials are seen more comfortable. Those who preferred to use digital materials were into practicality.

About the reading materials preferred, twenty seven students were intrigued more to read the materials in English, the other nine students preferred to use reading materials in Indonesia, and none of them read materials in other foreign languages. This finding was contradictory to a study conducted by Gilakjani & Ahmadi (2011) who explained that many students chose reading the materials in their first language as they seemed to treasure better understanding when the materials were well-known to them. The researchers assume that nine students who preferred reading Indonesian materials felt that they can comprehend certain reading materials more easily because the language is familiar, in the future they tend to like reading materials in the same language choice. On the other hand, the rest of the subjects chose English materials due to their assignment to accomplish extensive reading in English course. This reflects that teachers need to courage the learners to read more materials written in English since they are majoring in English. It will help them a lot to familiarize themselves to English as in the future they have to teach English.

The finding of this study regarding the reading activities used by the students shows particular pattern represented by question item number six (Appendix 1). Twenty three

students chose options from the left column while the other thirteen students chose options on the right column. Actually, the options in each column refer to what kind of comprehension that the students will get after reading. It is reported from a study conducted by Erten & Karakaş, (2007) that several reading activities (such as a combination of doing preview, giving keywords, scanning, skimming, giving clarification, asking and answering questions, and making conclusions) gave contribution to the effort of attaining the literal comprehension, while other reading activities (such as a combination of brainstorming, conducting survey, reciprocal teaching, doing evaluation, making inference, re-reading, thinking aloud, and having discussion) showed better impact on the effort of achieving the evaluative comprehension. It means that the students' preference on the reading activities takes part on what kind of comprehension they will acquire.

While you are reading, it is important to find out the suitable strategy used in order to get the greatest advantage of the activity. (Alyousef, 2005) proposes that the employment of particular reading activities is able to accommodate strategic reading behaviors by the learners be it at pre-, whilst-, and post-reading phases. It should be noted that reading strategy used by certain someone might be different from the perspective of an effective reading strategy by others. For example, a study conducted by Karakas (2005) presented that a collaboration of doing preview and brainstorming is more effective than just utilizing brainstorming combined with presenting short stories. The finding also examined the employment of doing preview and stimulating students' background knowledge and arrived at a conclusion that doing preview is more effective than stimulating students' background knowledge. However, a contradictory finding comes. It is discovered that stimulating students' background knowledge could help the students much better regarding their reading comprehension.

The students' engagement may be an indicator of learning success for students and teaching success for the teacher. The importance of students' engagement in the form of their participation in the teaching and learning process was greatly highlighted by Holdaway (1997); Hill, (2012); and Salim (2011). No matter what strategy used to read and teaching reading, as long as they are engaged to the reading materials, the researchers assumed that the process of reading and teaching reading can be categorized as successful. What we need to do as teachers is to provide various reading activities/strategies suited to the students' preference in order to help them to read more effectively yet, still enjoyably.

Eighteen students spent time to read at home, ten students spent time to read in the classroom, and eight students answered that they spent time to read at the library. Home is seen as the most comfortable place to read while classroom is supposed to be the more conducive one actually. Library is chosen because it involved the two aspects, conducive and comfortable. This finding is in line with Whitehurst & Lonigan (2001) in Kennedy & Trong (2010) who reveals that home literary environment influence students' reading motivation.

In term of students' perspective toward their own reading experience, twenty three students answered that they are satisfied about their reading experience and thirteen students answered that actually their reading experience is not sufficient. They then concluded that in the future they will recommend their reading experience to their students. The note is that they will emphasize on the good parts only and recommend the better reading experience to the students.

At the end, this study strives for finding the red line between reading experiences of nonnative-English-speaking bachelor program on ELT students and their perspective on teaching reading. The students may acquire the declarative knowledge of reading from their experiences. After knowing about reading, it is possible that we highlight the implication of the perspective on teaching reading by observing how they want to do it in their classroom. It is highlighted from the finding that reading assignment for the students extensively may motivates the students to read more and result on the reading habit that the students experience.

It is important to reflect on the reading experience to make betterment for ourselves but also to contribute to our perspective on teaching reading. The results of the study conducted by Daisey (2009) pronounce that pre-service teachers for secondary level may take the advantage from doing reflection on their previous positive reading experiences and try to re-apply those experiences in teaching their students in the future. Pre-service teachers could get knowledge about their faiths and teaching visions by doing reflection on their past reading experiences by comparing the positive and negative aspects. The students majoring English can also reflect on the experience to get insight of teaching reading.

4. Conclusions

The findings of the study emphasizes on the reading experiences of bachelor program on ELT students in Indonesian context and the implication towards their perspective on teaching reading in the future as they are prepared to teach. This study presents a broader coverage of reading experience in the aspect of the preference of genres and the purpose of the reading activity. At the end, this study tries to show the implication of reading experiences towards the perception on teaching reading in the future.

From the findings, the researchers can conclude that 55.6% of the students spent 2-3 hours reading, 27.7% spent 1-2 hours reading, while the rest 16.7% spent less than an hour reading. In term of genre, 69.4% of the students preferred scientific reading genre while 30.6% preferred fiction. Regarding the mode of reading materials, 86.1% of the students used printed material and the other 13.9% used digital reading material. The finding of this study presented that 75% of the students liked to read materials in their first language while the rest 25% preferred to read reading materials in English. About the students' preference of reading activities, the data showed that 63.89% of the students chose activities such as a combination of doing preview, giving keywords, scanning, skimming, giving clarification, asking and answering questions, and making conclusions while 36.11% preferred reading activities involving a combination of brainstorming, conducting survey, reciprocal teaching, doing evaluation, making inference, re-reading, thinking aloud, and having discussion as the reading activities. In term of the place to read, 50% of the students read at home, 27.8% read in the classroom, and 22.2% read at the library. About the reading experience, 63.89% of students were satisfied while the other 36.11% thought that their reading experience was insufficient.

The implication which can be inferred by the students is that it is important to reflect on the reading experience to make betterment for themselves and also to contribute to their perspective on teaching reading. The results of the study conducted by Daisey (2009) promote that pre-service teachers for secondary level might take advantage from doing reflection on their previous positive reading experiences and try to re-apply those experiences to teach their students in the future. They, in the future, will also teach. That's why the result of the study may contribute a lot for them since right now.

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