

TASK-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING IN EXTENSIVE READING PRACTICES

Aryo Arifuddin

Universitas Islam Indonesia

arifuddinaryo@gmail.com

Abstract: Nowadays, extensive reading (ER) has gained popularity in the field of teaching reading. The process of extensive reading involves learners to always read anywhere and anytime. Generally, the study related to extensive reading is likely to focus on the effort to assist learners in improving their reading habit and only a few studies on ER are aimed to the development of learners' English language skills. The data were collected from the observational notes and document analysis as the main sources. This study reveals that the enactment of Task-Based Learning method within the ER class is able to boost the learners' interest in increasing their reading habit. In addition, by carrying out Task-Based Learning method within the ER class, it also builds the learners' awareness in reading either inside or outside the classroom so that their English language skills are likely to be enhanced.

Keywords: *task-based learning, extensive reading, case study*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in global education system, Task - Based Language Learning has become an alternative technique for teaching many kinds of subjects. In Task-Based Language Learning, a task is defined as a piece of work undertaken for oneself or one other, either for free or for getting some rewards (Nunan, 1989: 5). Task - Based Language Learning has a purpose to engage learners to attain the main purpose of the study that is for global or general understanding with the intention to obtain pleasure from the media. As mention by Nunan (2004: 216) that task-based teaching is an approach to language teaching organized around tasks rather than language structure. In addition, task-based language learning is in contrast with grammar-based approach (Willis & Willis, 2001:173). Richards (2006: 30) explains that task-based language learning claims that learners' language learning will result from creating the right kinds of interactional processes in the classroom, and the best way to create these is to use specially designed instructional tasks.

The extensive reading program has been reported to have an effective contribution to language teaching (Nation, 2008). In other words, ER is an alternative approach to intensive reading courses and is a pleasurable way for undergraduates to learn English as a foreign language. ER as a language teaching and learning procedure is carried out by reading large quantities of materials or long texts for global or general understanding with the intention to obtain pleasure from the text. Due to the fact that reading is individualized, with learners choosing the books they want to read, the books are not discussed in class, thus, ER can push students to read more books and turn the reading activity into their hobby.

Additionally, it is found that the extensive reading provides a significant influence on the student's reading comprehension and performance (de Morgado, Fernandez, Nelly, 2009). By combining sustained silent reading and out-of-class pleasure reading, the learners gradually move from a learning-to-read orientation to a reading-to-learn framework. By reading what they choose and enjoying their reading, the learners have a great deal of flexibility which caters to the different needs and interests of individual learners. Thus, it allows them to increase their reading motivation and develop their reading competence at their own rates. In addition, under the extensive reading program, learners' interests are best served as control of reading activity without teacher having to choose the topic, text type and difficulty of the reading materials. That

is to say, learners are responsible for their own learning which also helps them to develop learner autonomy.

In accordance with the introductory explanation, this research focuses on implementing Task-Based Learning within ER classes. Specifically, this research concerns with the perspective of undergraduate students of English Department who take Extensive Reading (ER) Class in English Language Education Department of Islamic University of Indonesia at Yogyakarta. The three key aspects of the present research are online Task - Based Learning, Extensive Reading, and Case Study. Those key aspects are closely examined to answer the research questions: (1) "How is the Task-Based Learning implemented in Extensive Reading class?" and (2) "How do the learners perceive Task-Based Learning?"

METHOD

The research design in this research is the qualitative descriptive design in a form of a case study. In addition, this research adopted the descriptive narrative for data analysis technique suggested by Miles and Hubberman (1994). According to Miles and Hubberman (1994), activities are conducted in the interactive qualitative data analysis until the data are updated and completed. This study aims to begin the stages with data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusions / image verification.

The respondents of this research were the undergraduate students of English Language Education Department at Islamic University of Indonesia. English Language Education Department is one of majors in Islamic University of Indonesia in which the students are expected to be English language teachers. This research focused on the learners' perceptions towards the implementation of Task-Based Learning in Extensive Reading class. In this research, there were 4 classes of Extensive Reading. Each class consists of 10-20 learners. However, this research only used 2 classes who were chosen using convenient sampling.

This research investigated how the class runs as well as the results of their main tasks of the semester, namely Reading Log and Reading Report. Reading Log is a kind of daily note for the learners to measure how much words they have learned everyday by reading numerous kinds of books. The learners can see the progress by counting the improvement of their word banks. Each student needed to read at least 1 book a week and wrote the new words they had discovered for their Reading Report task. Meanwhile, for Reading Experience, they needed to write narrative texts about their experiences while reading outside the classroom including the vibes, obstacles, time management, etc. This research included the lecturer as the respondent. Two learners from every class who had the highest and the lowest score in Extensive Reading classes were also chosen as the participants of the study. These learners were recommended by the lecturer of Extensive Reading class so that the researcher could gain a comparison and variation of data.

The data in this research was reported in the form of descriptive, narrative and schematic data. The documents from the respondent were in the form of oral and written documents. Meanwhile, the reports of the observation were in the form of picture, video and voice records. The primary data was varied because it came from the video records, voice records, interviews, and observations. The interview section was recorded and transcribed. The secondary data or the additional data came from the lecturer of extensive reading class. According to Patton and Cochran (2002), a researcher must always consider the safety of those being interviewed. In other words, the researcher needed to take into a consideration related to stigmatization of the person, further humiliation, additional trauma, victimization and security. Regarding to Patton and Cochran (2002), they argued that the researcher had to be careful in choosing a good interpreter

and taking time to brief him or her and limit those present during the interview to a minimum. Thus, the interviews were done in a private place.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Regarding to the change of curriculum in English Language Education Department at Islamic University of Indonesia, ER was one of compulsory courses for reading in the university. Based on the interview conducted with the participants, it was found that carrying out Task - Based Learning method within the ER class successfully enhances the reading habit of the learners. In other words, by implementing Task-Based Learning in each meeting of the ER class, lecturers were able to assist the learners in building their reading awareness. Moreover, Task - Based Learning helps the learners to develop their background reading. That is to say, Task-Based Learning pushes the learners to create a situation in which reading becomes part of their daily habit; thus, they apply what they have learned from the ER class into their daily life. In addition to that, most learners said that they wanted to increase their vocabulary and word banks. Only one learner mentioned that one thing that motivated her to attend the extensive reading class was to get a high score. This particular learner not only wanted to increase the word banks but also wanted to get a high score on the extensive reading class.

The implementation of Task - Based Learning within Extensive Reading class in English Language Education Department at Islamic University of Indonesia is described and discussed as follows.

Reading Log

The findings of this research showed that the use of Task - Based Learning method within ER class gives the lecturer some benefits and challenges in the teaching and learning processes. One of the benefits is Task-Based Learning helps the lecturer to motivate the learners to read by giving daily assignment related to the themes of the reading materials. In addition, it also helps the learners in becoming autonomous learners. Moreover, by giving the learners English novels to read and the chances to explain the texts they have read and the words they have collected through reading log has engaged the learners' comprehension. As a result, it helps them to decide which book levels are suitable for them. The findings of this research are in accordance with Richards and Rodgers (2001: 228). They stated that tasks are believed to foster processes of negotiation, modification, rephrasing, and experimentation that are at the heart of second language learning.

Reading Report

One of the activities conducted in the extensive reading class that is that the learners worked in a group for reading activity. However, they also had to read individually outside the classroom as an addition to improve their knowledge and make a reading report. Each member of the group might come up with different levels and reading ability. As a result, the lecturer needed to take it into a consideration in dividing the learners into the group in order to help the learners engage with the reading materials in ease. The groups needed to be divided based on the learner's different level of reading since they needed to fulfill the reading report as well as analyze and understand the reading materials.

Furthermore, the learners were instructed to do some tasks (task-based activities) to regularly read books anytime and anywhere. The lecturer always reminded them that they gain a lot of benefits while reading since it helped them to understand new words and be accustomed to the target language, English. This finding supports Nunan's idea (2004). He suggests that Task - Based Learning encourages student-centered learning, helps learners to develop individual

differences and supports learning autonomy. It is in line with the finding in the present research since the learners become autonomous in learning new words through extensive reading classes.

Task - Based Learning in Extensive Reading Course

Task - Based Learning method was implemented in the classroom after the lecturer explained the topic of activity. The activity continued by conducting group discussion in which the learners were instructed to discuss the book that they had read with their friends and promote the books. The learners seemed to be actively engaged in discussing and working in a group. The process of exchanging the knowledge was carried out in the discussion activity. Moreover, the learners also shared every idea obtained from the book, chose the best reading material, and modified the ending of the reading materials. As mentioned by Shehadeh (2005:19), in designing or selecting tasks for language classroom, the lecturers have a number of choices to make in terms of the type of task, the conditions under which learners complete the task, and other task properties. In this case, Reading Log and Reading Report tasks in Extensive Reading have the same output in which they aim to enhance the learners' reading habit and word banks. Furthermore, in some situations or activities, the learners showed an act-out and applied what they have read from the reading materials as they worked together in a group.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, the present study shows two main conclusions. First, Task - Based Language Learning in ER class was well implemented in the university being investigated. Learners enjoy task-based activities provided by the lecturer. The particularly like Reading Report because it helped them to increase their word bank. Task - Based Language Learning method teaches the learners to always read and analyze the book that suitable with their reading abilities as it is a must for their final semester point and another personal advantage for them. Task - Based Language Learning helps them to become a self-autonomous person and reader. It can push them to continue their reading as much as possible to improve their levels of reading ability. The task also evolves them to read beyond the classroom turning them in to a habitual reader.

Second, learners were noticeably engaged with the task-based activities in ER class. It could boost the learners' interest in reading, build their awareness to read and become their habits. The task pushed them to read the book and understand the point of the book. The activities made them realize that reading is not such bored activity; there are many ways to make reading really interesting and fun.

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