

The Role of Teachers' Reading Habits and Perception about EFL Reading Towards Students' Literacy

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to find out how teacher's reading habits and perception affect students' literacy. Firstly, the researcher investigated teacher's reading habits by using Iftanti (2012) questionnaire about reading habits. It is found that teachers have very limited reading habits per day and they didn't have solid reading habits even they have studied and read English text since junior high school and senior high school. Moreover, teachers' notion about reading is changing along with the development of technology where teachers tend to find reading source from Internet and read through smartphone rather than books. Secondly, the researcher investigated students' literacy about interview students' reading habit at school and home and gave test to measure their ability to comprehend the text. It was found that students' literacy was low due to their lack of time on extensive reading. Based on the result, it is concluded that teachers' reading habits gives significant effect on students' literacy. Teachers hold an important role to build a solid reading habits to increase students' literacy, specifically in EFL reading. Thus, in order to build that good reading habits, teachers must have their own good reading habits. Teachers need to consistently increase their reading time on daily basis and starts to collect many sources of reading.

Keywords: *reading habits, reading perception, literacy*

INTRODUCTION

The assessment results about students' literacy released by PISA on 2019 (Program of International Students Assessment) found that Indonesian students' literacy is at the low level compared with other countries in the world and specifically in ASEAN. This fact shown that the learning output in school, particularly in students' ability to comprehend text, is still in low quality and need some improvement. Moreover, it is also shown that Indonesian students do not have solid

and good reading habits that make the poor quality in reading. Then, the question arose in how the school and the teachers could help students to increase their reading habits.

In terms of reading, the previous research has shown the complexity and the sophisticated in comprehension process (Yulita & Neno, 2021). This could one of the factor that students become less motivated in reading EFL text and teachers also having difficulties in building students' reading habits. The EFL need more effort that reading in first language as the reader has to develop the mental process in order to understand the meaning of the text. This mental process requires the ability to decode a sentence, find the main idea of a text, and connect the meaning of each idea in the reading text (Denton, 2014; Harmer, 2007). Thus, to understand the ideas of the reading text, the readers must synthesize the initial information in the text with their general knowledge to find the connection between the sentences.

PISA (2015) has formulated that there are many factors that affect the literacy level of students, namely, the economy, resources, and all components in the school. In regards of the school component, the teacher plays an important role in the learning process and encourages students to improve their literacy. From this fact, the problem of students in reading is also affected by the teachers' views on reading activities, and whether teacher personally have a good reading habit.

The study from Iftanti (2012) proved that teachers must have good reading habits because they have a big influence on students' reading skills in class. In Indonesian education curriculum, reading skills are taught in an integrated manner with other English skills, namely listening skills, speaking skills, and writing skills since junior and senior high school for 6 years. This shows that students in Indonesia in general have been studying English and reading English texts for approximately 6 years at school. For teachers' side, they have been learning English in quite a long period and hypothetically, they should have a good reading habits for that long periods.

However, the preliminary research by Yulita and Neno (2021) shown that teachers in junior high school and senior high school in Kefamenanu, East Nusa Tenggara had a notion in reading as an activity of translating the words or sentences from English to Indonesia and vice versa. Even in the syllabus and lesson plan teachers has develop cognitive and construction theory, namely observing, asking, associating, collecting data, and communicating (Sundayana, 2017), the practice in the classroom is far from constructing reading methods, strategies and good reading habits for students. This leads to a question about teachers' reading habits and how it affects the students' literacy.

There is still old traditions and conventions that is believed by the teachers about reading. Bakken (2018) stated that many of the teachers considered word pronunciation and reading aloud as important activities in the process of reading English texts. Thus, the reading process stops at the process of pronouncing words. Many teachers didn't develop the reading activities into meaningful and interactive activities that could increase students' reading habits. This has influenced students' literacy at school and at home. The students do not have long hour in reading EFL text, the reading source from teacher's in limited and the motivation to read form teacher is also low. This problem caused the low quality and ability to understand and comprehend the EFL text. As teacher is the main facilitator in the classroom, they should provide the reading time, many of reading sources and monitor the students' progress in building a good reading habits.

In relation to the problems above, this study analyzes the reading habits of English teachers in both Junior high schools and Senior high schools in Kefamenanu and how it their affects the students' literacy and build a good reading habits.

METHOD

This study used mixed method to analyze the data which combined both of combination both of quantitative and qualitative methods. Mixed method is an approach to combine both of quantitative and qualitative data together to provide a better understanding of the research problem (Hamied, 2017). Firstly, in this study the quantitative method was conducted by applying a simple descriptive statistics analysis to show the results of the questionnaire of reading habits. The aim of qualitative data analysis is to organize the data in such a manner to reach a meaningful conclusion (Polit & Beck, 2004). Then, the results of quantitative data are combined with the results of observations and interviews. Moreover, descriptive statistic also be used to measure the students' reading ability by analyzing the result of reading test.

The qualitative method in this study is applied by using narrative descriptive in which Mack et.al (2005) added that descriptive research is used to explore the phenomena by conducting interview, focus group and participant observation, shortly this study is more flexible. In other word, in descriptive research, the information is obtained by in-depth interview with the participants. To obtain that purpose, this study used four instrument. The first one is questionnaire of reading habits, developed and modified from Iftanti (2012). The second one is interview guide which is modified from Yulita and Neno (2021). The third one is observation checklist which is also developed and modified from Yulita and Neno (2021). The fourth instrument is reading test to measure students' reading ability.

Those four instruments were analyzed in triangulation to get valid and depth analysis form the result. This triangulation design will be mixed both quantitative and qualitative design. The quantitative data included closed-ended information and statistical analysis, while the qualitative data consists of open-ended information and ideas presentation (Creswell, 2014; Hamied, 2017). Each approach has its own strength and limitation. Thus it is used to strengthen the result.

The participants of this study was four teachers from two junior high school and two senior high school in Kefamenanu. There are two classes with total 60 students as the sample for the reading test. The participants were random sampling to represent the teachers and students' population in Kefamenanu.

Overall, this study will be conducted to find out the answer of three research problems in which problem will be elaborated and combined as a unity. Firstly, to know the teachers' habits on reading text, it will be broken down into the amount of reading practice, the length of time of having reading habits, the types of text read and the number of books read. Secondly, to know the students' literacy level by conducting of reading comprehension test and interview their reading habits at home. Thirdly, to correlate the effects of teachers' reading habits and the students' literacy level, the narrative analysis is done to find the line and also the problem faced by students' in EFL reading.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis result from the instruments, the findings show that teachers' reading habits are still low and the level of student literacy is at also a low level. The detail explanation of those results is formulated below into two parts. The first part is about teachers' reading habits and the second part is about it effects to students' literacy.

Teachers' Reading Habits

This part shows and explain about the teacher's reading habits which are divided into 4 categories, namely of reading practice, the length of time of having reading habits, the types of text read, and the number of books read. The detail result of the questionnaire is shown on the table below.

Table 1. Teachers' Reading Habits

No	Description	Teachers' response
1	The amount of reading practice	1-2 hours per day
2	The length of time of having reading habits	Since junior and senior high school
3	The types of text read	All type of text
4	The number of books read	Less than 5 books per week

1. The Amount of Reading Practice

From the results, the amount of time teacher practice reading is about only 1-2 hours a day. Teachers affirmed that they do not read every day and only read for entertainment or pleasure and for work-related materials. This purpose leads to the low amount of reading practice since teachers are also busy with daily activities that they do not have much time to read, especially at home. This result implied that teachers' reading habits are still very low and it affects their teaching practice in the classroom. As stated by Renandya (2007) and Iftanti (2012) the poor reading habits indicates poor reading practice in the classroom and will impact on students' reading habits which will also be low due to lack of literacy hours with the teacher.

2 The Length of Time of Having Reading Habits

Regarding to the length of the teachers' reading habit, the results shown that most of the teachers started to read EFL text from junior and senior high school. None of them started the to read EFL text from elementary school. The interview with the teachers revealed that the main problem with the absence of a reading habit in the earlier age was the lack of reading sources and negative perception on EFL reading. It was difficult for the teachers to create reading habits from an early age because they also did not get support from their parents. Thus, this result is the same with result from Iftanti (2012) and also Mbato (2013) that implied the external factors such as books or reading sources and socio-economic background are very important in creating good reading habits since early age.

3 The Type of Text Read

Related to the types of text read, teachers confirmed that they read all kind of text depend on their interest and the purpose on reading. The teachers usually read about work-related material text when giving task and assignment for students. The teachers read shot story or news from the Internet for entertainment and pleasure. This result is related with study by Mbato (2013) that there is change in teachers' choice of text during the development of the technology. The reading sources are easy to access recently so teachers could read all kind of text based on their preference.

4 The Number of Books Read

Related to how many books are read, indicating that teachers read less than 5 books a week. This is probably due to the influence of the internet where teachers are more likely to have the habit of reading online texts than conventional texts. Reading seems to be considered by teachers like the old way for teachers. Books that are too thick are often an excuse for teachers not to read. The teacher lost the desire to read books and finally switched to shorter texts to read. Their purpose of reading is just to get entertainment and pleasure, not to gain knowledge.

The Effects on Students' Literacy

From the test results, it is found the students' literacy level is in average a with tendency to be low. The total number of questions that given, students are only able to achieve half of the correct answers which is 51.5%. Based on the results, it can be synthesized that the teacher's reading habits have an effect on students' literacy.

Table 2.
Students' Reading Test Result

Students	Mean Score	Percentage
Junior High School	3.2/6	53%
Senior High School	2.5/5	50%
Total		51.5%

The analysis from observations and interviews revealed that students' have same perception with the teachers regrading EFL reading that students consider reading as activity to understand that focus only on vocabulary. In the reading process itself, students only focus on the level of meaning word for word rather than processing information in the text. Based on reader level by Grabe et al (2011), students get a low reading level because they only try to understand words rather than the context of the text as a whole. This concept of reading EFL by understanding words is seen as an old tradition that is imitated from the previous teachers. This old tradition become an obstacle to increase students' literacy as reading EFL text is not just about translating the words but also the ability to synthesize the ideas in each sentence and read critically the text with some background knowledge (Denton, 2014).

Furthermore, the finding also indicates another problem in building good reading habits is the low exposure from the teacher to the students in terms of reading sources and reading amount practice. The lack of exposure and time make the students become less motivated and less attributed to do the reading task. The students were easily given up when they found difficulties in doing reading task. Besides, the students also have inadequate reading strategies so that they were clueless to find the best technique and strategies to understand the meaning of the text and the information in the text in a limited time. The classroom practice shown that teachers rarely teach the students any reading strategies that could assist and support students in reading process for example when they found unknown words in the text or how to link the information in each paragraph. The lack of teaching strategic reading in the classroom may affect the students to make them unaware about the effectiveness of using reading strategies. In fact, a solid and good readers should know that understanding and comprehension are easily achieved by applying the good reading strategies (Grabe and Stoller, 2011).

Lastly, students' reading habit were also affected by teachers' reading habits that they have poor reading habits either at school and at home. Even the students already read English on their

English class, unfortunately their time to read is still limited since they only learn English subject twice a week. Even with the advanced of technology where the Internet has provided many reading resources, students still rarely use it to read and spend more of their time watching videos and playing games. Based on interviews, and observations, the decrease in reading time was caused by the lack of interest of students in reading and the absence of external motivation in reading English texts. It was also revealed that teachers rarely gave reading assignments to students to do extensive reading at home which could increase students' reading interest and build good reading habits.

The interesting fact is found that despite the teacher's lack of knowledge and practice in literacy, the students still expressed their willingness to complete the EFL reading task as long as they were properly guided and assisted during the reading process. For a long time, the students are The students said that they did not have strategies in reading that could help them understand the text faster and make reading more interesting. This fact could be another consideration for teachers to change the approach in teaching reading.

Discussion

The results of this study implies that the teachers' practice in the classroom does not give exposure to students' reading experience which was important to empower their literacy as the ability to read and see the reality of the world they live in (Gustine, 2018). Additionally, students' literacy in English texts was also influenced by students' anxiety and negative perceptions about English texts. It is being called as internal factors in reading. As supported by Watson (2010), many students find English texts difficult to understand. The students took a long time to understand the meaning of the text and that many students considered reading exercises as translating exercises. Instead of trying to read critically and use their background knowledge in reading, the students still need supporting tools like translation tools or even dictionary to understand words by words in the text. Meanwhile, as a critical reader, the students should read to learn and acquire knowledge from the text read (Bakken & Lund, 2018; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

Given the above facts, the education system and especially the teachers have to consider the importance of building a good reading habits to increase students' literacy. The establishment of reading habits should be integrated in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Based on that analysis, the atmosphere in the classroom was not quite motivated that both the teachers and the students are still struggling to build good reading habits and to create positive perception towards EFL reading. The willingness to conquer the difficulties in reading is also low that the students could not finish the reading task properly. This related with the study by Kusumadyasti (2008) which found difficulties in understanding words and meanings in reading EFL to be the number one factor that affects reading habits. This negative treatment makes the reading habits of teachers and students poorer.

Next, the good reading habit is not related with the length of reading experience. The result of this study proved that although teachers have a long time in learning English, it does not guarantee that they have good reading habits. Iftanti (2012) and Daniel et al (2017) revealed that students with good reading habits have teachers who like all types of texts. In addition, Kusdemir & Bulut (2018) added that the motivation in reading EFL by the teacher makes students able to maintain good self-confidence and positive affect in doing reading assignments. Therefore, the teacher's reading habit is important to have a positive influence on student positive affection and perception about reading.

Additionally, Adetunji (2007) stated that the teachers' professionalism and development must be improved because it is important to improve students' reading habits and literacy. Teachers can improve classroom situations by modifying textbooks as practical reading resources and engaging students in more valuable and critical reading activities. Teachers cannot rely entirely on textbooks because they are not always relevant to the current situation but teachers can combine the use of textbooks with their teaching methods that focus more on the process of reading to gain knowledge from the text and not just translating word for word. Since the teachers' reading habits significantly affected their teaching practice, the improvement in their reading habits and the changing perception about reading could foster student literacy in the classroom to be higher than before. It is importance since literacy is connecting students with the outside world and the current situation that can bring their future to be better and better (Gustine, 2018).

In addition, Yulita & Neno (2021) exposed that there are some internal factors and external factors that affect students' ability in reading. The internal factors are hold more importance and significance effects such as students' affective states towards reading. Students' who have strong and positive aspects towards reading intend to have highest score that their strong motivation and volition helps to finish the reading task completely. Meanwhile the external factors such as support from the environment was also importance to boost students' motivation in reading.

Regarding that case, students' affective states also hold the significance factors that could help students to increase their ability in completing reading task and to give the students strong willingness to face any difficulties in reading. One way to increase students' willingness in reading is the practice of extensive reading outside school. Renandya (2007) had found that extensive reading activities are helpful to increase students' motivation in reading. By increasing their motivation, students could also increase their ability in reading. The combination pf extensive reading activities and intensive reading activities by teacher is important for students to develop their capability in EFL reading.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the teachers' have poor reading habits where the teacher only has time to read in a day for only 1-2 hours. This is also caused by the teacher's lack of reading habits where the teacher has not had a good reading habit since elementary school. Teachers generally only aim to do entertain reading or pleasure reading rather than reading to gain knowledge. In the past the teachers are perceived reading as translating activities and this old tradition is brought up to their students in the classroom. The students become less motivated in reading since the old perception about EFL reading where it is trapped on word level. Meanwhile teachers' reading habits affect the students' literacy level. The poor reading habits caused the poor level in literacy. The improvement in classroom activities and changing perception about EFL reading to be more positive could help the students to increase their literacy level.

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