Analyzing university students` strategies in building powerful vocabulary through extensive reading

Normalina [a,1*], Noor Aida Aflahah [b,2]

[a, b] Universitas Muhammadiyah Banjarmasin, Kalimantan Selatan, Indonesia
[1] linanorma02@gmail.com*; [2] aidaaflahah@gmail.com
*corresponding author

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ABSTRACT

In order to master English, it is important to build English vocabulary as a language component. Vocabulary mastery requires the right method, one of them reading books. The more books that are read, the more new vocabulary will be found. Therefore, this study attempts to investigate the direct effect of extensive reading in English on vocabulary mastery among university students. This study aims to find out students' strategies for improving their vocabulary skills by using extensive reading. The method used in this research was descriptive qualitative. The research required classroom observations and interviews. Four students and a lecturer were included in the interviews. This research was conducted in the Extensive Reading class of the English Education Department at University of Muhammadiyah Banjarmasin. The results of interviews show that they have various ways and strategies to build vocabulary through extensive reading. The more students read, the more students build new vocabulary and slowly indirectly understand the context of the vocabulary used. As a result, students' English language skills will also improve.

1. Introduction

In this era of globalization, mastering English is arguably a must. The ability to speak English is an added value for everyone, including students. Because, after graduating they will be faced with employment, of course, some of the companies or offices they will go to require their employees to be proficient in English. To be fluent in English, you can start with learning vocabulary, because it is one of the main capitals for learning sentence construction and communication skills. Vocabulary is a fairly important component and the amount of vocabulary that is known will affect language skills (Sulistiana et al., 2019; Utari, 2017). Students who have a lot of vocabulary will understand the contents of the text or reading easily. It can be said that vocabulary is the foundation of a language. Therefore, building vocabulary is quite important to support English proficiency.

English requires a large vocabulary to be able to use the four language skills well. In the process of learning English there are four skills that must be understood, listening, speaking, writing, and reading, because these four skills can be used together as communication tools (Sulistiana et al., 2019; Thariq et al., 2021). Vocabulary is one of the main factors that need to be mastered for students who learn English, especially in teaching reading. This means that what is needed for reading ability is vocabulary.

Vocabulary is an important component in a language. Because, the large number of vocabulary students have can help fluency in communicating. Vocabulary is the arrangement of the alphabet that forms a word in a language, and these words can express a thought (Samad, 2021). Vocabulary also supports speakers to express opinions, ideas, and feelings in communication, because learning a language cannot be separated from vocabulary. Before mastering the four English skills, students can first learn several components, vocabulary, structure and pronunciation.

Vocabulary is indeed a pillar or initial foundation for learning a new language, especially English. English is a language that has quite a lot of vocabulary. Our first step in learning English is to learn vocabulary (Bai, 2018). English as a second language that you want to learn will be more difficult to understand than your first language or mother tongue. Because some types of vocabulary may make students difficult to learn, so there will be different strategies from each student in mastering vocabulary. From the explanation, it can be concluded that the learning strategy is an important factor in mastering English. Therefore, students must know how to learn vocabulary more efficiently and effectively by building the right learning strategy.

Vocabulary learning strategies are divided into two groups, namely discovery strategies and reinforcement strategies (Ortalisje & Metboki, 2022; Holidazia et al., 2020). Even if a student does not like reading English texts and does not understand the meaning of each word in the text, when students enjoy reading, students will try to catch the meaning of the words in the context of their reading without using a dictionary. After finishing reading, then students try to find the true meaning of the difficult words they find.

Students can study and monitor their progress in learning vocabulary by using various media, one of which is books through reading. Students can read reading materials such as novels, magazines, and newspapers in English. Reading books is an important activity that can be done to develop and increase vocabulary (Wasik et al., 2016). The more you read the more new words you can learn. Learning new words is fun because they can be learned in various activities, especially reading books. Reading books in English does not require frequent opening of the dictionary to find out the meaning of newly discovered vocabulary. Just read all the sentences, and then you will automatically understand the context of the vocabulary in a reading.

Reading ability is quite important for students who want to improve their vocabulary, because reading activities will expose students to a lot of vocabulary. Indirectly, students will recognize many new vocabularies from the reading they have read. Various strategies can be used to increase vocabulary such as predicting reading content, skimming and scanning, cause and effect, learning one word a day, engaging in several English conversations, and reading (Padrita et al., 2018). With these various strategies can make it easier for students to increase vocabulary quickly.

Another strategy that can be used to increase students' vocabulary is to read something that interests them. This will encourage students to be more interested in reading activities. Students can read various types of reading such as novels and story books which will be very helpful in increasing interest in reading. Reading can improve students' vocabulary and reading skills (Arpandi, 2019). Increasing vocabulary by reading can be done easily and anywhere, through advertisements and leaflets containing English. Especially in this age of sophisticated technology, there are many English teaching applications and services that students can find online using their mobile phones or laptops.

Reading activities are quite important for students to have, because they have many benefits, especially for students. By reading students can develop their ability to either acquire or process knowledge to increase vocabulary. Reading is influenced by the time spent reading, because the more time spent reading, the higher the level of competence or the easier it is for students to understand what they read, and of course the vocabulary gained will also increase (Tantri, 2016). The more you like to read, the more vocabulary you have.

In the process of reading, one of the factors needed is reading interest, because students will read seriously without any coercion. If students have a high interest in reading, it is expected that they can achieve a high understanding as well. With an interest in reading, it is hoped that students will be able to build enthusiasm for reading, especially for students who have very little interest in reading. Because reading aims to make the readers understand the entire contents of the text or writing from the author (Arlianti et al., 2019; Patiung, 2016; Harianto, 2020). It is hoped that in the future students

can form good reading habits, so that students' extensive reading skills are well organized and their learning outcomes can also increase.

Students who do not like to read need to know the types of reading activities so they know that reading activities are interesting enough to do. Students` who like to read also need to know the types of reading so that they are more diligent in reading. Plus if students know the benefits of reading that can broaden horizons. So, the types of reading activities range from skimming reading, scanning, intensive reading, to extensive reading (Hedge, 2003; Arlianti et al., 2019; Tarigan, 2015). Several types of reading are done with several different techniques to make it easier for students to achieve the desired goals. There are two types of reading, namely reading aloud and reading silently. Reading aloud is also called reading aloud and reading silently or reading silently is silent. Reading aloud consists of extensive reading and intensive reading.

Extensive reading can help students to improve reading skills. Extensive reading is also used to encourage or increase students' interest in reading. The best way to improve vocabulary mastery or language skills is to live in an English-speaking environment or you can also do extensive reading which will encourage students to enjoy reading (Komariah, 2021; Lindawati 2021; Azmuddin, et al, 2014). So extensive reading is reading a number of texts that must be adjusted to the language abilities and speed of each student. Make it a habit to read light and fun books to build students' reading speed and fluency. The more diligent in reading, the higher the students' English proficiency.

In learning languages especially English, reading can be one of the best ways to connect with English because students will need a lot of references to understand English. By reading frequently, students will get thousands of words and sentences from their reading, of course this will make a change in students' English language skills (Mufliharsi & Mayuni, 2014). In addition, because of the limited time students have, they must use various strategies to read. In reading students must understand what the author wants to convey so that later it is related to the level of understanding of what they read.

Extensive reading can be one of the strategies that can be applied in reading class to encourage students' reading activities. In this reading activity students cannot be separated from the motivation to read in teaching English. The role of motivation is very important for someone to do something, because strong motivation will encourage us to achieve targets. In addition, reading requires high-level thinking skills to stimulate various reading models (Shenton, 2018). In improving reading skills students need various efforts such as using strategies or methods in reading. Reading activity is one of the means for students to find information according to their needs. So, reading is not an activity that is solely done in spare time.

In previous studies it was shown that students who learn English using strategies to increase their vocabulary by reading can recognize the meaning of new words and build vocabulary as a result of extensive reading that focuses on comprehension. Based on the analysis and interpretation, it can be understood that the proportion of the number of vocabulary owned by students is very helpful in measuring students' vocabulary and showing an increase in their vocabulary, also in this study many administrative and teacher weaknesses were found which were sufficient to motivate students in learning (Iqbal & Komal, 2017). So, it can be said that teacher and administration training is quite important to increase students' motivation in improving their reading skills.

Then, in other studies this approach has had an impact on the progress of reading comprehension and development in building students' vocabulary (Lekawael & Ferdinandus, 2021). This study encourages students to undertake further studies to test the effectiveness of extensive reading on vocabulary learning at various reading levels. Then in further research, it is said that extensive reading can improve students' vocabulary skills by frequently doing reading activities, doing vocabulary exercises repeatedly, and working in a group (Arafa, 2018). By doing extensive reading and doing various exercises, it will encourage students' enthusiasm for reading. In addition, students' vocabulary mastery will continue to be built.

Many have discussed how extensive reading can improve English vocabulary skills. However, some of them have engaged students as research samples for experimental research. Thus, this study attempts to investigate the direct effect of extensive reading in English on vocabulary skills among college students. The question to ask is "How do students' perceive building powerful vocabulary through extensive reading?"

2. Method

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. By using this method, this study aims to determine students' strategies in building their vocabulary by using extensive reading. Data collection was carried out by direct observation and interviews with respondents. The participants in this study were English Education students who took the Extensive Reading class. The number of students who will be studied is 4 students and a lecturer who teaches the Extensive Reading course. In this Extensive Reading course students read a book in groups, each student will read several pages in one week, then present the conclusions of their reading in front of the class. Then students are also asked to make a list of new vocabulary words they know and their meanings, to make it easier for students to remember the vocabulary they just found. This research was conducted at the English Language Education study program, Teaching and Education Faculty, University of Muhammadiyah Banjarmasin, with a focus on Extensive Reading class. This research was conducted during the Extensive Reading class and when the respondent had time. By conducting interviews in the form of questions about extensive reading and building vocabulary.

3. Findings and Discussion

The findings in this study used interviews with several students and an extensive reading teacher. The results of interviews with several students indicated that they had various perceptions in using methods and strategies to build vocabulary through extensive reading. As stated by several students, the strategy they use to build vocabulary is to get used to reading, reading books, novels, and reading with pictures such as comics. There is one student who has an additional strategy, as Student L said that:

> *Apart from reading, another strategy that I use is listening to music and watching movies in English.*

While listening to music and watching movies, they have their own way of remembering the vocabulary. students will use note taking or make a list for the vocabulary they just found, then stick it on the bedroom wall so that it can be read frequently so that the strategies students have can work more effectively. There are also students who save pictures or videos about vocabulary that they see on social media. Then, other students also said that instead of memorizing vocabulary it is better to remember it by reading it often so you don't forget, then practice with other people so that the vocabulary you get is not easily forgotten. Because support from the environment is also important, vocabulary skills can develop properly.

Teacher M who was interviewed also had several strategies in teaching students extensive reading. Teacher M says:

> *In an extensive reading class, apart from focusing on building students' reading skills, one aspect that is trying to improve is vocabulary. This means that from the various kinds of books that students read, it is hoped that they will get new vocabulary.*

Then, teacher M said there were two main strategies in building vocabulary, first directing students to choose readings that match their interests, so that students more easily apply the contents of the reading from the book. Second, students are required to record the new vocabulary obtained from each reading material so that it can be repeated and maintained. The point is to get used to recording new vocabulary in every reading material that students read every week. So the assumption is that after a total of 16 meetings in one subject students will get a total vocabulary of 16 times because of the many meetings.

Teacher M also confirmed that the two strategies discussed things in stages that students had to learn. First, students learn about their interests by choosing certain books, and second, students get used to taking notes. So after that, there will be a follow-up strategy that is implementation in nature. As teacher M said before, students should be able to apply vocabulary more easily if it suits their interests. So, the third strategy is to apply the vocabulary according to the students' daily activities. When students already have an interest and vocabulary, it will be quite easy to apply them in a sentence, for example making short stories, or making captions. In addition, these strategies will be effective if all three can be implemented.

Since not all students like to read, therefore a strong motivation is needed to encourage students' interest in reading. They said that their motivation for reading was to improve their English skills and be able to speak English fluently. As this student M said:

> *Apart from completing assignments, it is also to increase my knowledge; it will also make it easier for me to communicate with other people using English.*

Students also said that an attractive book cover is a motivation to read. So, it can be assumed that creative book covers are also one of the factors that motivate students to build vocabulary. On the other hand, teacher M, who found it rather difficult to cultivate students' interest in reading, had their own strategy.

Since it is rather difficult to foster students' interest in reading, teacher M said if a teacher wants to give a lot of reading assignments then make students interested in reading so they are comfortable with the assignments given. One of them is by keeping their interest channeled from reading. If students already have an interest in certain reading material, it is assumed that they will read it more easily than reading material that is difficult or does not suit their interests.

Teacher M said that currently the results of building students' vocabulary through extensive reading are unknown, because students have not done the final task. However, from the Extensive Reading class assignments at least they have a lot of new vocabulary notes, because students have many meetings in the Extensive Reading class to add new vocabulary. As the assumption that teacher M said:

> *If they apply the first two strategies, the students' vocabulary probability will increase. Supported by learning patterns that force them to carry out their tasks, also considering that their reading material is more than 150 pages, averaging 200 pages.*

Building vocabulary through extensive reading provides various benefits for students, especially in building vocabulary. When reading they will find new vocabulary that they did not know before and gain reading comprehension in a passage. In addition, the large number of vocabulary students have will indirectly improve their English skills. Like the words of students that the more vocabulary they get, the more their ability to communicate will increase. So, from the results of this interview it can be said that by reading extensively students can build vocabulary.

Effective strategies used by students to memorize vocabulary. After interviewing several students, it turned out that there were various strategies they used to build vocabulary. Of the several strategies, reading books, listening to music and watching movies, they said that using the note taking strategy as an additional strategy would make the other strategies more effective. Because note taking will indirectly make it easier for students to remember the vocabulary they just found. According to Evans & Shively (2019) as sited in Di Vesta & Gray (1972, p. 13) taking notes can facilitate the sending of new material to memory for long periods of time when learners take notes by "acting on incoming information, filtering relevant material, and organizing content urgent".

In addition, there are also other strategies that are quite effective in building vocabulary. Reading a book they like is a fairly effective strategy because interest in a book will motivate students to read so that their vocabulary can be built. Reading can improve students' vocabulary and reading skills (Gilakjani, 2016). Given the small interest in reading students, then choose the type of book that interests students so they are interested in reading. Even if they don't understand the meaning of every word in the text, when students enjoy their reading, they try to catch the meaning of words from the context of their reading rather than distracting themselves to find meaning in a dictionary or the like. In addition, reading provides many benefits for those who read diligently, building vocabulary, improving English skills, sharpening the mind, Get inspired and gain insight. Therefore, it is quite important for teachers to find ways to make students diligent in reading (Labib, 2022). So that students are motivated to read books and can feel the various benefits of reading. Because the myriad benefits of reading are useful for mastering the four skills in English.

Extensive reading can help build student vocabulary. The students interviewed said that extensive reading could help build vocabulary, because while reading they find foreign vocabulary that they don't know and slowly understand where the context of the vocabulary leads. It is not easy to understand the context of one word in a sentence, therefore by reading a lot, students will indirectly understand the context of the vocabulary. The ability to understand context in reading will be one of

the main factors for understanding and implementing a reading (Fauzi, 2020). This understanding ability is also influenced by certain processes and experiences gained by the reader, where this experience will become a reference for understanding the context contained in the reading.

Extensive reading requires a process to build vocabulary. In order to have good habits, the right strategy is needed to build these habits (Pradita, 2022). Especially for students, it takes more patience to get used to reading habits. Little by little students will get new vocabulary and new information that is not yet known (Pradita, 2022). This helps their role as students who are required to read a lot, besides that it can also improve students' speaking skills because during lectures they are often asked to use English skills.

The amount of vocabulary built from extensive reading is not small. They get quite a lot of vocabulary if they read diligently, so that they can also manage word for word into a sentence. The real purpose of building vocabulary is to help students acquire English proficiency. Language as a means of communication, lexical knowledge or knowledge of language vocabulary is the main thing in language learning (Holidazia & Rodliyah, 2020). If students are able to speak English proficiently then they have mastered the vocabulary they have built by reading extensively.

4. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the way for students to build vocabulary through extensive reading is by using the right strategies and strong motivation to encourage their interest in reading. There are various strategies of students perception that can be used in building vocabulary such as reading various types of books, choosing the type of reading they like, note taking, listening to music, watching movies and the last is applying vocabulary according to students' daily activities. The encouragement motivation that makes students move to read is an attractive book cover and a book they like. Besides that, the biggest motivation that makes them read is to improve their skills in English and be able to speak English fluently. By using appropriate and effective strategies as well as strong encouragement motivation to read, students will get used to reading activities. A lot of reading will produce new vocabulary, broaden horizons and make students think critically. So, the more often students read, the more new vocabulary they will get. Their English proficiency will also improve as vocabulary is built.

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