

Factors of Reading Skills in English for Adults

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Abstract

This paper aims to reveal factors that influence reading skills for adults. Qualitative research was done towards two categories of freshmen major in Management in Universitas Pamulang. Observations and interviews were used to collect data from two categories of freshmen. Oral reading accuracy was used as a component of reading skill assessment in observations. The results showed that the use of the language and the fondness to the language itself influence reading skills for adults.

Keywords: reading skills, reading English for adults

1. Introduction

The research started in the beginning of semester in a management class for the English course. All the students learned English when they were in Junior High School and Senior High School. Some of them had learned English when they were in Elementary School. They were taught four skills of English: Listening, Writing, Reading, and Speaking but reading is one of the skills that less have been practiced than other skills in some schools. When the students go to University, the English is taught based on the University curriculum.

Even though the students have learned English for a certain period of time, the students give different results for English especially in Reading. Ideally, people who have got exposures of English since they were kids will perform better English than those who just get English when they are adults as mentioned by Cenoz, J. (2003) that learners who begin in early childhood may evidence a foreign accent and Gawi, E. M. K. (2012) said that age affects EFL learning because early exposure to language instructions constantly results in better performance.

In this management class, the different results in reading English are some students who are good in reading and the rest are still low in reading. When the fact showed that there were two different results in reading performance, therefore, this research intends to reveal some factors that influence reading skills in English for adults.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Reading Skills

Reading words requires a number of word identification strategies such as phonics, onset/rimes, morphemic analysis, and contextual analysis said Tindall, E., & Nisbet, D. (2010). Susanti, R. (2002) defines reading as seeing and understanding the contents of what is written (with verbally or only in the heart). Pratiwi, V. U., Astuti, P. I., & Handayani, S. (2015) said that reading is a form of interaction with language, and therefore reading is a language activity. Furthermore, Pratiwi added that readers are faced with words, phrases and sentences as well as visual media that complement them, which form a whole manuscript with the scripting system adopted. Whilst Ruddell in Karmiani, S. (2018) said that reading is a process of interaction between writers and readers through written texts that are able to expand knowledge of the reader to interpret the writing into the correct meaning.

The ability to read is absolutely owned by students because reading skills are very useful for studying other fields of study and in reading there is a principle that is understanding the core being read or finding the contents of the reading said Laily, I. F. (2014). Harrison in Budiarti, W. N., & Haryanto, H. (2016) mentioned that reading is not only increases our life skills and extend our knowledge, it goes much deeper that it was fundamental effect of the imagination.

Paris, S. G. (2005) mentioned that reading development can be grouped in three categories: Conceptual (Scope, Importance as measured by centrality or typicality of exemplars, and Range of influence), Developmental (Unequal learning because some letters, concepts, and phonemes are learned more quickly and thoroughly than others, Mastery, and Universality), and Methodological (Oral reading accuracy and Oral reading rate). There are many factors that cause students to be low in reading skills, namely students are less fond of reading skills, apart from self-awareness of the importance of reading to increase knowledge said Rinawati, A., Mirnawati, L. B., & Setiawan, F. (2020). Barriers may exist: (a) limited or no exposure to English or sounds in English, (b) limited or no engagement with phonemic

awareness activities, (c) possible presence of a reading difficulty, (d) absence of literacy in the native language, and (e) incongruence with English symbol system in the native language as mentioned by Tindall, E., & Nisbet, D. (2010).

2.2 Reading English for Adults

August, G. (2006) reported that there are very few studies on the topic of adult English Second Language Reading. A review of the literature reveals a lack of empirical research regarding effective practices for teaching low literacy adult ESL students to read said Tindall, E., & Nisbet, D. (2010). Burt, M., Peyton, J. K., & Adams, R. (2003) mentioned that teaching literacy to adults learning English is a complex and multifaceted process and the study said that teachers need to be aware of several factors that influence adults' reading development in English as a second language and take these factors into consideration when designing and implementing programs, curricula, and instruction.

Adult English language learners with limited literacy often have little or no formal schooling in their native language (Burt, M., Peyton, J. K., & Schaetzel, K., 2008). The students who master reading skills will easily extract meaning from reading English texts because they have a better vocabulary in context (Wibowo, Y., Syafrizal, S., & Syafryadin, S., 2020).

2.3 Reading English for Adults

Research which was done by Susanti, R. (2002) showed that the mastering of English vocabulary is equal to their mastering of the English reading ability and students who have high a level on mastering the English vocabulary, they have a high level on mastering the English reading ability too and the same result happen also to the opposite one, that students who have low level in mastering the English Vocabulary, their mastering in English reading ability are low too.

Andriansyah, W., & Johar, A. (2012) did research to generate a reading comprehension model that is able to increase students' reading comprehension ability at Polytechnics gave a result that the use of reading strategy of reciprocal teaching combined with peer-teaching method can significantly improve students' reading comprehension ability and the emerging nurturant effect of implementing reciprocal teaching to reading comprehension course improves social values on students.

3. Method

Using a qualitative approach, this research covered observations and interviews method to two freshmen in a management class. The observations started in the beginning of semester to the class that was taught English. First, all the students in the class were asked to read an English text loudly in front of the class then the researcher found two categories reading English from the class.

The observation continued to the two freshmen who were chosen with different categories to collect the data in one semester. The first freshman is the one who is good enough in reading English and the other one is not good enough in reading English. The criteria of good reading English based on Paris, S. G. (2005) who mentioned about oral reading accuracy in reading development. At the end of semester, the researcher called the two freshmen to be interviewed. The answers were recorded and the analyses were done from the answers of both freshmen.

4. Results And Discussion

English course for management class is taught in once a week for one hour and 40 minutes. It is two credits and total meeting is 14 meetings. In every two meetings, the researcher did observations to the two freshmen in reading English. In the first meeting and the second meeting, based on the observation, the researcher noted there were two categories freshman in two big groups. First group was those who could read English well and the second group was those who cannot read English well. The researcher chose one freshman that can represented each group then asked these freshmen to practice reading English at home after they are taught English in the class in every two meetings. The researcher took notes in every observation. The result of these two freshmen for 14 meetings is shown in the **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Result of Reading English

No. of Freshman	Oral Reading Accuracy						
	Meeting (%)						
(Male/Female)	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14
1 (Female)	60	65	65	70	70	75	75
2 (Male)	80	85	85	90	90	95	95

Based on the **Table 1** above, the two freshmen gave different result. The first freshman is the one who cannot read English well. After 14 meetings, the progress of reading English did not achieve 95%. It means, this freshman got

difficulties to read better week by week even she had tried as much as she could. As mentioned by Lipson & Wixson in Paris, S. G. (2005) that educators and researchers consider a level of 95% accurate word identification to be essential for comprehending text. Whilst the second freshman seemed to perform better to increase his ability in reading English until he could get 95% after 14 meetings.

The researcher took a deep interview after 14 meetings to find out the difference result towards the two freshmen. They were interviewed one by one and all the answers were recorded and transcribed. Since the freshmen were not in English major, so the first question that the researcher asked was about the last time these two freshmen used English. All the conversation had been translated into English. The first question is as follows:

Interviewer : “When was the last time you used English?”
Freshman No. 1 : “.... the last time ..when I was in Junior High School.”

When the first freshman answered that the last time, she used English was in Junior High School, and now she is about eighteen years old, it means that it has been three years she does not get exposed English words. This long distance in using English is the same result to the language as common. Marsh, D., & Langé, G. (2000) said that successful language learning can be achieved when people have the opportunity to receive instruction, and at the same time experience real-life situations in which they can acquire the language. It means that if the people do not use the language, they cannot perform the language. English in Indonesia is a foreign language. It is not the second language, so the language will be used if people get it from school, learn by themselves, or look for it from some language institutions.

The different answer the researcher got from the second freshman. He said that the last time he used English was the day before. It was a surprising answer for the researcher because no wonder he could perform better than the woman. Even so, the researcher focused on reading English, so the detailed questions the researcher asked were all about reading English. As the researcher got answers from the first freshman, this woman rarely practices reading English for long time. The researcher was also asked about one example of an English word that related to the past time and the researcher checked how the first freshman read it. The same checking to the second freshman that the researcher wanted to know whether the second freshman knew how to read the word.

The second freshman can read the word correctly, but the first freshman cannot read the word correctly. This result made the researcher wondered the other reason why the second freshman can perform better in reading. The other answer the man said was fondness. The man said that he had got motivated to learned English since he graduated from High School. He also said that he liked English and he liked to use English. He liked English song and he liked to sing English songs. Here, it is good if someone likes English songs. If he or she wants to know what words someone sings, he or she needs to know how to read the words. By imitating the native speakers to read the words, someone will perform better in saying and reading the words. The more exposure language someone gets, the better performance he or she will get.

After doing deep interviews, the secret has been revealed. The factors of adults can perform good in reading English are because the use of the language for daily life and the fondness to the language itself.

5. Conclusion

The experience of learning English in a certain period of time does not guarantee someone can become a good English reader. The one who use English for everyday life will perform better English reader. It can be concluded that this research successfully reveals factors that influence reading English for adults are the use of the language and the fondness to the language itself. The next research is needed to assess a reader from the other components of reading. The next researcher can also use technology in collecting data to make the research completer and more accurate.

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