

**The Profile of Effective Readers and Their Learning Achievement
(A Case Study at English Education Department of FKIP UNS Surakarta
2013/2014)**

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Abstract: This article discusses the characteristics of effective readers in reading course books and their learning achievement. It is based on a research at English Education Department of FKIP UNS Surakarta 2013/ 2014. The research used qualitative approach in term of case study that deeply describes the case. It employed purposive sampling. The data were collected through observations, interviews, and documents analysis. The effective readers are influenced by their family, friends, lecturers, and their motivation. They read for getting something new and as background knowledge in learning process. They usually read alone, plan the schedule and prefer to read English books. Reading strategies of the effective readers are text books marking to the key points, making notes, keep reading, find easy readings, focus and understand by the context or read multiple sources. They are aware that appropriate reading give positive effects to their learning achievement. So, they always use their own reading strategies and it makes their better achievement.

Keywords: *effective readers, learning achievement*

Abstrak: Artikel ini membahas karakteristik pembaca efektif dalam membaca buku perkuliahan dan prestasi belajar mereka. Hal ini didasarkan pada penelitian di program studi Bahasa Inggris FKIP UNS Surakarta 2013/2014. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yakni studi kasus menggunakan sampling bertujuan. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan analisis dokumen. Hampir semua pembaca efektif dipengaruhi oleh keluarga, teman, dosen, dan motivasi mereka sendiri. Mereka membaca untuk mendapatkan informasi baru dan sebagai bekal dalam proses perkuliahan. Mereka biasanya membaca sendiri, menetapkan waktu membaca dan lebih memilih buku Bahasa Inggris. Strategi membaca mereka adalah memberi garis bawah pada bagian buku yang penting, membuat catatan, berusaha tetap membaca, mencari bacaan yang mudah, fokus dan memahami konteks atau membaca dari berbagai sumber. Mereka sadar bahwa membaca yang tepat memberikan dampak positif pada prestasi belajar mereka. Jadi mereka selalu menggunakan strategi membaca mereka sendiri and hal itu membuat prestasi mereka lebih baik.

Kata Kunci: *pembaca efektif, prestasi belajar*

College students need to read a lot of readings related to their learning materials to develop their knowledge. It is basically that more time, more learning, and more achievement (Binkley and Williams, 1996). They are expected

to read a lot of course books or references, especially when the books in foreign language. Foreign language course books need extra time to interpret the meaning to get the appropriate understanding. In this case, it happens to the English Education students at English Education Department of FKIP UNS Surakarta 2013/2014 who required read a lot of literatures in relation with their study as effective as possible.

During reading there are some students who understand the English books easily, but there are some students who cannot understand it well. Some students do not process letter and word sequences efficiently, or that they are unable to coordinate the components of processing effectively (Bradley, Danielson, and Hallahan, 2005 in Taylor and Ysseldyke, 2007: 2). Those have effects in someone's comprehension in reading that indicate they can read accurately or weakly. Though many college students have weaknesses in reading, but it is possible that some of them have good reading behavior and lead them to be effective readers. So, the main points are students' awareness and willingness that will influence their reading accuracy.

The students' reading is affecting their learning achievement. It means that as college students are better to read course books appropriately to have the advantages of what they have read. It is automatically lead the students in achieving a satisfying result of learning (Zare, 2013). When they have good reading habits and appropriate reading strategies, college students will read and learn better. On the other hand, they cannot read better if they have bad reading habit and reading strategies. It means that college students who have their own effective reading ways appropriately will have better understanding, it leads they to the satisfying achievement. It can be said that effective reading affects students' achievement.

Therefore, the researcher wants to investigate the effective readers of English Education Program at English Education Department of FKIP UNS Surakarta 2013/2014. It is aimed to get understanding of effective readers' characteristics and their learning achievement. To do this, the researcher conducted a qualitative research study to observe and investigate the effective readers.

As stated by Brown (2004: 185) that the functions of reading are to convey information, to amuse and entertain us, to codify our social, economic, and legal conventions and to fulfill a host of other functions. It means that by reading, college students easily get the advantages of reading mentioned. In relation with the functions of reading, college students need to have appropriate ways. Appropriate ways in reading mean their reading strategies related to effective reading. Reading strategies as mental processes of reader comprehension and the ability to modify strategies when consciously select to use to complete reading tasks needed successfully (Cohen, 1990). It can be said that reading related to college students reading strategies that lead them to be effective readers.

Effective readers mean successful readers. It can be said that the effective readers have good reading behavior in their reading. Good readers have preferences, they have differences in genres and in kinds of materials and they have vary in the types of strategies they employ in reading, they are also in the process of developing different repertoires of strategies to fit different reading needs, purposes, and materials (Blachowicz and Ogle, 2008: 6-10). Effective readers know their strengths and weaknesses in their learning.

Learning is mostly done by reading. It has correlation with their achievement, if they read effectively they will learn more and if they read less they have lack of knowledge. The effective reading related with their learning strategy, therefore Brown (1987), Lent (1984), Pintrich & DeGroot (1990) define that learning strategy is the best predictor of study achievement. It can be said that effective reading influences readers' academic achievement. Travers (1970: 447) believes that achievement is the result of what an individual has learned from some educational experiences. It can be said that learning achievement is not only the score, but the participations and performances of students (experiences).

In addition, Environment, parents' occupation, social class, school pressure, the person itself are the factors that influence their reading (Heilman, 1967; Aebersold and Field, 1997). It is not only the reading factors, but also repeated reading is an effective approach for improving reading comprehension by doing practices. It will make students become effective readers or good readers that have positive effects to their learning successfulness (Carbo, Dunn, &

Dunn, 1999; Nunan, 1998; Ostrov, 2002; Taylor & Ysseldyke, 2007; Whiteley, 2004; Blachowicz & Ogle, 2008). In line with those experts, Ostrov (2002: 16) said that the most successful people in every field need to keep learn new information in order to make new developments.

RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher conducted the research of the profile of effective readers at English education department FKIP UNS Surakarta on May until the end of June 2014. The university is located on Ir Sutami Street 36 A Surakarta. It used qualitative approach in term of case study that deeply describes the case. It employed purposive sampling by selecting the participants who have good reading habits, reading strategies, good performances and achievement. The data collections are from interviews, observations, and documents analysis. The data analysis is interactive model. Thirteen students were categorized as effective readers observed. It was taken from interview processes from the students' lecturers, friends and class observations. The interview to the effective readers used for investigated their reading background, reading habits, and reading strategies. The results of interview were supported by class observations to know their performances during teaching and learning process. The data collections were about the characteristics and participations of effective readers in the class. To validate the research findings, the researcher analyzed some documents, asked to their lecturers, and their friends for confirmations. Therefore, the background of reading, reading habits, and reading strategies of effective readers were found.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and discussions are including reading background of the effective readers, their reading habits, their reading strategies, and their learning achievement.

Background of Reading

The reading backgrounds of effective readers describe preferences, their purposes or reasons in reading, and their influences in reading. Generally most of the effective readers like reading; in this case they have their own preferences of how much academic reading (course books) and general reading they will do. The first is for academic purposes and the second is for pleasure. It can be drawn that they read for academic purpose is about 60% and read for pleasure is about 40%.

Regarding the reading purpose or reason; AG, LS, ST, UM, HS, RK and AF said that reading course books is for background knowledge during teaching and learning activities. The other effective readers said that their reading is for knowing something new; they are DB, RD, FM, and NF. It is different from SR because she said that reading course books both for get something new and background knowledge. AA has her own reason, she often reads as a preparation in learning and her activities in magazine organization.

The effective readers' reading factors come from their environments; such as family, campus, classmates, friends or lecturers. AG is influenced by her family (her little sister) and friends. It is the same with RD, but he is influenced by his brother who likes reading a lot of literature books. AA has the same factor with AG and RD, she is influenced by her brother, sister, and aunty. In addition, she is influenced by her magazine organization at her campus. ST and HS are influenced by their family; but the difference is that ST is influenced by her brother; meanwhile HS is influenced by his father. In the other hand, the same factor is that ST and HS are influenced by their boarding house friends. Student UM has the same factor that she is influenced by her boarding house friends. She said that her lecturers always give motivation to read. It is supported by LS, AF, and RK. They said that their lecturers usually give reading motivation to the students.

In addition, SR, NF, and AA argued that the main factors of their reading generally are their family and friends. The most of the effective readers agree that family, friends, and also lecturers are their important factors in reading. On the other hand, DB and AF have their opinion that actually the atmosphere of reading in their environments is not really good. So, they said that they try to read based on their awareness or willingness.

Reading Habits

Beside their reading backgrounds mentioned above, the effective readers have their reading habits. The effective readers' reading habits are time / place in reading and course readings preferences (English or Indonesia). In relation with

English course books, most of the effective readers usually read in low anxiety (good situation or mood). Generally they usually read in spare time or anytime, such as LS, SR, FM, ST, DB, and AF. They said that when reading in spare time give motivation to read more. HS and AA also read in spare time, but they prefer read at night. It is different from NF that usually read in the morning to learn or prepare related to her courses. AG and RK have the same habit with NF, they usually read in learning or preparing related to their courses or assignments. On the other hand; some of the effective readers such as RD, UM, and HS said that generally they try to read every day to improve their knowledge. In addition, the effective readers have readings preferences in their study at English Education Department. In general; AG, LS, UM, ST, RK, FM, NF, and AA directly stated that they usually read English course books. DB and SR prefer to read both English and Indonesia in relation with their study. HS, AF and RD have the difference preferences among the effective readers. They decide that when reading general books in Indonesia and reading course books in English.

Reading Strategies

Their reading strategies are prefer to read alone, repeat and keep reading, understand the context and correlate word by word, take notes and resume, discuss with friends or lecturers, check dictionary if really needed, underline to the key points, read other references, read step by step and check their understanding. The descriptions about their reading strategies which has different strategies from others effective readers are described; for example reading in a noisy environment, sit in front line in the class, read novel to improve vocabularies, ask to the lecturer outside the class.

By reading alone, they easily understand what the meaning of a text is. They have high motivation in reading and it affects to their reading efforts. The effective readers have high efforts during reading, such as student AG, LS, RD, UM, ST, HS, AF, SR, and NF that said always repeat and keep reading even they cannot understand in one time reading. When the effective readers face some difficulties; AG, LS, RD, ST, FM, and AA have their own solutions to solve reading problems. The solutions that they usually used are trying to understand the context and the correlation word by word. By doing the strategy, they said that

they can understand texts very well. In addition, to make their reading effectiveness, they usually take some notes during teaching and learning activities. Student DB, ST, and HS usually do that strategy to remember what has learned in the class. On the other hand, some of the effective readers, such as student AF, SR, NF and AA are using dictionary to check the correct meaning of words that very difficult to understand. Student LS, FM and RK use both strategies. They take some notes during learning in the class and find some words difficulties in the dictionary. The other effective reader; DB, LS, HS, UM, AF, RK, NF, AG and SR prefer to ask to the lecturers or friends. To make effective reading readers should have a clear purpose. It is related with effective readers at English education FKIP UNS that they decide some purposes before read a book. They decide their readings and then they have a clear purpose why do they read it. RD, ST, AF, RK, SR, FM, NF, and AA are effective readers who decide their reading purposes clearly. They said that they read well when having purpose before reading.

Furthermore; DB, AF and SR usually see the table of content or summary of books to create background knowledge before read the whole parts. That is their technique before reading to make their reading more effective, but the other effective readers prefer to make some notes during reading process. It is aimed to make their understanding easier to be remembered. The effective readers are AG, DB, UM, RK, and SR. They do it after they read the texts. In the end of their reading, they try to make a resume related to their reading conclusion. Their reading strategies are aimed to have better understanding and learning in the next parts of texts or books. Another reading strategy used by effective readers is they underline to the key points of texts with colorful pen. AG, DB, UM, NF, and AF usually do that strategy to make their reading more interesting. It is also easier to be found when they want to remember the meaning of texts in the other time. In order to overcome the reading difficulties beside some strategies above, the effective readers such as AG, DB and UM try to read other references when facing difficult materials. By reading other references or sources of reading, they compare and correlate different texts easily. It means that they try to find other references that assumed easier to be understood. In the other side, the other

effective readers such as LS, FM, and AA prefer to discuss with their friends when having difficulties in reading. Those are different from student ST and RK. It is caused by their preferences that they prefer both find other references and discuss with friends. They stated that after reading other references and after that they still confuse, they will discuss it with friends to overcome their problems.

Generally, most of the effective readers read in spare time. On the other hand, most of them read before class begins. They said that by reading, they understand the lecturers' explanation well. In addition, the effective readers have their own strategies to overcome the reading problems in different ways. Some of effective readers have reading strategies which are not use by others. Student AF and NF read step by step, it means that they read part by part of the books till they understand. They said that reading should not be done fast, but reading should be done carefully to get appropriate meaning. It is different from student ST when finding content difficulties; she tries to check her understanding by asking herself. She said that she usually asks herself about what she has been read. In this case, student AG prefers to do both reading step by step and checking understanding to herself. In other hands, some effective readers try to read in detail to have depth understanding. Student RD and AF try to do that strategy, but in different ways. Student RD reads in detail and tries to read it every day. Meanwhile, student AF read in detail when he finds important points. So, he reads the whole important parts. Student HS prefers to do both reading in detail every day and reading the whole important parts. In different ways, student RK and FM always motivate their selves to read a lot when facing reading difficulties. They motivate their selves to read as many as possible reading sources.

Specifically, some of effective readers have different reading strategies than others. Student AG said that sometimes she prefers to ask her lecturers outside the class when facing difficulties in understanding texts. Meanwhile, student HS prefers to ask his lecturers in the class directly when finding reading difficulties. It is also different from student NF that said she only asks to the lecturers only she finds interesting parts of books. Another effective reader who has unique reading strategies is student DB. She motivates herself in reading because she knows how to treat herself. Her notes are separated in many papers

during learning process. She argued that when she collects her separated notes automatically she has time to read her notes at home. She reads texts till she understands before she goes to next parts. She prefers read in noisy environment, for example listening music or lots of people talk but they are not giving their arguments during her reading. Student RD also has his own way to improve his reading. He usually sits on the front line in the class during teaching and learning process. He said that he understands the lecturers' explanation and he automatically recalls it when reading the materials alone. It is the same with student UM that usually recalls what she has read. The difference is that UM recalls in the next time of what she has read alone not what the lecturers' explanation. Student AF has clear reading strategies in reading soft file books. In the first reading to create background knowledge, he decides to read in two stages such as scanning and skimming. After that he reads in detail of the important parts that he is looking for. When he reads books in form of soft file; sees the table of content, searches keyword, blocks the key points, finds the theories and focuses to read. The effective reader who has different reading strategies to improve her vocabularies is only student FM. She said that she usually reads novel to improve her vocabularies. It means that her motivation in learning is high. She has hard effort to develop her course books reading with her own way according to her pleasure.

Regarding the characteristics of effective readers at English Education Department of FKIP UNS Surakarta 2013/2014, it has influences with their learning achievement. Many reading factors, reading habits, and reading strategies of effective readers give some effects to their learning achievement. Their performances, participations, and scores related to English courses are satisfying. They ask, answer, discuss, or respond the lecturers or friends during teaching and learning activities actively. They have high scores in relation with their learning in English education. Most of the effective readers have scores between 3,40 – 3,90, whereas the highest score is 4,00.

Discussion

This part justifies the characteristics of effective readers especially in reading course books and their learning achievement at English Education Department of FKIP UNS Surakarta 2013/2014. A lot of factors influence their reading, especially in reading course books to develop their achievement in the learning process. Carbo, Dunn and **Dunn (1999: 2)** said that:

Every age of learners or students are affected by their (a) immediate environment, (b) own emotional, (c) sociological needs, (d) physical characteristics, and (e) psychological inclinations when concentrating and trying to master and remember new or difficult information.

The theories above have relation with the research findings related to background of reading. Every student (effective readers) has their own background in reading. Some of them stated that family (father, mother, sister, brother, or friends) influences their reading. Beside the influence from the environments, their reading is also influenced by their characteristics. It is about their awareness or motivation in reading, especially reading course books and good preparation. It is supported by Aebersold and Field (1997: 7-9) stating that there are some influences in reading; such as the school influences, the cultural influences, the influence of individual characteristics, and the text.

Moreover, according to Aebersold and Field (1997: 7-9) individual characteristics related with students motivation is important. It is related with the students' (effective readers) motivation. In general most of them have good motivation in reading. The cultural influence based on the theory is students who are influenced by social or economics group in their life. For example student AA, in the interview she said that her reading influenced by her magazine organization. Her reading is influenced by her friends in a university student organization. The texts that they read also influence their reading in that what the students read will create their understanding. For example student AG stated that she likes reading English books, because when she read books written in Indonesia she will be confused. Therefore, reading is influenced by many factors. Factors in reading course books of college students which have been observed are the students' environment (family or school), culture, individual characteristics, and the text that they usually read.

In line with Carbo, Dunn and Dunn; Aebersold and Field; there are some factors that influence someone's reading as quoted by Iftanti (2012) in her research that reading is influenced by personal characteristics of the students including age distribution, social class, and parents' occupation (Adetunji, 2007); accessibility to electronic facilities such as internet (Akyay & Ogeyik, 2009; Karchmer, 2001; Huang, 2004) and home video influence the students' reading habits (Kaufman, 2007). Moreover, the environmental influence, parental influence, peer pressure, school curriculum, and teachers (Adetunji and Oladeji, 2007) are the other factors which can either support or militate against better reading habits. In line with this, Nathanson, Pruslow, and Levitt (2008) found the evidence that parents have a powerful effect in creating enthusiastic readers. It can be stated that most of the students (effective readers) are influenced by their surroundings (environment: family, campus, friends) and individual characteristics (good motivation).

The background of reading creates the students' reading habits. Every student has their own reading habits, based on the research findings most of the students plan a time schedule. It is related with the opinion from De Boer as quoted by Candrawati (2009: 14) that when reading it's better to have schedule. Most of the effective readers based on this research plan their time schedule in reading although not always in routine, but they try to plan when they need to read. For example, some of them plan to read before exam, in the spare time, every day, when having good mood, or plan to read seriously.

The effective readers have different needs in reading preferences (texts) that they usually use as their reading habits. Blachowicz and Ogle (2008: 6) define that good readers have preferences. The most obvious is that different readers like to read different things. The differences are the students' preferences related to course books written in English or Indonesia and other general books. The effective readers in this research focus to read English books to improve or develop their English ability. It is related with the Iftanti (2012) findings about reading of EFL students in Indonesia that most of them read to improve knowledge.

Besides that, not only the improvement of knowledge that the students (effective readers) want to achieve, but most of the students in this research read because they have good motivation in reading. Their motivation in reading, especially reading course book is different one from another. It deals with their habits and most of their habits indicate that the students have good reading habit. They have good reading habit, such as they have preferences in reading and schedule to read.

The students' reading factors and reading habits stated above, cannot be done without strategies to get better understanding. Zare (2013) defines that incompetent readers can become skilled readers and develop their reading skills if they are provided with appropriate instruction about effective strategies and taught to monitor and check their comprehension while reading. Therefore, strategies in reading are needed to improve and explore the knowledge during reading. It is done by the effective readers in English Department 2013/ 2014. They have their own reading strategies and have their own techniques to improve their reading.

Most of the effective readers observed have the reading style that is *prefer to read alone* (Carbo, Dunn and Dunn; 1999: 36). Most of the them prefer to read alone because they said that by reading alone they understand the meaning of the texts or passages. In the interview with effective readers, there is one student, DB, who likes reading alone in a noisy environment. It is related with Carbo, Dunn and Dunn (1999: 36) stating that one of the reading styles/ strategies that student prefers to read in an environment with talking or music.

Some reading strategies that they use to improve their reading strategies used by students in reading are note taking, textbook marking, reading through discussion with lecturers or friends, re-read, focusing in the information that they seek, understanding by the context, and reading multiple sources to develop their reading. The most reading strategy that they usually use is text book marking and note taking during reading. It is based on the opinions from Zadina, Smilkstein, Daiek, and Anter (2014: 447,465,467). The effective readers also enjoy reading through discussion with lecturers or friends (Carbo, Dunn, & Dunn, 1999; Nunan, 1998; Ostrov, 2002; Taylor & Ysseldyke, 2007; Whiteley, 2004). In addition, Donoghue (2005: 19) defines that repeat to read is an alternative to make sure the

appropriate meaning. It is also done by the effective readers, they repeat to read with focus. It is done with increased focus and attention. When they cannot understand once and they try to re-read to make it clear. To make reading effective, they try to focus in the information that they seek. They only read the important information when needed if immediately (Donoghue (2005: 21).

The effective readers have their strategies to overcome reading problems, if they cannot understand word by word, the effective readers will understand by the whole context of text. It is supported by Carbo, Dunn, & Dunn, 1999; Nunan, 1998; Ostrov, 2002; Taylor & Ysseldyke, 2007; Whiteley, 2004 that understanding the context is a way to understand texts though in surface meaning but it gives better reading. In addition, they read multiple sources to develop their understanding in reading. As stated by Blachowicz and Ogle (2008: 34) that good readers try to cross-checking information when appropriate.

The theories above are the strategies that most of the effective readers in English Departement 2013/2014 use in reading. There are some students for example AG and LS that prefer to use reading strategy from Zadina, Smilkstein, Daiek, and Anter (2014: 404) that is PSR (preview, study-read, and review) strategy. The other student is DB who prefers to use reading strategy from Blachowicz and Ogle (2008: 33-34) that is PPSC (preview, predicting, setting, and choosing). In addition, Zare's opinion (2013) that the significant correlation between reading strategies and reading comprehension scores proved the point. It is related with the result of their learning (achievement). When the effective readers decide their own strategies in reading it will improve their achievement.

Zare (2013) said that students will reach satisfying achievement when they employ appropriate strategies. In line with the research findings, the learning achievement (marks and performances) of the students observed are good. It is influenced by the students' habits and strategies, especially in reading course books. Beside that, it can be correlated between their competency, ability in reading, and participation. The most essential factor influencing to learning achievement is the environment. They try to do their best during teaching and learning process in their own ways. In the same idea with that facts, It can be said that achievement is reached by the learning process, efforts, and progress to get a

satisfying result in learning. Therefore, the effective reading give some effects to the effective readers' learning achievement when they use an appropriate strategies to improve knowledge especially English education students who need to explore and develop their language ability.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The data analyzed shows characteristics of effective readers about reading backgrounds, reading habits and reading strategies. The effective readers have high motivation in reading. They are influenced by their environment, such as family, friends, lecturers, social groups, or school environment. They have awareness in reading because they have strong perception that by reading practices every day will lead them to be effective readers. So, they have appropriate reading strategies to have better knowledge and aware that course readings lead them to be success in learning. They have hard efforts to read many course books because of their awareness and curiosity in learning to have better achievement. Regarding their reading habits, they usually read alone at home or boarding house, plan the schedule to read, and they read English course books. Their reading strategies: they underline or highlight the key points of texts, make notes during reading or learning process, focus in information that they seek, repeat to read when face vocabulary difficulties, solve the reading problems by discussing the content of books with friends or lecturers, try to understand the whole context if they do not know the meaning word by word and do not have probability to open the dictionary, and read multiple sources to develop their reading understanding.

Almost all of the effective readers focus when reading alone. Meanwhile, there is one of the effective readers that like to read in a noisy environment because her own characteristic. She knows how to treat herself in reading well. Besides that, there is an effective reader who loves reading because of her friends of university magazine organization. It means that reading can be done by different style based on the individual characteristics. The environments that influencing one reading are different, but if the readers have efforts to improve reading appropriately, it makes they become effective readers.

The scores of effective readers is satisfactory. It is reflected from the participations of the effective readers during the teaching and learning process. They actively ask, answer, and respond the lecturers' explanation and friends' arguments. It is also reflected from their learning scores. It is a proof that they have hard efforts in learning through reading course books. It means the achievement is good, in terms of both process and product.

The result implies that other students will apply some appropriate strategies or habits in reading course books to have better understanding and achievement, especially English students. So, it is suggested to students' environment will help them to learn better through effective reading and create good reading atmosphere to encourage reading motivation.

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