

## ***A STUDY ON ENGLISH READING HABITS OF STUDENTS OF ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM OF RIAU UNIVERSITY***

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***Abstract:*** *The aim of this study is to find out the habits of English reading among the students of English Study Program of Riau University. The method used in this research is quantitative research and the design is survey study. A questionnaire was used as the instrument of this research. The questionnaire involved seven indicators of reading habits: attitudes toward reading, reading frequency, reading materials read, time spend on academic reading, time spend on non-academic reading, motivation in the family environment, and motivation out of the family environment. SPSS Statistics 17.0 program was used to analyse the data. The data analysis displayed only a few number of students who have a habit toward English reading. The finding also proved that the frequency of students in reading English materials was less than 25%. However, the data of attitudes toward reading reveals that most of students (80.2%) aware that reading in English was important for their future. Conducting research to gain a broad overview of the reading habits of EFL learners, the researcher made suggestions to promote English reading habits among university students, especially the students of English Study Program.*

***Keywords:*** *Reading, Reading Habits, Survey Study*

## STUDI MENGENAI KEBIASAAN MEMBACA DALAM BAHASA INGGRIS PADA MAHASISWA JURUSAN BAHASA INGGRIS UNIVERSITAS RIAU

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**Abstrak:** Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kebiasaan membaca bahasa Inggris di kalangan mahasiswa dari Program Studi Bahasa Inggris Universitas Riau. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah penelitian kuantitatif dan desain penelitian berupa survei. Kuesioner digunakan sebagai instrumen dalam penelitian ini. Kuesioner melibatkan tujuh indikator dari kebiasaan membaca: sikap terhadap membaca, frekuensi membaca, bahan bacaan yang dibaca, waktu yang dihabiskan untuk membaca bahan bacaan akademik, waktu yang dihabiskan untuk membaca non-akademik, motivasi dari lingkungan keluarga, dan motivasi dari luar lingkungan keluarga. Program Statistik SPSS 17.0 digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Analisis data menampilkan bahwa hanya dalam sejumlah kecil dari siswa yang memiliki kebiasaan terhadap kegiatan membaca dalam bahasa Inggris. Hasil penelitian juga membuktikan bahwa frekuensi siswa dalam membaca bahan bacaan Bahasa Inggris kurang dari 25%. Walaupun demikian, data dari sikap terhadap membaca mengungkapkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa (80,8%) menyadari bahwa membaca dalam Bahasa Inggris itu penting bagi masa depan mereka. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mendapatkan gambaran yang luas dari kebiasaan membaca peserta didik EFL, peneliti membuat saran untuk mempromosikan kebiasaan membaca bahasa Inggris di kalangan mahasiswa, terutama mahasiswa dari Program Studi Bahasa Inggris.

**Kata Kunci:** *Reading, Reading Habits, Survey Study*

## INTRODUCTION

Reading, as one of the four language skills, is not a kind of a natural act. Unlike listening skill, which is a natural act, reading is a holistic act. Anderson, *et al* (1985) defined reading as a holistic act, they mention that reading can be analyzed into sub skills such as discriminating letters and identifying words, performing the sub skills one at a time does not constitute reading. In adds that reading can be said to take place only when the parts are put together in a smooth, integrated performance.

Later, reading is an important activity of human in order to gain the information from the schoolbooks which can help students to understand or to solve the problems that they found in the learning materials. However, it is easier to understand the reading material that is written in the mother tongue/first language more than to understand reading material which is written in other languages, such as English. In this case, Indonesia is one of countries which using English as foreign language, and English was put in the curriculum of schools in Indonesia as a major subject. Some difficulties which are faced by some of students in learning English is that they do not only must to understand the meaning of the content, but they must face the new vocabularies and the word orders that is totally different with the word orders in Indonesian. Fortunately, not all of students in Indonesia must to read English everyday at school, since English is not the first or the second language in this country. But, there are some educational environments which applies English in the learning subject which mean they face reading in English in teaching and learning process. One of these educational environments is English department of universities in Indonesia.

Based on the university where the study is held, that is Riau University, the courses of reading in English department which are on the curriculum i.e. Reading Comprehension I, Reading Comprehension II, Reading Comprehension III, (the three courses learn about the intensive reading), and Extensive Reading. This curriculum of reading course is similar with the other English departments in other university in Indonesia. As general, the main courses for reading skill in English department of the universities in Indonesia are in the area of intensive reading and extensive reading. In addition, the four reading courses of English Study Program of Riau University are aimed to prepare the students for the higher reading course that is Academic Reading and Writing. In this course, the students not only learn about the intensive or extensive reading, but they learn both of the main courses. In purpose, this course is aimed to make the students familiar with the academic reading materials, such as essay or journals, which will direct them into the thesis writing.

In fact, the observation towards the students of generation 2011 in English Study Program of Riau University reveals that as amount of 69 students, for more than half of them hampered in the process of thesis writing, especially in determining the title for thesis, even though they had finished the Academic Reading and Writing course. The lack of reading activity, or in this case, do not has a habit toward reading activity, may be one of reasons that causes the students have a less idea in determining the title for thesis.

In addition, promoting reading habits nowadays is important, especially among the students, since reading besides to increase the intellectual of a person; this activity has been listed as the requirement to determine the status of a country. A country is called as developed and developing country when the population or community has a high

interest with evident from the number of books published and the number of libraries in the country, means that the people in that country have high interested in doing reading activity. In fact, Indonesia, as a developing country even listed as the country which has low reading habits among its society. It was reported by UNESCO in 2012 that index reading interest in Indonesia just reached 0.001 people. It means that in every 1000 people, there is only one person who has interest in reading. Further, the data from the Central Bureau of Statistic in 2013 also mention that people read in Indonesia only 20 percent while nearly 80 percent of people prefer watching TV (television) and listening to radio.

Due to the fact that reading habit is an important thing that needs to be promoted in Indonesia nowadays, and the observation result which reveals that the students of English study program of generation 2011 in Riau University still do not have a high interest toward reading activity or do not have a habit toward reading, especially reading in English, which causes most of them found difficulty when they were in the last semester that is difficult in deciding the topic for thesis because of the lack of idea for writing the thesis. This study was conducted to answer the question ‘How does the habit of English reading of students of English Study Program of Riau University?’

## METHODOLOGY

The design of this research is survey study. According to Creswell (2012), survey study designs are procedures in quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the population. In this study, the population of the research is the students of English Study Program and the sample is the 5<sup>th</sup> semester students, which is determining based on purposive sampling, and the research is implemented to reveal the habits of reading in English among the students.

Creswell (2012) defines that in quantitative research, the investigator identifies a research problem based on trends in the field or on the need to explain why something occurs. The problem of this study is based on the data which displays the less of reading habits in Indonesia, particularly in Riau province, and the importance learning English in Indonesia, especially in the activity of reading.

The population of the research is the students of English Study Program in Riau University. The total participants are 70 students of 424 students from 2011 to 2015. The participants are the students of 5<sup>th</sup> semester which spreads into three classes, which was selected through purposive sampling technique. A purposive sampling is a sampling methodology that selects the units based on personal judgment rather than randomization. This judgmental sampling is in some way “representative” of the population of interest without sampling at random. One of the commonest uses of purposive sampling is in studies based on very small numbers of areas or sites.

The instrument of this research is questionnaire which is adapted from the book *Reading for Understanding* by Schoenbach *et al* and modified by other questionnaires from other researchers i.e. Gaona and Erwin (2010) and PIRLS. The data collection technique as a main part there are three points: observation, distribution (the questionnaire), and collection. Later, the data was analyzed through SPSS 17.0 in order

to find out the percentages, the frequencies, and the mean of the reading habits among the students within the tables and histograms.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The reading habits among the students of English Study Program of Riau University had been surveyed through the seven indicators of reading habits. The finding results revealed that most of the students did not have a habit toward reading in English. The reading frequency data showed that only 12.86% students who were doing English reading activity in their daily spare time. This reading frequency data revealed that most of students doing English reading activity more over for education reason than for enjoyment. As the data displayed that 21.43% of students reading English reading materials everyday for assignment reason while only 10.00% students doing English reading activity everyday for enjoyment.

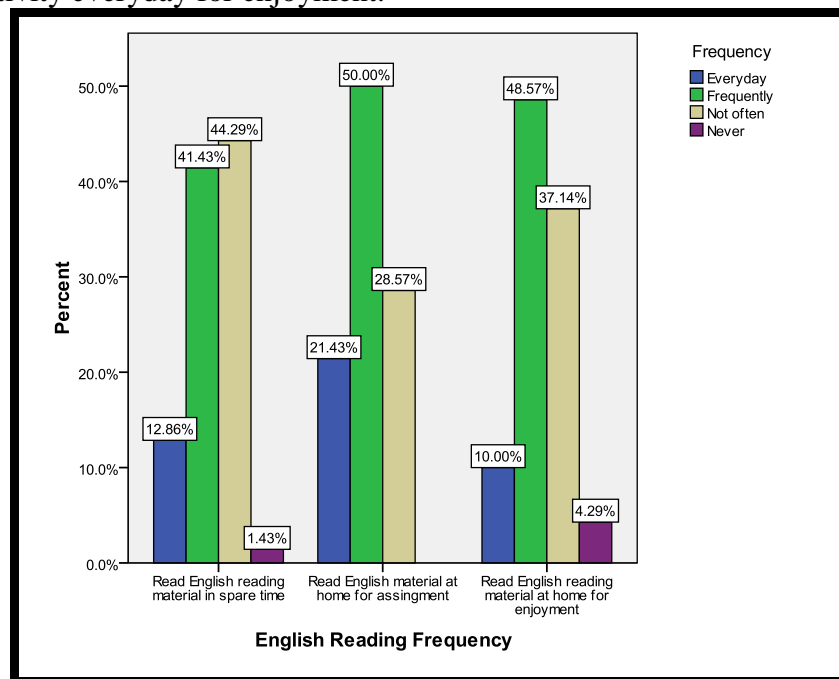


Figure 1 English Reading Frequency

However, the attitude toward English reading revealed that most of students had awareness about the important of reading in English for their future. The data showed that from 5.00 (the highest average value), as 4.04 average amount of students, or as same as 80.8% students, aware that they need to read English well for their future. Further, only 2.41 or 48.2% of them who thought that reading in English was tedious.

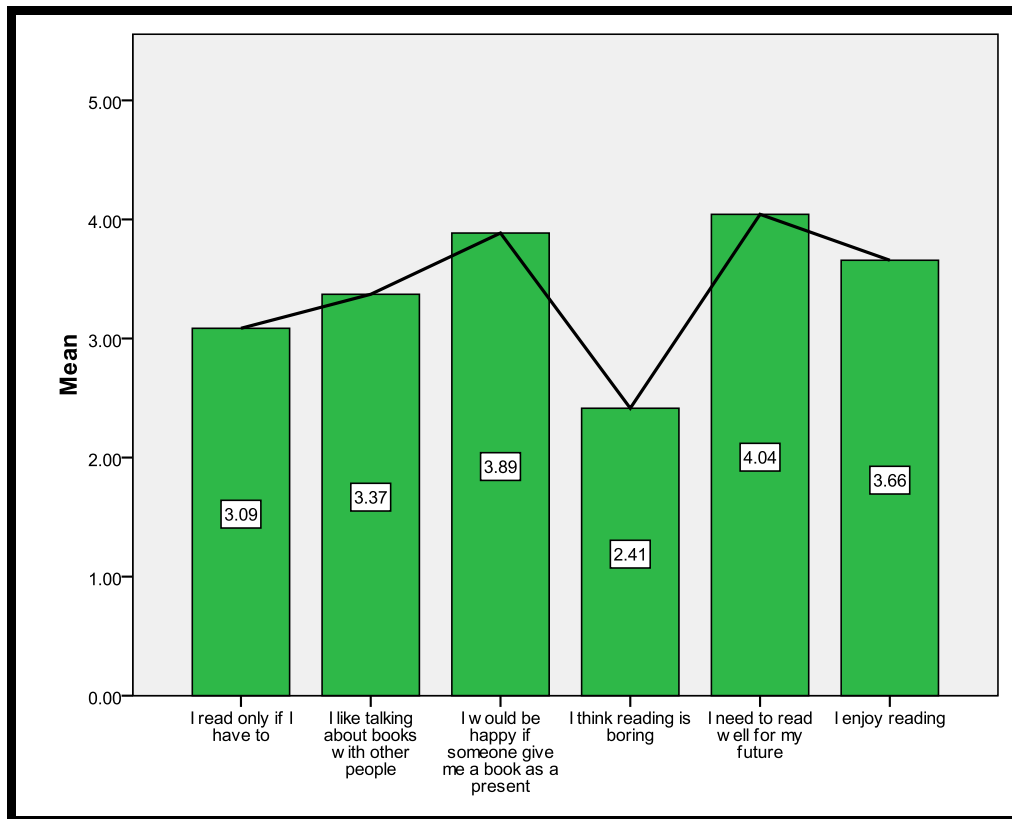


Figure 2 Attitude towards English Reading

In the length of time of reading activity, most of students spent more time on reading non-academic English reading materials than on reading academic English reading materials. The students could spend their time more than one hour to read non-academic English reading materials, in which for 11.43% of them read at university and for 21.43% read at home. Meanwhile, only 1.43% of them could spend their time more than one hour for reading academic English reading materials at university and 7.14% read at home. In relation with the data of reading material which were read, in which novels became the reading materials that was mostly read (76.8%), it can be assumed the non-academic English reading materials which made the students could spend their time more than one hour is the 'novel'.

Moreover, the motivation in the family and out of the family also explored as the indicator of reading habits. The finding result revealed that the motivation in the family were more influential than the motivation out of the family. In which, the students who had English books at home (not their own) were more than the students who had it as their own. There were 32.84% students who revealed that the English books at their home were in the range of 25 – more than 100 books, but only 25.71% of them admitted that they had English books by their own among that amount. Meanwhile, the percentage of students who borrow English books from the library in once a week, only 14.29% and they were who borrow English books from lecturers only 31.43%. In brief, the support from the family was biggest than the support from outdoor environment.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the habit towards reading activity among the students of English Study Program of Riau University is still in the lowest rank. The findings did not reveal that there were many students who had an English reading habit, but only in small amount. However, the data of attitude towards reading admitted that even though only a few amounts of the students who had the habits toward English reading, but the most of them had an interest toward English reading. The habit of English reading in English Study Program of Riau University which was not revealed in most of students caused by some factors according to Mustafa (2012) such as factor of the past that is the Indonesian culture which prefer oral culture than reading culture and the present factor that is the modern technology.

This study suggests that there are programs from the government in promoting English reading habits toward the EFL learners. Later, supports from the family and the promotion of reading habit from the library (public or university) are needed to develop the reading habit among the students, especially for the students in the earliest grade in order to build the habit which is formed based on the interest rather than formed based on demand.

## RECOMMENDATION

Since the present study is discussed about the habits of reading in English, some of recommendations can be delivered go to: 1) Teacher. The teacher should make the more creative learning method, especially for teaching reading strategy, in order to make the learning atmosphere which is not boring for the students so that the students will feel the activity of reading is a pleasurable activity. Later, the reading material which is given to the students should be fit with the level of students so that the students will easier to comprehend the text, thereby will develop the students' thought about reading activity in English is not as difficult as they thought. 2) Students. Students should have a strong awareness as an EFL learners that having a habit in English reading is really necessary for them since having a habit in English reading will help them easier to comprehend the English text and easier to write any English writing whether in academic writing or in non-academic writing.

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