



Self-Access Centre in Teaching Reading and Vocabulary to EFL Learners

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Abstract

This research is aimed to improve students' reading skill and vocabulary mastery through self-access centre at tenth grade students of SMAN 5 Kota Serang. This research was conducted for three months. This study tries to answer the main questions (1) how is students' learning process of reading and vocabulary through self-access centre? (2) how is students' learning achievement of reading and vocabulary through self-access centre? The method used in this research was a classroom action research. The action research was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle was consisted of four steps; planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. The data were collected through qualitative and quantitative techniques. The qualitative data were collected by analysing the observation. The quantitative data were obtained from the students score in pre-test and post-test. The study showed that there was improvement on students' reading comprehension and vocabulary mastery. The mean scores are 53.64 for reading pre-test and 64.92 for vocabulary pre-test. The results of post-test in cycle I show 65.12 for reading post-test and 72.96 for vocabulary. In cycle II, students get 70.88 for reading post-test and 76.36 for vocabulary post-test. The result specifies that self-access centre is successful in improving students reading comprehension and vocabulary mastery.

Keywords: reading, self-access centre, vocabulary

Introduction

Reading is very important skill for both lives in general or in language learning in particular. For life, it enables people to access the written words of ideas, feelings as well as knowledge of the ages and vision of the future. It has been stated that learning to read is one of the greatest accomplishments in childhood because it is the foundation for learning and academic achievement (Paris & Stahl, 2005, p. 184). Besides, reading skill also facilitates people to sense to others' attitude and behavior and to know what happens in the past or what may happen in the future. For language learning, it can improve other general skills and enlarge

vocabulary that can be applied in writing skill.

In fact, there are still found problems in case of reading and vocabulary. Teachers often get problems in handling this. Even this is teachers' problem time by time. Students are still get consciousness in facing reading text also in engaging with the vocabularies in it. As a consequence, teachers must think it over and find what the real problem is. Teachers must be able to identify the problems they get in their own school together with language teachers in group.

As being recognized that reading comprehension and vocabulary mastery have close relationship, teachers need to concern in this problem. Seemly, students get good



understanding in reading comprehension when they have master many vocabularies. In hence, students get difficulties in understanding reading comprehension when they have less vocabulary. Teachers often meet this problem when they are in classroom.

Meanwhile, teachers must help students to achieve minimal criteria of mastery of English lesson, as it is the command for schools to decide in every new academic year for every subject. In SMAN 5 Kota Serang, the minimal criterion for English is 70.

Furthermore, students in senior high school needs to increase their skills in reading for supporting their knowledge not only in class but also it will be very meaningful for them to apply outside classrooms at school. Thus, every language learner needs to have concern in this case, and schools also teachers must seek the better way to achieve it.

Therefore, schools need to provide supporting facilities that enable students to get additional knowledge and practice to improve their skills especially in reading. Students need access to enlarge their effort in learning.

In this case, self-access centre is an obligatory for schools to be set up. Furthermore, with reference to vocabulary learning condition in high school, researcher sees there are several factors leading to occurrence of low vocabularies list of

students such as; 1) lack of reading interest from students, 2) lack of motivation to learn English, 3) limitation number of hours to teach English in the classroom, 4) involving the vocabulary learning in the English lesson, and 5) lack of students involving in learning English.

For effective reading outcomes, literacy is fundamental building. Teachers as literacy director should guide themselves by rich knowledge to support. In addition, school literacy is launched by the curriculum of 2013. According to the curriculum of 2013, the effort to apply is in the form of reading habit for students. This reading habit is conducted by fifteen minutes during reading before the teaching and learning activity begin. When this habit has been built among students, it will be continued to the next step that is development which is added by evaluation. So, it emphasizes that the availability of self-access centre in the school is a must.

Investigating reading and vocabulary for EFL situation also had been discussed by previous works, as Ghonivita, Pahamzah, & Wijayanti (2021); Hani & Gailea (2018); and Usman (2020) which proved the importance of reading and vocabulary for English learning. In this study, therefore, the researchers investigate the learning process and achievement of reading and vocabulary through self-access centre in SMA Negeri 5 Kota Serang.



Theoretical Review

Reading Skill

Reading means perceiving a written text in order to understand its contents (Smidt, 2002, p. 454). Meanwhile, still according to Smidt, skill means acquired ability to perform an activity well, usually one that is made up of a number of coordinated processes and actions.

Reading requires some abilities to engage in text intensively and makes reading as habit so that reading can be a skill. Or in other words, reading skill means perceiving a written text in order to understand its content and acquired ability to perform an activity well.

Graesser (2007) stated that the most important part in the language skill is reading. He added, reading is an extraordinary achievement when one considers the number of levels and components that must be mastered (Graeser, 2007, p. 3) In addition, according to Torgesen, reading skill at the high school level is defined as the ability to understand and learn from grade-level text (Torgesen, Houston, & Rissman, 2007). Its most essential elements involve: 1) the ability to read text accurately and fluently, 2) enough background knowledge and vocabulary to make sense of the content; 3) knowledge and skill in using reading strategies that improve understanding or repair it when it breaks down, 4) the ability to think and reason about the information and concepts in the text, and

5) motivation to understand and learn from text. However, the focus was on the reading at senior high school students suggested by (Smidt, 2002, p. 254) discerning main idea, understanding sequence, noticing specific details, making inference, making prediction.

In other words, reading skill requires students to be able to identify the words, sentences and paragraph on the text accurately, and to be motivated and engaged enough to use their knowledge and thinking ability to understand and learn from the text. Teachers must think what makes relevant and interesting reading for students. What are students' goals in learning reading? Then choose materials that are relevant to the goals.

Brown stated that Language Experience Approach (LEA) is one popular motivating approach to reading instruction where students create their own material for reading in which students are given choices in selecting reading material (Brown, 2007, p. 374). The material that students will find must be interesting, enjoyable, and challenging. The texts had been selected also must facilitate the achievement of certain goals whether viewed from language function or content. Besides, teachers used many strategies to support their students' growth in reading skill.

As a successful high school principal, as Torgesen (2007) observed the reading coach has conducted professional development with all of our teachers on



different reading strategies and on the importance of reading.

It was clear that teachers must create engaging learning environment that help students improve their ability to comprehend text. Therefore, the most important activity in the formal language learning inside the classroom is reading (Salikin, 2017, p. 1).

Furthermore, motivation to understand and learn from text is a critical component of reading comprehension for middle and high school students. It takes real effort to understand the many textbooks and other forms of complex written materials students encounter in their study of literature, history, social studies, science, or mathematics. Unless students are appropriately engaged, they often do not fully apply the skills they have, nor will they be motivated to acquire additional skills and knowledge.

Purpose of Reading

Grabe (Grabe & Stoller, 2013, p. 8) classified the major purpose of reading. He classified it into six: 1) Reading to search information, 2) Reading for quick understanding, 3) Reading to learn, 4) Reading to integrate information, 5) Reading to evaluate information, 6) Reading for general comprehension, (This is the reading that takes place as the readers read a good novel, story, an interesting magazine, feature article, etc.) Brown highlighted the approach of teaching reading skill. He also reviewed the reading methodology into three; Bottom-up processing or data-driven, in which

comprehension would be then derived from the sum of the parts of signals, Top-down processing or conceptually driven, and Interactive reading (Brown, 2007, p. 298).

Based on the explanation above, the students need to be able to understand the content of the text well. In this research, the text that the researcher used was narrative since in the curriculum of English subject of high schools; narrative was the most exposed genre.

Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary is a basic part of signs, symbols or word constituting a means or system of a language to make communication. Vocabulary defined as a core component of language proficiency and it provides much of the basic for how well learners listen, speak, read, and write. (Cahyono, 2011, p. 153). This also proved by study from Septiyani, Hikmah, & Baihaqi (2019) that both vocabulary and pronunciation are basic competences for listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Vocabulary, as the basic parts of language, must be owned by the students in language learning. Someone cannot express the idea if he or she lacks of vocabulary. Students who learn English need a lot of vocabulary because it is important to learn the four language skills, especially reading. Students must have an ability to identify meaning of words forms whether spoken and written also to identify the use of words involved synonym, antonym, collocation and



association. Consequently, it indicated to the teaching of vocabulary. Language teachers have to focus on those aspects of vocabulary.

In this research, the researcher focused on receptive or passive vocabulary since this research focused on reading skill. Vocabulary mastery is essential for students as the basic of developing language skill. Language will not be able to be learnt easily without mastering vocabulary. The students were expected to master as much vocabulary as possible. So they can develop their language skill especially reading.

Vocabulary holds some important roles in teaching learning process since vocabulary has function; 1) promoting fluency, 2) boosting comprehension, 3) improving achievement, 4) enhancing thinking and communication. Therefore, it is obvious that role of building vocabulary is very essential for learning the reading skill. In addition, Nation (Nation, 2011, p. 232) stated that knowing the form only is not enough when students do not know what it's meaning even it will useless when students do not aware when or when it is used.

As the goal of teaching vocabulary according to Schmitt that students are expected to have enough vocabulary to start making use of the unknown words they meet in context (Schmitt, 2000, p. 144). Therefore, vocabulary learning is acquired without focus on words itself. Yet, learning vocabulary incidentally can do, for instance by guessing the meaning of words in the context in which

they are written or spoken (Nation, 2011, p. 232). In this case, it is teachers' duty to make sure that students get the teaching goals of vocabulary mastery.

Self-Access Centre

Self-access centres can be as simple as a classroom set aside with dictionaries and shelves of paper-based exercises to state-of-the-art digital centres with various types of computer- and Internet-based resources. What resources are available and how students are guided to use them depend on the financial resources available and how much learner autonomy an institution decides to give students. While, Nayos, in his study on self-access centre (Nayos & Chuaychoowong, 2016, p. 2) wrote that a self-access centre is a place which provides self-study materials and facilities to support learners to learn on their own. He then added that in self-access centre, students are given opportunity to practice language skills and organize their own study.

Self-access centres in language learning are educational facilities designed for student learning that is at least partially, if not fully self-directed. Students have access to resources ranging from photocopied exercises with answer keys to computer software for language learning. These centres are an outgrowth of a style of learning that can go by several names: learner-centered approach, learner autonomy, or self-directed learning.



Teachers must acknowledge what a literature self-access centre is. Teachers must do literature self-access centre in order to get better teaching and learning. Benson, (Benson, 2003, p. 114) argued that "The Self-access centre should function as a quasi-independent unit with its own philosophy and routines for engaging learners in study outside the classroom". In other words, the Self-access centre should have principles and purposes which could encourage learners to learn outside formal classes.

According to Lazar (Lazar, 2009, p. 179), the self-access centre could consist of:

- 1) Literary texts such as novels, plays, short stories, or poetry in school library.
- 2) A box or a file of literary extracts, kept in the classroom and from which students select and borrow text.
- 3) A small collection of books (novels, short stories, poetry, etc.) which are kept in the classroom and from which students borrow regularly.
- 4) A collection of video recordings of plays or films based on novels, and audio recording of literary texts which students are encourage to working through on their own.

Many benefits of self-assessment for a self-access learner as follows: It raises a learners' awareness of the language, makes him aware of his effective ways of learning and learning performance, increases learning motivation and goal orientation in learning, enhances and formulates his beliefs about aspects of learning.

According to Lazar, the following are the main reasons for taking the time and effort to establish a centre;

- 1) To provide students with a choice literary texts to listen to or to read,
- 2) To foster the students' enjoyment of literature,
- 3) To develop students' reading and listening skills,
- 4) To promote students language acquisition,
- 5) To enable students to become more self-confident and independent as learners.

The self-access centre as social context

Self-access centres are places designed for self-directed language learning in which students engage in literacy practices that permit their learning a foreign language. Teachers at a school establish a self-access centre to encourage the students to read literary texts. Teachers are concerned that if a literature self-access centre is set up, even on a very modest scale, everything should be done to look after it and maintain it properly. With teacher colleagues, think about ways of selecting texts for the center which will be relevant and motivating to students.

Before having the planning meeting, then decide as a group on the following information about the school. The group were:

- 1) The Head teacher,
- 2) Director resources,
- 3) Classroom teacher 1,
- 3) Director teacher/senior teacher,
- 4) Classroom teacher 2.

Teachers must believe that a literature self-access centre would be of great benefit, but teachers are concerned about how the students will get the most from it.



At the last session, all members of teachers are responsible for each duty in setting up the literature self-access centre. It is time for teachers group to act the plan of literature self-access centre that they have simulated before and start designing any the worksheets, questionnaires or materials teachers might need for the center.

The last most important in conducting self-access centre was selecting materials. Teachers at these levels were asked to consult their students about the kinds of literary texts in English that they enjoyed or would like to see in the library. Students can tell the literary works they want freely. Teachers are also free to add their own suggestions in choosing literary texts for use with students. In selecting materials, teachers should think about three main areas. These are the type of course they were teaching, the type of students who are doing the course and certain factors connected with the text itself.

Lazar (Lazar, 2009, p. 50) have stated that it is probably fairly self-evident what is meant by criteria such as the age of students, their emotional and intellectual maturity and their interests and hobbies. The only difficulty when applying these categories to a whole class is that individual students within a group may vary considerably in their maturity and interests. When selecting materials, teacher needs to try to find texts that are suitable for the majority of students in the class; 1) Students' cultural

background, 2) Students' linguistic proficiency, 3) Student's literary background.

Finally, self-access centre was expected to increase students' engagement to learning activity. Self-access centre provide materials that could give the students opportunity to learn on their own. It could give teaching assistance that could help the students improve their English skills, especially reading.

Method

This research was mixed method by implementing classroom action research design. Classroom Action Research had a practical and problem-solving emphasis. It was carried out by individuals, professionals and educators. It involved research, systematic, critical reflection and action. As suggested by Costello (Costello P. J., 2003, p. 5) that action research is referred to variously as a term, process, enquiry, approach, flexible spiral process and a cyclic. In addition, action was undertaken to understand, evaluate and change. The research involved gathering and interpreting the data, on a specific teaching and learning. It aimed to improve educational practice.

Classroom Action Research was systematic, yet less formal, research conducted by practitioners to inform their action. The goal of Classroom Action Research was to improve our own teaching in our own classroom (or our department or school). While there was no requirement that



the Classroom Action Research findings be generalized to other situations, as in traditional research, the results of classroom action research could add to the knowledge base. Classroom action research went beyond personal reflection to use informal research practices such as a brief literature review, group comparisons, and data collection and analysis.

The classroom action research process could be conceptualized as a seven-step process: (1) Identify a question or problem; (2) Review Literature; (3) Plan a research strategy; (4) Gather data (5); Make sense of the data; (6) Take action; and (7) Share the findings (Mettetal, 2001, p. 4). A Classroom Action Research fit comfortably under the umbrella of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Along with traditional educational research and course portfolios, Classroom Action Research is a way of systematically examining teaching to gain new insights.

This research was carried out at a Senior High School that applied self-access center in the classroom. The self-access centre was a place where students were expected to practice what they had got in class with teachers during teaching and learning process. In the self-access centre the students could develop their language skills independently.

The researchers had been observing the students' ability in English subject especially reading and vocabulary. The action research was conducted in two cycles.

It consisted of two meetings of pre-research and eight meetings of research. Each cycle took four meetings of treatment. In the end of research was one meeting post-research for giving questionnaire related to self-access centre and post-test of reading skill and vocabulary mastery.

The researchers focused in the application of self-access centre in the process of teaching and learning of English subject to improve students' reading skill and vocabulary. The researchers had been observing students' progress in their reading skill and vocabulary mastery. She found tenth grade students of met difficulties in reading skill and vocabulary.

The research setting of the study was the activities in self-access centre and students learning activities in studying English subject especially in reading skill and vocabulary. The researchers investigated the process and the result of self-Access centre.

The researchers used several ways in data collecting as follow: First, The data was taken from the students' pre-test of reading and vocabulary before the researchers conducting self-Access centre in class. Second was classroom observation. Third, researchers prepared questionnaire for the participants according to the researcher needs. The main content of each question focused on learning English subject especially reading and vocabulary. It contained also the students' opinion of self-Access centre that was applied in classroom.



The last, the researcher took documentation to support the data collection.

The researchers used quantitative and qualitative data as the data analysis techniques: The quantitative data collection was analysed by utilizing data collection of reading and vocabulary pre-test (before the students engaging in elf-access centre activities) and post-test (after the students engaging in elf-access centre activities). The researchers used the instrument of pre-test and post-test of reading and vocabulary. To analyse the data, the researcher applied the steps: (1) collecting the data from students' work, (2) scoring and analysing the students' work, and (3) accounting the percentage of the student result, to account the researcher use T-test.

In qualitative data analysis, the researchers used the data based on the classroom observation which could consider the situation of students' reading skill and vocabulary and how their motivation in learning English, also their opinion of their engagement in self-access centre.

In the last session, the researchers delivered questionnaire related to students' ability in reading and vocabulary. The questionnaire was printed, so the students filled provided scales' option by choosing "yes", "sometimes", and "No" on the questionnaires. The researcher then counted the result of students' options and calculated them in percentage by dividing numbers of "yes", "Sometimes", or "No" with numbers

of scales, and multiply the result's number to 100%.

Result

This research was conducted in one class contained of students of first grade at SMAN 5 Kota Serang by conducting classroom action research referring to the efforts to improve students' reading skill and vocabulary mastery.

To identify the problems of the research in the field (class), the researcher spread the questionnaires to the students dealing with Reading skill and vocabulary mastery in their class. The questionnaire was also given in dealing with students' opinion on self-access centre brought in class. Based on the questionnaire which had been filled in by the students, the researcher found out some problems as follows: there were 56 % students who find difficulty in learning reading; there were 68 % students who find difficulty in vocabulary; there were 88 % students who agree that mastering vocabulary will help them in reading text; there were 92 % students who like reading literature; there were 76 % students who like reading story or narrative text; there were 84 % students who think that going to library is a must; there were 92 % students who think that students' need to select books or materials that are interesting for them; there were 80 % students who agree that having self-access centre in their own classroom; there were 84% students who agree that self-access



centre will improve students reading; and there were 76% students who agree that self-access centre will improve students vocabulary.

After finding the problems faced by the students in English class, the researcher conducted a pre-test. The pre-test was done before the teaching and learning process. The researcher gave two pre-test consisted of reading pre-test and vocabulary pre-test. It was conducted to measure the students' basic score in reading and vocabulary.

The pre-test results of reading showed that the highest score for reading test is 70 and the lowest score is 30. Score 70 means it achieves the minimum criteria of reading at tenth grade. The data showed that there were 3 students who obtain score 70. In other words, there were only three students who pass the minimum criterion. Means, the rest 22 students were still below that criterion. From that analyzing, it could be said that almost of the tenth grade students reading comprehension was still low. As a conclusion, most of the students had some serious problems in comprehending narrative text. The students did not concern of many aspect of reading comprehension.

The pre-test mean score of vocabulary mastery showed that were 14 students could obtain score over 70 or passed the minimum criterion and the rest 11 students still got low score or fail the minimum criterion. It means that 56% of students had master the

vocabulary well and 44% students still have difficulty in mastering vocabulary.

Based on the questionnaire and pre-test conducted by the researcher, it could be identified that reading skill and vocabulary mastery of the tenth grade students in SMAN 5 Kota Serang were still low. It needed improvement to overcome the problems and increase students score. It should be improved by teaching technique along teaching and learning process in the classroom.

In implementing the teaching and learning process, the researcher applied a self-access centre activity in the classroom to improve students' reading skill and vocabulary mastery.

In summary, there was an improvement from the implementation of self-access centre in increasing students' reading and vocabulary mastery. It can be seen from the result of post-test in cycle II. There was some improvement of students' score in cycle II. The mean and the number of the students who pass the minimum passing grade (KKM) were increase in cycle 2. It means that the criteria of success had been achieved in which the students' mean score should be at least or more the minimum passing grade (KKM) 70. Also the students became more active in learning process meeting by meeting. Besides, the students' enthusiasm and the students' attention during the lesson were also increased.



The objective of conducting the classroom action research was to acknowledge the researcher's students' progress in reading and vocabulary by implementing self-access centre in the classroom. The using of classroom action research was suitable for this research since the researcher could identify the students' improvement from the first meeting up to the end of the lesson. Based on the questionnaires given to the students, it was proven that the students interest to engage in activities in self-access centre. The students also agree that self-access centre can support and help them to easily understanding the lesson especially in reading and in comprehending the text more especially.

The result of the research showed that there were some improvements. The finding of the results showed the sufficient improvements in students' reading and vocabulary through self-access centre implemented in the class room. It could be said that learning reading and vocabulary could be improved through self-access centre. By engaging in activities in self-access centre more intensively, the students' reading comprehension has improved even not very significantly. Students could deal with text more detail. They could comprehend the text without hard effort and need shorter time compared before they engage in activities in self-access centre. They became familiar to main idea, sequence of the text, reference, as well as explicit

information of the text and moral value. The students also could deal with various vocabularies that they pretended to be complicated. The students could work with the texts more contextually instead of textually. They became familiar to meaning of words, synonym, antonym, spelling, even collocation and association. Some students still have problem with learning activities in class, but they were not too much. They could follow the class even though they need more effort. Besides, the group activity in self-access centre provided opportunities for students to work with each other. Most of students enjoy the activities in teaching and learning process through self-access centre.

The last results in cycle 2 showed the changes on the students' score which increased positively. The students' score which achieved 65.12 from 25 students (44%) for reading comprehension and 72.98 (84%) for vocabulary mastery in cycle 1 were able to increase the score 70.88 (60%) for reading comprehension and 76.36 (88%) for vocabulary mastery in cycle 2. It indicated that they were successful in making considerable improvement in vocabulary mastery but still need more improvement in reading. This may be impact of online teaching as this research was partly done in pandemic period due to covid-19. The researchers are sure that the process of this classroom action research would be more effective if it is conducted in whole normal teaching and learning process. However, the



result also conform to works such Morrison (2008); and Priyatmojo & Rohani (2017) that proved the importance of self-access centre for English teaching and learning.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research, the researchers concluded that there were improvements of students' vocabulary and reading comprehension during the teaching and learning process through self-access centre. The students tend to be strongly interested to get involved in activity in self-access centre. The students could get more detailed information of the text and could get the main point of the text also able to master more words. The students also paid more attention to English lesson after they get involved in self-access centre. At last, students need to be supported by attractive activities that were suitable for their own interest. Students need also to be facilitated with sufficient additional activities outside their main lesson activities in class such as making reading corner in classroom as the implementation self-access centre.

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