Reading Aloud Activity in ESP Class in the Perspectives of Students

Titien Indrianti

*# Business Administration Department, State Polytechnic of Malang, Jl. Soekarno Hatta 9, Malang, 65141, Indonesia
E-mail: titienindrianti@gmail.com*

Abstract— Many studies have contradicted the reading aloud with silent reading instruction in EFL classroom. However, each viewpoint has its own arguments. Those in support of a silent reading claim that there exists psychological involvement in the mind of each reader and any written content. Through silent reading activity, students are trained to grasp the meaning of the text as intended by the writer. On the other hand, the power of reading aloud cannot be seen as simplistic. Some believe that out loud reading instruction aid students to acquire new words and correct pronunciation, and comprehend language forms and mechanics, especially those with low English proficiency. The students of Business Administration Department, State Polytechnic of Malang learn English as a foreign language in their ESP class. However, they still have insufficient English proficiency. In their English class, the reading aloud activity has been practiced as a method of instruction. On the basis of the above-mentioned background, this study intends to obtain the perspectives of students towards reading aloud activity in their ESP class. The problems of the study include (1) students' viewpoint toward the benefit of reading aloud activity; (2) whether students feel any improvement in their English and aspects of the improvement; and (3) sorts of problems they encounter when dealing with reading aloud. The data are analysed qualitatively. The findings indicate that the students view a lot of benefits in reading aloud activity as it is building their self-confidence, recalling vocabulary, improving pronunciation, and managing pace and intonation in their reading.

Keywords— Reading Aloud; ESP class; Perspectives.

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading skill has been one of the skills emphasized in the foreign language learning. As a receptive skill, reading activity deploys an active action and is not performed passively. It involves determining meaning in print and script, within a social context, exploring bottom up and top down processing, and demanding effective strategies and skills (Gebhard, 2000:197). Such a complexity is also shown in the reading taxonomy of Barret (in Turner 1988), stating that reading is performed through some sequential skill elements:

1. Literal comprehension (Recognition)
2. Inferential Comprehension (synthesizing literal content, knowledge, institution, and imagination as a basis of hypothesis)
3. Evaluational comprehension (judgement about content of text)

4. Appreciation (awareness of literacy technique)

Given such facts, it is clear then that reading is indeed a vigorous complex activity.

It is also commonly known, however, that reading activity is carried out in two kinds of activity, namely: reading silently and reading orally. Reading done silently is normally recognized as silent reading and when it is done orally it is called out-loud reading or reading aloud. Therefore, the two kinds of the reading activities are frequently explored in the foreign language classes, including English language learning.

Nevertheless, more emphasizes seem to be directed to silent reading particularly in higher education. As noticed by Kailani (1998) that the time students are engaged with reading aloud is very little; on the other hand, silent reading is

given more emphasis. In general viewpoint, reading is seen to merely gather and understand ideas as typically characterizing the silent reading activity (Hakozaki and Miller, 2012).

As a matter of fact, both activities of reading definitely benefit readers in each way. Silent reading benefits in a way that it is activating brain to attain understanding of the writer's intention (Hakozaki and Miller, 2012). So, the emphasis of silent reading is to understand quickly and directly (Waller and Mackinnon in Kailani, 1998).

In the meantime, Jacobs (2016) puts forth that reading aloud particularly helps promote the readers' fond of reading. Reading aloud can also aid general language learning. Some to mention are acquiring word meaning, pronunciation, and language mechanics as in syntax and punctuation (Kailani (1998:287). Moreover, reading aloud helps develop one's vocabulary especially those in primary level (Kindle, 2017).

State Polytechnic of Malang as a vocational higher education institution demands its graduates to be competent in global market. Communicating in a foreign language, particularly in English has become one of the priorities to be equipped by its students. To meet the vision and mission of the institution, Business Administration Department has also been committed to allocate plenty of time for English courses as indicated in the curriculum of the department.

Reading aloud, as a matter of fact, can be taught to acquire other English language competences at one time for the students at Business Administration Department. Thus, this paper intends to provide facts of the real benefits of reading aloud practices from the viewpoint of the English learners, that is students

II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGY

A. Silent Reading

Turner (1988) has viewed reading comprehension in accordance with Barret's Taxonomy, where eight competencies have taken place. They are:

1. . Recalling word meanings
2. Drawing inferences about meaning of a word from context

3. Finding answers explicitly stated in text or simply in paraphrase of content
4. Connecting ideas from content
5. Drawing inferences from content
6. Recognizing writer's purpose, attitude, tone, and mood
7. Identifying writer's technique
8. Following passage structure

As defined by Grabbe and Stoller (2002), reading comprehension calls for readers to get the meaning of the written scripts and accurately infer them. Nation (2004) has clarified that the paramount objective of reading is comprehension. Reading is not simply recognizing individual words. Comprehension takes into account readers to integrate beyond the text, activating one's knowledge of the world.

From the above mentioned viewpoint, it is clear that some reading experts behold reading as something dealing with psycholinguistic aspects, something which is activated inside the readers

B. Reading Aloud

Reading aloud or oral reading is typically done by the clear articulation of words, flexibility in rate, volume and tone, adequate phrasing and effective use of pauses (Kailani, 1998:281). In line with this idea, Jacobs (2016) mentions that reading aloud is seen as a sort of communication where a proficient reader read aloud to the audience.

Reading aloud, however, is still worth teaching and learning particularly for the lowly competent EFL/ESL learners (Glushko,1979; Amer, 1997). Reading aloud has proven to provide better understanding for students compared to silent reading (Amer,1997:46). Through reading aloud practices, students are trained to improve expressiveness, phrasing, accuracy and speed in reading Hakozaki and Miller (2012). For lowly proficient students or students with basic level of proficiency, reading aloud improves their pronunciation, new vocabulary, sentence pattern and also nurtures their self-confidence in reading (Ninsuwan, 2015). Jacobs (2016) even straightforwardly believes that reading aloud encourages learners to read more books, stories and poems that students frequently ignore. It is because reading aloud offers enjoyment for them. For developing vocabulary, reading aloud offers forceful context for word learning (Kindle, 2017).

Besides providing lots of benefits, reading aloud also has its drawback since it is preventing readers to control reading speed (Rodicio and Izquierdo, 2014). For the lowly proficient students, reading aloud activity in contrast can discourage them due to their inaccurate pronunciation and lack of self-confidence

C. English for Specific Purposes

Basically, English language teaching (ELT) in Indonesian context deals with ELT for general purposes (EGP) and ELT for specific purposes (ESP) as stated by Marwan (2010). ESP itself entails two categories, namely English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) (Kim, 2008; Bojovic, 2014).

The vocational graduates in Indonesian context are expected to acquire both knowledge in their own study subject and English competence in the subject field, like: engineering, science, business, or accounting and English for general communication (Mohammed,2012).

Therefore, there are five stages of English teaching in the vocational institutions, namely: (1) ESP teaching dealing with register analysis—the presumption that ESP constitutes a specific register different from that of general English; (2) ESP teaching dealing with discourse—the assumption that the students’ difficulties arise from unfamiliarity with English use; (3) ESP teaching dealing with target situation analysis—the belief that ESP’s purpose is to enable learners to function adequately in a target situation; (4) ESP teaching in connection to skills-centered approach—the notion that there are common reasoning and interpreting in all language use which enable students to extract meaning from discourse; (5) ESP teaching in regard to learning- centered approach—the approach to meet students’ academic and professional needs

the present study. Thus, the total number of students is at least 480 students. The cluster sampling procedure is employed to obtain two class samples.

The instrument to tap the data in regard to the students’ perspectives on the reading aloud activities is questionnaire. The questions elicit responses on (1) whether the students take benefits from reading aloud practices in class; (2) whether the students think that reading aloud improves their English; (3) whether the students think that reading improve the aspects of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and reading skill in general; (4) whether the students think that they encounter problems in performing reading aloud. The 4 open ended questions are used to elicit the intended data Prior to distributing the questionnaire at the end of the semester, the student samples are taught reading aloud method during their class sessions. There are 5 lesson units modified to reading aloud activities. They consist of reading texts of about 200-250 words accompanied with questions on new vocabulary and expressions, comprehension questions, pronunciation and grammatical discussions. All items of vocabulary, comprehension, pronunciation, and grammatical exercises are related to the reading texts. The process of teaching and learning lasts about 5 to 6 weeks. The step by step reading aloud activities are described as follows

TABLE 1
READING ALOUD INSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

Meeting	Activities
1	The teacher gives introduction concerning the topic of the unseen text by brainstorming and mapping the students’ ideas (20 minutes)
2	The teacher models reading aloud by paying careful attention to new vocabulary and expressions, correct pronunciation, and grammar points. In the middle of the reading aloud, the teacher may stop to explain, clarify, or ask question to the students
3	As reinforcement, the teacher reads the text aloud for the second time followed by the students.
4	The teacher gives some time for the students to read by heart (silent reading)
5	Then, the teacher invite 2 or 3 students to read the text

D. Method

This study is of a quantitative design. All the freshmen (the first year students) of Business Administration Department, State Polytechnic of Malang have become the subject population of

The responses from each subject in the questionnaire are analysed one by one. The responses are tallied to see the tendency of answer in the form of percentage.

III. CONCLUSIONS

All students believe that reading aloud is of a benefit for them. Some benefits are admitted by the students.

First of all, reading aloud, according to the students, nourishes their self confidence in dealing with reading English. Undoubtedly, reading always corresponds to pronouncing the words either by heart or aloud. In the reading aloud activity, one of the concerns of the teacher is modeling the pronunciation. After modeling, the next follow up is facilitating, motivating and monitoring the students in doing so. The role of the teacher in the reading aloud activity, in the students' perspective, seems to be the positive side for the students in building their self-confidence. The students' inhibition to involve in the class interaction is minimized through reading aloud instruction.

Reading speed and intonation also become aspects the students point out to be the benefit. In the reading aloud activity, those two points, indeed, cannot be neglected. Too fast reading, and/or plain and flat intonation cause dull and meaningless reading. By having reading aloud activity, the students feel they learn how to manage speed and intonation in their reading. In short, this finding is in support of the study by Hakozaki and Miller (2012)—see also part II.

In addition, vocabulary acquisition is also admitted by the students as the impact of reading aloud activity. By pronouncing the words several times occasionally, the students memorize the words better. Accordingly, the vocabulary retains and sticks longer in their memory. Such findings are in line with the previous study by Ninsuwan (2015) and Kindle (2017)—see also part II.

Some aspects of English serve as the benefit for the students in sequence are pronunciation, vocabulary, and reading skill in general. Grammar is also seen as the point the students can learn from reading aloud instruction. Kailani (1998) previously has also proven this finding—see also part II. The following table indicates the English aspects the students feel to accomplish.

TABLE III
THE PERCENTAGE OF THE ENGLISH ASPECTS THE STUDENTS ACQUIRE

No.	Aspects	Percentage (%)
1	Pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, reading skill	28
2	Pronunciation, vocabulary, reading skill	22
3	Pronunciation and reading skill	16
4	Pronunciation, grammar, reading skill	14
5	Reading Skill	8
6	Grammar and vocabulary	3
7	Grammar	3
8	Vocabulary	3
9	Pronunciation	3

Despite the benefits, there are also some difficulties encountered by the students in dealing with their reading aloud practice. Although they feel that their pronunciation has improved in some ways, they still find it difficult to cope with English pronunciation. This problem is due to the differences between the English spelling (how English words are written) and the pronunciation (how the words are uttered). This problem is obvious to most Indonesian students, as a matter of fact. The Indonesian system applies the similar way of how the Indonesian words are written and uttered, and it influences the students' pronunciation.

Another problem encountered by the students seems to be the most typical problem of many Indonesian students as well. Being lack of self-confidence to practice their English impedes them to involve more with English. Their lack of confidence finally meets their pleasure to be able to promote self-confidence through reading aloud. In this sense, reading aloud is not only considered as an English teaching and learning activity, but it can also aid the teaching and learning itself. The encountered obstacles the students find in the reading aloud activity is shown as follows

TABLE IIII
THE PERCENTAGE OF THE STUDENTS' PROBLEMS IN PERFORMING READING ALOUD

No.	Aspects	Percentage (%)
1	Pronunciation	55
2	No confidence to use English	26
3	Intonation	2
4	No problems	17

All the findings regarding the benefits, the improved aspects of English, and the problems encountered by the students are indeed in conjunction with some previous studies investigating the similar areas of reading aloud (Kailani, 1998; Hakozaki and Miller, 2012; Ninsuwan, 2015; Kindle, 2017).

Tone, word stress, expression, intonation, punctuation, and reading speed, are things leading to comprehension. Grammar points, like sentence pattern or word formation can also be inserted during the reading aloud activity to strengthen the comprehension. Thus, reading comprehension skill without a doubt is practiced and exercise.

The context of speaking skill is also triggered. When uttering words, the students are encouraged to speak. In turn, it stimulates students to produce language. There, perhaps, a discussion during the reading session. Thus, oral communication takes place.

Reading aloud also deals with listening skill. While the teacher is reading out loud, the rest of the students in class are practicing listening. Even though the situation is not ideal to listening comprehension instruction, the practice of listening comprehension occurs.

Writing skill can also be trained through reading aloud instruction. Reading aloud activity can be combined with other types of writing exercises, such as dictation, paraphrasing, summarizing, and so forth. It sounds overstated and seems to be less ideal circumstance for writing exercises but it is possible.

Many aspects of language learning can be taught and trained through reading aloud activity. Reading aloud activity in English instruction is potential to enhance students' proficiency. In addition, all the findings correspond with the previous studies. Therefore, reading aloud can be of the alternative for the teaching of English, particularly those in the lower level of proficiency. The students can also be encouraged to train and practice reading aloud themselves in order to more improve their pronunciation, intonation, expression, tone, stress, punctuation and speed in reading.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This paper will not be possible to come out into its present form without the help and support of several parties. Therefore, first of all, the deep gratitude goes to the Lord for all His blessings and mercy. Secondly, my gratefulness is addressed

to the Board of Directors of State Polytechnic of Malang for providing vast opportunity for their staffs to develop professionalism. The next gratitude is also given to Head of P2M, State Polytechnic of Malang for organizing all research writing in a very satisfactory manner. The last but not the least, I am greatly indebted to the Head of Business Administration Department, State Polytechnic of Malang and all lecturers, staffs, and students in the department for becoming my tutors, partners, and supporters.

REFERENCES

- [1] A. A. Amer, The Effect of the teacher's reading aloud on the reading comprehension of EFL students, *ELT Journal.*, vol. 51, pp. 43-47, Jan. 1997.
- [2] A. Marwan, ESP Teaching Challenges in an Indonesian Vocational Higher Institution, *The English Teacher.*, vol. 38, pp. 1-12, Jan. 2010.
- [3] D. Kim, English for Occupational Purposes: One Language?, *Continuum.*, vol. 8, pp., Jan. 2008.
- [4] G. Jacobs. (2016) Reading Aloud: Problems and Benefits. [Online]. Available: www.spstrunion.com.
- [5] G. M. Rodicio and B. Izquierdo. (2014) Aloud Reading and Silent Reading which Form of Reading in the Classroom Results in Better Comprehension?. [Online]. Available: <https://library.iated.org>.
- [6] J. G. Gebhard, *Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language*. Michigan, USA: The University of Michigan Press, 2000.
- [7] K. Kindle. (2017) Vocabulary Development during Read-Alouds: Primary Practices. [Online]. Available:

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/vocabulary-development-during-read-alouds-primary-practices>.

- [8] K. Nation. (2014) Children's Reading Comprehension Difficulties. [Online]. Available: <http://www.pitt.edu/~perfetti/PDF/Nation.pdf>
- [9] M. Bojovic. (2014) Teaching foreign language for Specific Purposes: teacher development. [Online]. Available: [Conference.pef.uni-lj.si/ate/978-9616637-06-0/487-493.pdf](http://conference.pef.uni-lj.si/ate/978-9616637-06-0/487-493.pdf).
- [10] O. K. Mohammed, ESP teaching: reversal of roles between ELT teachers and subject specialists, *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, vol. 2, pp. 505-508, June. 2012.
- [11] P. Ninsuwan, The effectiveness of teaching English by using reading aloud techniques towards EFL beginners, *Procedia-Social dan Behavior Sciences*, vol. 197, pp. 1835–1840, Jan. 2015.
- [12] R. J. Glushko, The organization and activation of orthographic knowledge in reading aloud, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, vol. 4, pp. 674–691, May. 1979.
- [13] T. N. Turner, *Comprehension: Reading for Meaning*. Alexander., Ed. Glenview, Illinois, USA: Scot, Foresman and Company, 1988.
- [14] T. Z. Kailani, Reading aloud in EFL: revisited, *Reading in a Foreign Language*, vol. 12, pp. 281–294, Jan. 1998.
- [15] W. Grabbe and F. Stoller, *Teaching and Researching Reading*. Essex, England: Pearson Education, 2002.
- [16] Y. Hakoziaki and E. R. Miller. (2012) Reading Aloud as a Means of Improving Oral Fluency. [Online]. Available: www.i-repository.net.