

ANALYZING THE STUDENTS' NEEDS OF AN ACADEMIC READING CLASS AT A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN LUBUKLINGGAU

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ABSTRACT

This present paper studied the students' demands of a reading class at a private institution in Lubuklinggau, South Sumatera. The needs are separated into two elements, namely, students' needs and wants. This research was a descriptive study employing a qualitative method with the data collection strategy using a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires. The respondents in this study were 27 students from 2021 at the English Education Study Program of Universitas PGRI Silampari who had taken academic reading subjects. They were given 25 closed-ended questions and three open-ended questions. The results showed that 88.14% of the students agreed that the topic variation in an academic reading class was important, the Importance of Tasks in Academic Reading was categorized as "important" (81%), the topic for academic was categorized as "important" (63.5%). There 86.19% of students expected to have an improvement in the term of topics in Academic Reading Materials. There 74% of students wanted improvement in the aspect of tasks. Then, 56% of 27 students wanted improvement in terms of skills. In conclusion, the students agreed that the topic should be realistic, relevant, and diverse. Moreover, in consideration of the needs of the pupils, the topic should be diversified, engaging, and current.

Keywords: Academic Reading, Needs Analysis, University Students

INTRODUCTION

The problem of low student reading literacy in Indonesia is not new. The culture of reading literacy is still far behind compared to other countries in the world. In fact, Indonesia is still far behind neighboring Malaysia. In a study on Reading Habits and Students' Attitudes towards Reading: A Study of Students in the Faculty of Education UiTM Puncak Alam (Baba & Effendi, 2020), it is

explained that students have positive reading habits and attitudes. This is actually inversely proportional to studies on reading habits in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, low interest in reading is the main factor in this problem occurring. Mustafa (Susilowati, 2016) explained that in the last 20 years, Indonesia had experienced a decline in the habit of reading books. Based on a survey which is conducted by Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) released by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2019, Indonesia is ranked 62nd out of 70 countries or is in the bottom ten countries with low literacy levels. Moreover, it can be concluded that people in Indonesia are not diligent in reading.

Reading is one of the four bases in learning English skills that students must be mastered besides speaking, writing, and listening. Having good reading skills in English is very important for students. It can help students obtain much information and expand their knowledge. This skill is also essential in learning English as a foreign language. It is the reason for the importance of teaching reading. The purpose is so that students can read English texts effectively and efficiently. Students not only can understand the structure of the text, but the most important thing is that they must comprehend the meaning implicitly.

Reading is necessary for all students, regardless of their level of proficiency. But the problem is that most of them cannot comprehend the entire meaning of the text. Especially for academic materials with long paragraphs and a lot of unfamiliar words. Because comprehension is a difficult process that requires students' background knowledge,

academic reading is more difficult to understand because they are longer than general reading, the paragraphs are denser, and they contain complex sentences and difficult vocabulary. Students must bring prior knowledge and adequate vocabulary to the reading process in order to read effectively (Westwood, 2008). According to Hirano (2015), students felt more challenged when reading academic texts in English. Students are frequently assigned to read a variety of English reading sources, including textbooks and journal articles.

With the many difficulties students face in reading, especially in academic reading, it is necessary to make a need analysis. Needs analysis becomes crucial for a specific area of teaching because it significantly impacts the learners' ability to achieve the teaching and learning objectives. Its objective is to achieve the goal of teaching learning so that the learners get benefit from teaching-learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Need Analysis

Need analysis is the systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information required to define and validate defensible curriculum

purposes that meet students' language learning needs within the context of specific institutions influencing the learning and teaching situation (Cunningham, 2015). (Cunningham, 2015). It means that when analyzing the student's needs, a detailed analysis of information pertinent to the student's learning objectives is included. It assists teachers in developing learning plans that meet student's needs in their educational context.

According to Douglas (2013), needs analysis refers to the process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and organizing those needs according to priorities. Needs analysis is divided into two categories: objective needs and subjective needs. The learning outcomes objectives serve as the basis for the objective needs derived from student data (Al-Hamlan, Baniabdelrahman, 2015). In order to be truly appropriate for their needs in the workplace, the teacher must understand the students' priorities in learning English within their context.

Then, needs analysis is referred to as demand or requirement needs, and it has become a necessary and important stage of course design for either general English or English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. In addition, a more thorough needs analysis includes information about all contextual factors, including learning materials, aids, and environment (Lee, 2016). The majority of academics concur on the significance of the needs analysis and the significance of this issue.

According to Soriano (1995), Needs analyses collect and analyze data to determine what students "want" and "need" to learn, whereas evaluations assess how well a program meets students' needs. This definition distinguishes between needs analysis and evaluation. A needs analysis determines the needs of the described group of people, whereas an evaluation determines the extent to which a program meets those needs.

Types of Need Assessment

Target needs

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), target needs are the tasks that learners must perform in target situations.

Necessities

According to Allwright (1982, as cited in West, 1994), necessities are the skills that a student considers to be personally relevant. For example, what students must know to be successful in the target situation. Students will be expected to do this upon completion of their university education.

Lacks

Deficiencies represent skills that are not yet mastered. It is the difference between the student's current level of competence and the level of competence that is desired (Allwright, 1982, quoted in West, 1994). In fact, according to the English

for Specific Purposes textbook, lack is based on what the learners already know, allowing the teacher or facilitator to determine which essentials the students lack.

Wants

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), learners perceive their wants as their subjective needs. Wants also imply that students are aware of what they hope to gain from a given situation and are willing to work diligently to achieve their goals.

Learning requirements

The learning needs of a student illustrate how he or she acquires the language item required for the target situation. In other words, The path to the desired situation is defined by the learning requirements. Hutchinson and Waters (1989) proposed a framework for analyzing learning needs by asking specific questions such as: 1) why are the learners taking the course? 2) how do the learners learn? 3) what resources are available? 4) who are the learners? 5) where the course will be held, and 6) when the course will be held.

Methodologies for Need Analysis

An approach is a perspective on education and instruction. Additionally, an approach is a theoretical perspective on what language is and how it can be acquired. Before conducting needs analysis, educators or practitioners must determine which needs analysis procedures will best support their research objectives. Several approaches, including:

TSA (Target Situational Analysis) (Target Situational Analysis)

It is more concerned with actual communication needs that are directly related to the target situation than with learning needs (Munby, 1978).

PSA (Present Situational Analysis) (Present Situational Analysis)

It determines the student's strengths and weaknesses at the beginning of their language course by analyzing their strengths and weaknesses (Robinson, 1991).

Academic Reading

Academic reading is the deliberate and critical reading of lengthy academic texts for the purpose of studying particular major topics (Sengupta, 2002). It differs from other types of reading in that the length and level of difficulty of texts vary throughout the process. These texts are difficult because they contain philosophies expressed in a complex language, as well as words and sentences that are difficult to understand. According to Leki (2001), Academic reading entails a thorough interconnection of data from various resources as well as a broad and exhaustive reading of texts that are subject-explicit. Using academic reading strategies successfully requires a high level of awareness and flexibility. Furthermore, based on Shunyun and Munby (1996), Academic reading is a purposeful, serious, and multifaceted activity.

Kinds of Academic Reading Texts

Academic reading texts are more difficult to comprehend than general reading because they are longer, the paragraphs are denser, and they contain complex sentences and difficult vocabulary. Texts from academic readings are incorporated into scientific papers. A scientific paper, according to Gastel and A.Day (2016), is a written and published report that describes new research findings. According to Sakrim (2018), there are numerous varieties of scientific papers, such as:

Report

A report is a form of essay that includes a record of activities regarding something that is being done, researched, or observed, as well as implementation suggestions.

Paper

The term "paper" refers to scientific work written by students or students for assignments in a specific academic field.

Thesis

A thesis is a paper that must be submitted to earn an undergraduate or bachelor's degree.

Dissertation

A dissertation is an essay submitted in order to earn a doctorate, the highest academic degree available.

Review

A book review is a piece of writing containing the results of evaluating, assessing, or rating a book. This reviewer also referred to as book scales or book reviews, communicate with readers via newspapers or periodicals.

Criticism

The origin of criticism is the Greek word *Kritikos*, which means "judge." As an essay type, criticism provides an objective evaluation of a work's positive and negative qualities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a descriptive qualitative method. Creswell (2009) defines qualitative research as a method of investigating and comprehending the importance that individuals or groups place on a social or human situation. Because the results are explained in great detail and then provided in the form of research reports based on the facts, descriptive qualitative research methods are measurable, actual, and very accurate research methods.

This study focuses on the third-semester English education students at PGRI Silampari University in the academic year 2022/2023. Questionnaires are used to

collect data. The following steps are identification, classification, description, and conclusion.

FINDINGS

Students Need

The following section will discuss the detailed findings of the students' necessities and wants in academic reading material.

a. The Students' Necessities of Academic Reading Material

The Importance of Topic Variation

To get the data in detail, the researcher provided five sub-aspects. It can be seen in the table. Overall, most students believed that it is important for the material to have a variety of the topic. It is very important for the topics to encourage students' critical literacy and active learning. The topics should be relevant and encourage learners to express themselves. It is also highly expected to be realistic and likely to appeal to the learners. The last one is the topic should highly expand learners' awareness and enriches their experiences.

Table 2. The Importance of Subject Variety

Aspects	Sub-aspects	Agree	Neutral	disagree
The Importance of topic Variation	1. It is important to have a variety of topic	81.4%	11.1%	17.5%
	2. The topics should encourage Critical literacy and active learning.	92.6%	7.4%	0%
	3. The topics are relevant and encourage learners to express themselves.	85.2%	14.8%	0%
	4. The topics of the materials should be realistic and likely to appeal to the learners.	92.6%	7.4%	0%
	5. The topics should expand learners' awareness and enrich their experience.	88.9%	11.1%	0%
Means		88.14%	10.36%	3.5%

Thus, the majority of students said that it was essential for them to be able to meaningfully connect key concepts to their own experiences. In addition, they considered that forecasting activities, posing questions, guessing terms, asking about the text's structure, locating the paragraph's primary concept, and reflecting on the text should be included in the assignments. In addition, they considered that the duties might be difficult for them but that they would enhance their expertise. In order for students to locate information in a book, it is crucial that the assignments be planned and rehearsed with a range of reading levels in mind. Students also argued that it is crucial to include evaluating activities, background knowledge connections, defining an objective, and previewing the tasks.

Aspect	Sub-aspects	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
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The Importance of Tasks in Critical Reading	6. The tasks make me able to connect main ideas meaningfully to my own situations and experiences	66.7%	33.3%	0%
	7. The tasks should be designed and practiced to range learners reading skills in order to search for information in text	77.7%	22.2%	
	8. The tasks may be tricky for me, but at the same time, they can expand my knowledge	81.5%	18.5%	
	9. Finding the main idea of the paragraph should be included in the tasks	74.1%	25.9%	
	10. Previewing is one of the tasks that should be included in academic reading	59.3%	40.7%	
	11. Setting a purpose is one of the suitable tasks in academic reading	77.8%	22.2%	
	12. The tasks should contain about predicting activity	55.5%	7.4%	3.8%
	13. Posing questions should be included in the task	61.5%	38.5%	
	14. Connecting to background knowledge is the suitable task in academic reading material	56%	44%	
	15. Asking about the structure of the text should be included in the tasks	68%	28%	4%
	16. Guessing words is important to be included in the task	57.7%	42.3%	
	17. The task should include critiquing activity	23%	57.7%	3.8%
	18. Reflecting on the text is one of the suitable tasks for academic reading	66.7%	33.3%	0%

c. Subjects for Academic Study

The third factor is Academic reading topics. In short, the majority of students agreed that all of the topics listed in this section should be included in critical reading material.

Table 4. The Importance of Reading Topics in the Classroom

Aspects	Sub-aspects	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Topics for Critical Reading	19. Differentiating facts and opinions in academic reading material	81%	7.4%	0%
	20. Making inferences in academic reading material	81.5%	18.5%	0%
	21. Understanding the author's approaches to relate information to the reader	92.6%	3.7%	3.7%

	22. Organizing and remembering information in reading (maps, outlines, summary) in various disciplines.	81.5%	18.5%	0%
	23. Applying different reading strategies in academic reading material	92.6%	7.4%	0%
	24. Solving problems related to the text in academic reading material	92.6%	7.4%	0%
	25. Obtaining the intended score on a reading section of a TOEFL test	81.5%	18.5%	0%

Wants in Academic Reading Material for Students

Additionally, it is essential to understand students' needs in academic reading material. To determine this, the researcher devised an open-ended questionnaire. It is separated into three sections, including students' desires for academic reading material in terms of subject, task, and competence. Students could respond to any aspect of the inquiry without experiencing anxiety. The researcher condensed 27 responses into a concise description.

Wants of Students Regarding Academic Reading Material

In terms of content, there are a number of characteristics that students seek in academic reading material. Five Students (18.5%) indicated that the theme should relate to their personal life and experience. Seven students (25.9%) expected the issue to be engaging and current so that it might easily relate to what they learned. Eight students (29.6%) suggested that the topic should be clear so that students may more easily comprehend the lesson and accurately deduce facts from the text. Five students (18.5%) wanted the topic to vary so that they may get more knowledge and be more motivated to learn. Two students (7.4%) anticipated that the issue would expand their vocabulary. On the questions, 0% of the students believed that the topic would enhance their reading comprehension at a critical level, strengthen their language, link with cultural awareness, and encourage them to express themselves.

Students' Desires Regarding Assignments for Academic Reading

Four students (14.8%) believed that the assignment would place greater emphasis on previously learned topics. Six students (22.2%) anticipated that the work description would be explicit. Three students (11.1%) wanted the assignment to incorporate a discussion component to foster critical thinking. Three students (11.1%) recommended that the task include explicit questions. Then, two students

(7.4%) suggested that the activity should assess students' deeper comprehension of the content.

Next, three students (11.1%) believed that the task should be variable. 2 students (7.4%) wanted the exercise to address their desire to ponder, make connections, and analyze. Two students (7.5%) preferred multiple-choice questions in the assignment. Two students (20%) were then adamant that the activity incorporate higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) so as to stimulate and expand the learners' understanding. In addition, 12 students (15%) anticipated that it would encourage them to improve their reading fluency.

c. Students' Expectations Regarding Academic Reading Skills

The final one is based on skill. Four students (14.8%) wished that academic reading material may increase both their critical literacy and their language proficiency (English). Three students (11.1%) anticipated it would be simpler to draw conclusions and comprehend the text's core point.

Then, thirteen pupils (48.1%) desired to increase their reading ability. Two pupils (7.4%) desired the ability to anticipate the material. Three additional students (11.1%) anticipated that they could organize and recall the material. Last, two students (7.4%) were expected to perform text skimming accurately.

Discussion

This study attempted to determine the academic reading material demands of pupils. There were 27 students that filled out the questionnaire and provided responses. According to Nation and Macalister, analyzing data regarding students' need for academic reading material requires consideration of both necessities and desires (2010).

First, the necessities of the students are discussed. In part on the significance of topic variety, the majority of students argued that topic variety is crucial. They felt that the subject matter should promote critical literacy and active learning. Relevant themes that inspire learners to express themselves should be selected. Then, the theme should be realistic and likely to engage the students. They anticipated that the final theme would broaden learners' horizons and deepen their experiences.

The role of tasks in academic reading is discussed next. The findings revealed that the majority of students judged the tasks to be highly significant. Students must be able to connect primary ideas to their own experiences in order to successfully complete this assignment. It is essential that the job include activities such as making predictions, offering questions, guessing words, asking about the structure of the text, locating the paragraph's primary theme, and reflecting on the text. Students claimed that although the exercises may be challenging for them, they

may expand their knowledge. Next, it is essential that reading comprehension assignments be devised and practiced so that students can seek information in the text. Lastly, it is crucial that the assignment include critical thinking, connections to prior information, establishing a purpose, and previewing.

The third portion covers academic reading subjects. The themes were derived from the curriculum for academic reading in UNPARI's English Education Study Program. Four were utilized in academic reading material, including analysis, inference from academic texts, synthesis, and evaluation of English writings. Overall, the majority of students agreed that every topic in the assigned readings is significant.

In examining students' needs for academic reading material, it is equally essential to understand students' preferences. The researcher posed three open-ended questions in relation to this. Students could openly express their ideas, feelings, and desires regarding the topic, assignment, and critical reading ability. The researcher has compiled and briefly described 27 responses.

There are some things that students desire in terms of subject matter. Some students anticipated that the topic would be selected based on students interest in the globalization period so that they could easily tie it to their prior knowledge and so enhance their comprehension of the text. Common subjects that can relate to contemporary situations are included in instructional materials since they can be naturally understood after reading the texts and attract the learners' attention. In this 4.0 era, people learn a great deal about technologies, cultural diversity, marketing, etc., which teaches them new vocabulary and stimulates students creativity. Therefore, it can enhance their knowledge and vocabulary. Additionally, they felt that the topic should be varied because the more diverse the topic, the greater the understanding of it. Additionally, students want topics that not only introduce pertinent language but also teach them about cultures and traditions. To achieve this, it is advised that students work with actual resources. Cultural differences aid students in selecting the appropriate language for interaction in a variety of scenarios involving cultures.

A task is an ideal method for gauging a student's grasp of previously-learned material. Students can offer their expertise and viewpoint on the issue by completing the assignment. Then, they anticipated that the assignment would improve their reading proficiency. Students felt the assignment would encourage them to think critically and develop their higher-order thinking. Therefore, the job should no longer consist solely of questions for which the answers are already present in the text.

The most crucial aspect of the learning process is the acquisition of proficiency. Ability enables students to implement the learning outcome that will result from the administered treatment. Fluency in reading will be attained if kids

are interested in the topic and the task. If the topic and assignment are completed correctly, students' knowledge and skills will undoubtedly increase. Students were required to grasp both the subject matter and the language itself. They desired improvement in areas such as textual prediction in academic reading. That is, they must also possess the necessary prior knowledge. Students are required to simultaneously master subject matter and language.

CONCLUSION

This research attempted to determine students' needs for academic reading instructional materials. After reviewing the data, the researcher arrived at a conclusion. It is divided into two categories: requirements and desires. In examining the needs of the students, particularly the significance of topic variety, the majority of students firmly agreed that the topic should be realistic, relevant, and diverse. Moreover, in consideration of the needs of the pupils, the topic should be diversified, engaging, and current.

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