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# Exploring Personal Reading Histories in Developing Reading Interest of English Study Program Learners of University of Riau

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### Abstract:

As one of activities in Extensive Reading classroom, Exploring Personal Reading Histories provides learners in exploring their reading experiences. This study aimed to explore: (1) What are the reading experiences of English study program learners of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Riau based in Exploring Personal Reading Histories?" (2) How are the reading experiences of English study program learners of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Riau based on Exploring Personal Reading Histories developing reading interest?" It was a case study and the data were collected through the document of learners 'reading histories. The result of this study found that: (1) the reading experiences of English study program learners of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Riau based on Exploring Personal Reading Histories is individual contexts and processes in becoming competent for each level. (2) The reading experiences of English study program learners of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Riau based on Exploring Personal Reading Histories developing reading interest are through reading experiences developing processes (parent's and teachers' role, learners' positive attitude, reading materials for each level, reading activities, building critical thinking). This study suggests implementing Exploring Personal Reading Histories in Extensive Reading course. It is also recommended conducting deep study on Exploring Personal Reading Histories in developing reading interest by using socio-cultural theory and interviews as an additional theory and instrument.

**Keywords:** reading, reading experiences, and exploring personal reading histories

#### I. Introduction

Learners majoring in English experience reading through contexts and processes. In English Study Program of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Riau, learners learn reading in Reading courses (Reading I, Reading II, Reading III, and Extensive Reading). These reading classes are supposed as intensive reading. While the focus of Extensive Reading course is for reading extensively. Bumford and Day (1998, 2004) point out that extensive reading is an approach to language teaching in which learners read a lot of reading materials. The objective of Extensive Reading course is to develop the learners' interest in reading by reading a lot of reading materials outside of the classroom. Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) emphasize that the goal of extensive reading program is to convince students of its value so that they will continue reading extensively on their own after the class is over. It means that Extensive Reading course is an appropriate reading activity to attract the students' reading interest.

Based on the researchers' experiences in teaching Extensive Reading, we realize that learners need to be involved in various classroom activities. It is needed in order to attract their interest in reading outside of the classroom. It is due to the fact that it is difficult for some of students to be interested in reading; especially, reading outside of the classroom. It shows that they have different reading background which means that they experience different reading histories. Besides, few students perform their report of texts read outside of the classroom spontaneously, some students perform their report if they are asked to do it, and some students are not ready to present their report. It shows that lecturers need to be involved in the activity that makes learners attract their interest. It is not only in the form of suggestion and direction but also in creating classroom activities.

One of the classroom activities in Extensive Reading course is *Exploring Personal Reading Histories* (Bumford and Day, 2004). This activity provides the students to recall their reading experiences in which the experiences contribute to their reading competency. The students will perceive the experiences in order to be competent in reading. The experiences are processes supported by environment, contexts, and reading materials. Experiences make the students realize that doing reading is based on interest. They can make it in the activity of *Exploring Personal Reading Histories*. To our experience, we have been implementing *Exploring Personal Reading Histories* for two classes in two different years. It is conducted at the second meeting in Extensive Reading course. The class is begun by presenting the exploration of our personal reading histories as a role model for students, then, each student explored their personal reading histories. It seems that the students are enthusiastic to explore their personal reading histories.

The writers' experiences in implementing extensive reading is broadly in line with Ho-Hyak Jang et al (2015) who found that the affect of extensive reading activities have a positive influence on students' reading proficiency and their intrinsic motivation Korea. The result of a study conducted by Delfi & Yamat (2017) shows the current context of Indonesian reading performances. Learners increase reading competency through extensive reading (Milliners, 2017). However, practicing

reading is not the same for all learners (Pammu, 2017). Delfi (2017) found that the experiences of Indonesian learners majoring in English were reading through pictures in childhood and reading stories in the first language, meanwhile in reading English, they experience reading by understanding words, rereading texts, reading a lot of reading materials, sharing others, and reading for entertainment and knowledge in Indonesia. Therefore, this research answered two questions: (1) What are the reading experiences of English study program learners of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Riau based on *Exploring Personal Reading Histories*?" (2) How are the reading experiences of English study program learners of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Riau based on *Exploring Personal Reading Histories* developing reading interest?"

### 2. Literature Review

Theory relating to this study mainly refers to theory of Reading including Extensive Reading which focuses on Exploring Personal Reading Histories as a classroom activity in Extensive Reading.

### 2.1 Reading

Reading is a process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning (Anderson and Nunan, 2008). The processes of second language reading can be classified into interactive process, purposeful process and critical process (Hedge, 2008). Interactive process is in terms of schematic knowledge and language knowledge. In schematic knowledge, texts will activate readers' prior knowledge by reading words or phrases. On other hand, the language knowledge is in terms of decoding words and grammatical structure quickly and accurately. Reflecting in the ways of interactive process, readers present their prior knowledge in pre reading and recall the content of the text by writing what they understand. They write the content of the text by using their own words. Before gaining the meaning of texts, readers should be competent in the language knowledge, like vocabulary and syntactic structures. The competence in language knowledge is for schematic knowledge. Consequently, interactive process makes readersinteract with writers through the process of finding the meaning or understanding texts.

The second process skills as Hedge(2008)means is purposeful process. In this process, readers do some activities or have reading styles in order to be competent in reading skills. The activities that readers do while reading as suggested by Hedge(2008) are getting information, responding to curiosity about a topic, following instructions to perform a task for pleasure, amusement, and personal enjoyment. He points out that readers will be directed to the idea contained in texts when they do reading through these activities. Reading styles that Hedge (2008) means are receptive reading, reflective reading, or intensive reading. He points out that readers will be directed to the idea contained in the text when they do reading through these activities. Readers who know what they should do in the process of reading will read texts effectively. Readers may find the general information, detail information or the information of the whole information of the text. The information

that readers gained through the activities will develop their critical thinking. Hedge (2008) believes that critical process is shaped through the readers' perception toward ideology and unfamiliar cultural values of texts. The readers' language awareness is as the basic for critical thinking. Therefore, in the critical process, readers need to have careful analysis of the writer's language. Readers' analysis to the writers' language provide the readers in understanding the use of language.

Learners in the reading process bring their own cultural and linguistic background (Hedgcock and Ferris, 2009). Factors influencing learners' schemata are the influences of family and society, school influences, and types of readers' schemata. Family or home environment is as a primary source of background knowledge and schemata formation in reading. Family and society or community attitudes vary in diffrent culture. Schools may make students involve in doing activity and reading atmosphere. Practices in reading that children face in their life affect on the type of their schemata. The types of schemata that learners have like linguistic schemata, formal schemata, and content schemata. Learners may gain such schemata based on the oral practice that they experience while learning reading, If the children are exposured to listen the story read to them, they are prepared to listen to how the stories are constructed. They will know that stories are presented in chronological order, problem, solution, and specific characters. By listening to strories, children gain life experience. This experience matches to what they acquire about other kinds of texts like recipes, newspaper column, research papers, and lab report. Any texts readers read is as the background knowledge for the learners to read the following texts. The different learners' schemata indicates that they are individual. The difference refers to different motivation, learning styles, and learners' strategies. Different learners' cultural and linguistic background affect their understanding on the texts they read. Hedgcock and Ferris' (2009) in line with Koda's (2010) believe that reading success is governed by the competencies of visual information extractionand prior knowledge consolidation.

Students are expected to be able to find particular information or the general idea of what the text is about. It depends on the information that readers want to find out whether they read for specific information or for general idea or both of them. Generally, students read both of these informations. It means that they practice from time to time to find these informations. Consequently, they have skills finding specific information and the skill in finding the general idea. Finding general idea refers to skimming and finding specific information (Hamers, 2009).

EFL learners will gain the meaning and acquire the language by reading (Hedge, 2008). It is in line with Hammer (2009) who points out that reading is an appropriate activity in acquiring the language; vocabulary and grammar. It indicates that by understanding the language components, students will get the meaning of texts because the meaning of texts is constructed by language components. In other words, readers will understand texts based on their understanding on the language components as well as understanding text construction. Lee and Hsu (2009) point out that readers will absorb a good source of writing because they can learn vocabulary, sentences, and text organization. Kuang Yu Chen (2014) studied the

correlation among vocabulary knowledge, syntactic knowledge, and reading comprehension for College students in the western part of Taiwan. The study found that syntactic knowledge as important as vocabulary knowledge on second language reading comprehension.

### 2.2 Extensive Reading

Bamford and Day (2004) define that extensive reading is an approach of the language teaching in which learners read a lot of easy material in the new language by choosing their own reading material for overall meaning, information and enjoyment.Brown (2001) and Anderson as well as Nunan (2008) point out that extensive reading is reading of longer passages with focus on enjoyment and or learning new information while reading. Reading with enjoyment direct readers to gain the information in the process of reading until they finish reading texts. It will make them continue reading the longer texts or the other texts. Mikulecky and Jefferies (2007) believe that extensive reading involves reading whole books and the books are selected by the students.

Bamford and Day (1998, 2004) classify the characteristics of extensive reading into: (1) The reading materials is easy, (2) A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics is available. (3)Learners chose what they want to read, (4) Learners read as much as possible, (5) Reading speed is usually faster than slower, (6) The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding, (7) Reading is individual and silent, (8) Reading is its own reward, (9) The teacher orients and guides the students, (10) The teacher is a role model of a reader. These characteristics are always as references used by writers and researchers in discussing or studying extensive reading.

In order to gain the goal of extensive reading program, teachers need to know how extensive reading program is designed and implemented. Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) suggest five points for designing and implementing extensive reading approach. They suggest that teachers get students on board, provide access to reading materials, help students find and select appropriate materials, design class activities; and develop accountability or evaluation mechanism. In preparing students to work in extensive reading program, teachers are expected to make them perceive that doing extensive reading is as a pleasure activity. Students are guided to decide reading materials they read in terms of number, kinds, ways and goals of reading. They suggest that in the beginning of the course, teachers can ask students to have a short presentation for summarizing research on the benefits of extensive reading. Hence, in the process of the course, teachers can show students the benefits of extensive reading explicitly and implicitly by talking about what they have done with the interesting reading materials they have selected. Students may share the reading materials they have read through presentations, discussions, posters, and recomendation forms. Teachers need to consider the reading materials used in extensive reading. Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) suggest that teachers are expected to provide materials which are appropriate for students' interest, language proficiency, and literacy skills.

Mermelstein (2014) studied the use of extensive reading in improving EFL learners' reading for non English major in Taiwan. The study proved significantly higher reading level gained by the treatment group. The study suggested that utilizing extensive reading can provide a successful alternative to improve Asian learner's reading levels as well as considering pedagogical suggestion in implementing extensive reading. Sarwo Edy (2014) studied the effectiveness of extensive reading on the Indonesian students' reading comprehension achievement and motivation. The study proves that students taught by the extensive reading activity showed higher scores than those taught by conventional way; however, there is no interaction between students' motivation and extensive reading. The practice on extensive reading in this study was only for reading course in which the goal is for comprehension. Sarwo Edy suggested make special course for extensive reading in order to enhance the students' reading skills and reading habit. On other hand, Ho-Hyuk Jang et al (2015) studied the effect of English extensive reading activities on the students' reading proficiency and reading motivation in Korea. The study found that extensive reading activities have a positive influence on students' reading. Learners' reading habit are established if they live in a good literacy environment, regular reading motivation and habits in L1, and access to digitalized texts and literary texts (Iftanti, 2015). Besides, the more experiences the students have in reading English texts, the more they desire to read English texts (Salikin et al, 2017). It shows that learners increase reading competency through extensive reading (Milliners, 2017). Wisaijorn (2017) believes that learners' reading competence and attitudes can be improved by engaging in extensive reading.

### 2.3 Exploring Personal Reading Histories

Exploring Personal Reading Histories is one of the activities in Extensive Reading course. It is a classroom activity in which students discuss the past and present role of reading in their lives Bumford dan Day (2004). The learners can evaluate their reading experiences, habits, and attitude in the first and the foreign language. Bumford and Day (2004) point out that the components to be considered in implementing Exploring Personal Reading Histories. The components are levels, aims, preparation, and variations referring to questions as guidance as the following table.

**Table 1: The Components of Exploring Personal Reading Histories** 

No.	Components	Description	
1.	Level	Intermediate	
2.	Aim	To develop students' awareness of the role of reading in their lives	
3.	Preparation	reading in their lives  Select some appropriate questions and teachers play as a role model.  Example of Questions:  1. What are your first memories of reading?  2. Did anyone read to you? If so, who? I not, why was that?  3. What ideas of things did you enjoy reading	

most?

- 4. Do you still enjoy reading these kinds of things today? If not, how has your reading changed?
- 5. Which author or types of reading have been most important to you?
- 6. What role does reading play in your life now (for example, as a parent or for work, pleasure, community, or religious purposes?

Questions are taken home questions and the responses will be presented in the classroom.

4 Various questions

These components were considered in designing *Exploring Personal Reading Histories* in Extensive Reading course. Therefore, the analysis was also based on the components of research questions.

### 3. Research Methodology

The suitable design in answering the research question of this study is a qualitative research approach, specifically, it is a Case Study. A Case Study focuses on instances of a particular phenomenonto provide an in-depth account of the event, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in the particular instance (Dencombe, 2007; Bernard and Ryan 2010). This study focuses on the detail explanation on how the English Department Students of FKIP Riau University experienced reading based on the exploration of their personal reading histories.

The participants in this study were chosen purposively. They were semester four students of the English Study Programme the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Riau taking the Extensive Reading course. These students were selected based on several criteria. The first criteria were the students who took Extensive Reading at the first time and got highest scores in Extensive Reading course. Another criterion was the students who reported the exploration of their personal reading histories fluently as well as in responding questions and comments. The students who met these criteria were three persons. They were Ica (pseudo name) and Puji (pseudo name), and Puji (pseudo name). The instruments determined appropriate for this current Case Study was the document of the learners' exploration of personal reading histories. The document of exploration of personal reading histories of Ica, Puji, and Silvi were analyzed. Thematic analysis was carried out in which the document was read and reread to code participant's responses and classifications into themes which is called thematic analysis.

The analysis for the classification of the themes based on the answer of the the questions is as examples in following tables.

Table 2: The Analysis for Themes (Open Coding) for Exploring Reading Histories of English Department Students of University of Riau

Question	Respon	Theme
What are your first	- Started at about 3 years old	
memories of	taught by mother through	Taught by mother
reading?	alphabet book using picture.	Picture book
	- Pronouncing words from <b>letters</b>	
	and syllables.	Pronouncing words
	- Pronouncing words from	Parts of words
	banners, stickers, and license	
	plates.	Media
	- Reading tales and fables	
	through pictures.	Stories
	- Praised by others	
	- Practicing reading alphabet	Positive response
	books as daily activities	_
		daily activities

## 4. Findings and Discussion

The data gained from the instrument of this studywas analyzed in terms of Ica's, Puji's, Silvi's reading experiences. It was classified based on Ica's, Puji's, Silvi's responses on the questions for *Exploring Personal Reading Histories*. Then, it was classified into themes for the answer of the research questions.

### 4.1 Learners' Reading Experiences

The result of thematic analysis of Exploring *Personal Reading Histories* is as the answer of the first research question of this study. The result of the analysis of Themes (Open Coding) for *Exploring Personal Reading Histories* of learners of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Riau is as the following table.

Table 3: Themes (Open Coding) for *Exploring Personal Reading Histories* of Ica, Puji, and Silvi

Ica	Puji	Silvi
- Asking letters	- Taught reading sentences	- Taught from alphabet by
- Taught pronunciation by	- Facilitated with children	mother
mother	books and magazines	- Facilitated with alphabet
- Pronouncing sentences	<ul> <li>Reading magazines</li> </ul>	and picture books
- Read stories	- Reading in the library	- Pronouncing words
- Remembering words read	- Reading materials about	- Read stories
- Asking to be taught reading	technology and geography	- Positive resposes
- Helped reading stories	- First perception about	- Dayli activities
- Taken to library	English	- Motivated because of
- First perception about	<ul> <li>Learning from teachers</li> </ul>	positive responses
English	- Reading novel and topics	- Motivation based on
- Taught to pronounce	about technology and	reading materials

- Reading for reading

ooks
ing
3

The result of the analysis from data of *Exploring Personal Reading Histories* shows meaningful experiences of the participants (Ica, Puji, dan Santi). The result indicates about what and how they faced reading experiences. It shows that the learners of English study program of the Faculty of Teachers Training University of Riau faced their reading experiences as individual contexts and processes. However, all of them were taught reading for the first time by their mothers and faced meaningful reading experiences in childhood. These experiences made them experience building their reading competence. Therefore, they could face the processes expecting their reading ability.

The first experience is about Ica's reading experiences. The experiences show that Ica began reading experiences when she asked her mother the letters of her name. Her mother responded by teaching her the pronunciation of the letters of her name. She also experienced listening to stories read by her mother. These experiences make her recognize and remember the new words. However, this experience makes her brave asking why her mother did not teach her to read. Then, her mother helped her understand the story when Ica read the story. Another context that Ica experienced is about the experience when her mother often took her to the library. In the library, she listens to the librarian reading stories for the kids and she also read some books in the library. Meanwhile, Ica's first perception about English was difficult. The teacher's treatment could change her perception. The teacher directed and guided the students to read articles every meeting. The teacher's treatment made her understand the text more than the teacher expected. She also asked her mother to buy story books for her and her mother bought the books for her. It made her more interested in reading English books. However, she should read and understand journal articles as English Study Program learner. She thought that understanding journal articles was difficult. In order to be able to understand the journal articles, she would improve reading ability.

The second experience is about Puji's in which she was taught by her mother how to pronounce letters and sentences. Her parents provided her with reading materials; color and picture books and magazines for children. Meanwhile, Puji's first perception about English was difficult. The teacher's treatment could change this perception in which the teacher directed and guided the students to read articles every meeting. It worked for her in which she could read English texts. It makes Puji be interested reading English texts in internet. Nowadays, Puji still enjoys reading texts about technology and geography, and entertainment in order to up-date

information. To Puji, reading has role in life: increasing vocabularies, knowledge, and entertainment.

The third one is about Silvi's reading experiences. The result of analysis shows that Silvi recognized reading for the first time when her mother taught reading by using alphabet books with full of colour and pictures. At that time, reading alphabet books had been as her daily activities. Besides reading alphabet books, Silvi also read stories under her mother supervisions. Silvi was really motivated reading new words, she found. This experience encourages her to recognize English words. She was supported by her mother who introduced words in Indonesian and in English. Before entering Kindergarten, Silvi had been able recognizing words in Indonesian and in English. Since Junior High School, she has been reading articles in internet. However, she understanding journal articles is difficult for her in which as an English study program learner, she should read and understand journal articles. In order to understand the journal articles. She also read a lot in order to be familiar to read any kinds of texts. It means that for her to improve reading is by reading.

The three participants experience meaningful reading experiences since childhood and developed through the level that they have to face and the development is also in line with the use of technology. The participants' interest towards reading reflects on how they learn Extensive Reading. How they experience reading can be seen from their current experience as English study program students. They should read journal articles in certain courses. They realized that it was difficult to understand journal articles; however, they do their effort in order to understand the texts that she should read. It seems that they really understand the meaning of reading as the concept of reading. EFL/ ESL learners will understand the meaning from texts and simultaneously, they also acquire the language (Hedge, 2008). To the context of the learners as the participants of this study, they did not allow themselves not to read the articles. They did their best to understand the articles. Ica, Puji, and Silvi's personal reading histories are as the practice of extensive reading. It means that they practiced extensive reading before joining extensive reading course as studies conducted by Mermelstein (2014), Sarwo Edy (2014), and Ho-Hyuk Jang et al (2015). The finding of this current study is in line with (Iftanti, 2015). Learners' reading habit are established if they live in a good literacy environment, regular reading motivation and habits in L1, and access to digitalized texts and literary texts. Besides, the more experiences in reading English texts, the more desire to read 2017). It shows that learners increase reading English texts (Salikin et al, competency through extensive reading (Milliners, 2017). Wisaijorn (2017) believes that learners' reading competence and attitudes can be improved by engaging in extensive reading. The experiences faced by Ica, Puji, and are as the answer of the first research question of this study.

### 4.2 Reading Experiences Developing Reading Interest

Experiences building reading interest are as the answer of the second research question. The result of analysis about the learners' reading experiences for all participants (Ica, Puji, and Silvi) reflects on how they enjoy doing activities Extensive Reading course relating to reading interest. The second research questions

refer to themes of reading experiences and classified based on processes. The classifications are as the following table.

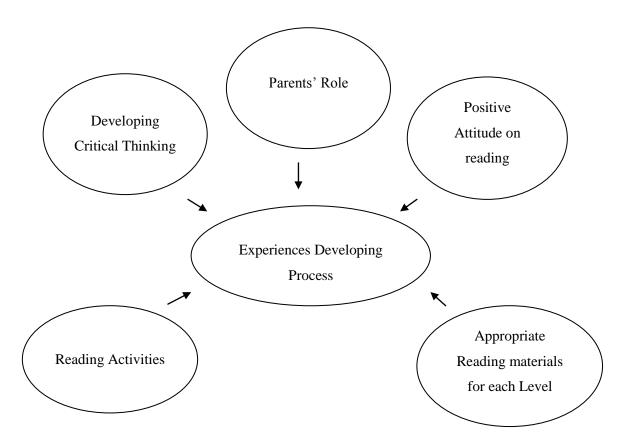
# **Reading Experiences Developing Reading Interest**

<b>Experiences Developing Process</b>	Experiences
Parent's and teachers' role	- Taught pronunciation
	- Read stories
	- Helped to read stories
	- Given English story books
	- Taken to library
	<ul> <li>Facilitated with reading materials since childhood</li> </ul>
	- Treated with positive response
Learners' positive attitude	- Asking letters
1	- Asking to be taught reading
	- Asking reading more
	- Asking English story books
	- First perception about English
	- Motivation based on reading
	- Reading for reading
	- Reading technology and geography
Reading materials for each level	- Children reading book
	- Novel
	- English Children reading book
	- Entertainment
	- Reading materials from internet
Reading activities	- Pronouncing words and sentences
	- learning words read
	- Asking for teaching learning
	- Reading English story books
	- Reading grammar books
	- Reading on line reading materials
	- Reading for learning
	- Reading magazines
	- Reading Novels
	- Reading English articles
Building critical thinking	- Asking letters of name
	<ul> <li>Asking to be taught reading</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Asking reading more than instructed</li> </ul>
	- Asking to have English story books
	- Reading for learning
	- Realizing lack of vocabulary
	- Reading for understanding
	- Reading for reading

Based on the participants' reading experiences in *Exploring Personal Reading Histories*, it shows that the participants face reading experiences based on context and processes. However, the experiences develop the processes and they can be

classified into five: (1) Parent's and teachers' role, (2) Learners' positive attitude, (3) Reading materials for each level, (4) Reading activities, and (5) Building critical thinking. These classifications indicate that reading experiences of English study program learners of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of develop their reading interest. It means that this finding answer the second research question. Experiences develop interest in reading are as the following figure.

### **Experiences Developing Reading Interest**



These five components (parent's and teachers' role, learners' positive attitude, reading materials for each level, reading activities, and building critical thinking) are the themes of reading experiences of English study program learners of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Riau University develop interest in extensive reading in which extensive reading is personal experiences as means. Wisaijorn (2017) believes that learners' reading competence and attitudes can be improved by engaging in extensive reading. To the context of this current study, the learners develop their reading competence since childhood which affect on their reading attitude. Therefore, it is not a big deal for them to do the activity of extensive reading.

### 5. Conclusion and Implication

This case study was based on the data from document of *Exploring Personal Reading Histories* of learners. The first research finding is that the reading experiences of English study program learners of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Riau based on *Exploring Personal Reading Histories* is individual contexts and processes in gaining goals in becoming competent for each level. The second research finding is that the reading experiences of English study program learners of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Riau based on *Exploring Personal Reading Histories* developing their interest are experiences developing process (parent's and teachers' role, learners' positive attitude, leading materials for each level, reading activities, and building critical thinking).

These findings contribute to theory, pedagogy, and methodology as the implication of this study. It contributes to reading theory, especially extensive reading relating with the other theories. Even though reading is individual activity but it is also influenced by environment and facilities from childhood in developing reading competency to the next levels. Interest in reading Indonesian also impacts on reading or learning English. This study also contributes to pedagogy in teaching and learning Extensive *Reading* by implementing *Exploring Personal Reading Histories* at the second meeting. This activity affects on learners in recalling their experiences developing their interest in reading as the objective of Extensive Reading course. Moreover, these findings contribute on methodology in order to conduct deep study on qualitative research dealing with Extensive Reading course. One of the alternatives is to conduct a study on *Exploring Personal Reading Histories* in developing interest by using Socio-cultural theory and using interviews as additional theory and instrument.

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