TEACHERS’ VIEWS TOWARD ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS
IN EXTENSIVE READING CLASS

THESIS
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Sarjana Pendidikan

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# TABLE OF CONTENT

Cover Page .................................................................................................................................................. i
Inside Cover Page ........................................................................................................................................ ii
Approval Page ............................................................................................................................................ v
Copyright Statement .................................................................................................................................. vi
Publication Agreement Declaration .......................................................................................................... vii
Table of Content ...................................................................................................................................... viii
Thesis Body

Abstract ................................................................................................................................................ 1
Keywords ................................................................................................................................................. 1
Introduction .............................................................................................................................................. 1

Literature Review .................................................................................................................................. 4
  The importance of teachers’ views .......................................................................................................... 4
  The use of alternative assessments ......................................................................................................... 5
  Assessments in reading class .................................................................................................................. 6
  The nature of Extensive Reading ............................................................................................................ 7
  Alternative assessments in Extensive Reading ....................................................................................... 9

Methodology ......................................................................................................................................... 10
  Context of the Study ............................................................................................................................... 10
  Participants .......................................................................................................................................... 11
  Instrument ........................................................................................................................................... 12
  Data Collection Procedures ................................................................................................................ 13
  Data Analysis Procedures .................................................................................................................... 14

Findings And Discussions ..................................................................................................................... 14
  Alternative assessments are in line with the nature of Extensive Reading ........................................ 14
  Alternative assessments could be used to strengthen students’ critical thinking .............................. 21
  Some aspects in alternative assessments are still challenging ........................................................... 24
Alternative assessments are commonly used nowadays by teachers to assess students in some courses, including Extensive Reading. It is because there are various assessments that can be used so it will be more flexible for teachers. However, the usage of alternative assessments is being debatable so it is needed to over view because of the pros and cons. That is why this study aims to explore Extensive Reading teachers’ views toward alternative assessments used in Extensive Reading class. To get deeper data from the participants that are Extensive Reading teachers who taught in the first semester of 2015/2016 in Faculty of Language and Literature, Satya Wacana Christian University, a semi-structured interview was used because the researcher could ask some questions as the follow-up questions. After transcribing the data obtained, it was found that all the participants agreed if alternative assessments were suitable for Extensive Reading. They believed that alternative assessments were actually going along with the nature of Extensive Reading and it can strengthen students’ critical thinking. They also stated if objectivity of teachers in using alternative assessments still became the problem. This study is limited for only one particular context with five participants. Therefore for the further research, it can be done in a larger context and explore the consideration of applying reliability and validity in using assessments due to the credibility of the assessment itself.

Keywords: alternative assessments, Extensive Reading, teachers’ views, assess

INTRODUCTION

Extensive Reading is different with others reading classes in which the assessment used becomes one of some differentiating aspects. While other reading classes use test as the assessment, Extensive Reading class does not use it. The example of assessment used is writing book reports after students finish reading a
book or doing presentation in which often called as alternative assessments since the format is free-response up to the reader. It is also an open-ended assessment that requires the students’ creativity in answering.

This application of alternative assessments in Extensive Reading class seems being debatable. It can be seen from two different opinions which stated that alternative assessments give negative impact for students while the other statement argued that alternative assessments are actually good enough to apply.

It is also possible that certain kinds of assessment in ER, such as comprehension questions or the requirement to write summaries, make no difference to the eventual gains in acquisition, and may even be detrimental as they demotivate students and eat into time that could be used for reading. (Prowse, 2002; Mason & Krashen, 2004; as cited by Brierley, Ruzicka, Sato, and Wakasugi, 2009)

It seems that Brierley et al. (2009) wanted to state if using alternative assessments or not will make no difference for students. Even it can demotivate students in learning and it also takes time which can be used to read. However, Janisch, Liu, and Akrofi (2007) disagreed with Brierley’s idea. He thought that alternative assessments will give positive impact for students if it is implemented in the classroom, including Extensive Reading class. Janisch, et al. (2007) suggested that “Classroom practices such as self-selection, self-reflection, and learning goals are powerful aspects of portfolio assessment and are a means for students to take control of their learning and to develop positive attitudes toward learning”. From those two different opinions, the use of alternative assessments still becomes pros and cons among the scholars.
As the example is when the researcher took Extensive Reading class, she was required to make a journal after reading a book. She had to write reading journals which consist of several aspects for each journal such as favorite parts, experiences while reading, and comparison between a book to a similar song/story; write double-entries reading journal that is responding some parts of the book; make a portfolio; and perform a mini drama. However, an issue came up that is while writing the reading journal, some of her friends did not read the whole book but reading the summary in the internet or asking their friends. The teachers seemed unaware whether the journal is their own writing or not. Teachers’ objectivity in grading students’ reading journals also became a problem since there was no assessment rubric. Besides, the levels of the book chosen by the students are different one to another. It makes the final grade seems unfair if the students who read the higher level will get the same score with students who read the lower level all the times.

In the teaching and learning process, teachers’ views will take part in it. Teachers’ views or beliefs have an important role in the class since their thought will influence the activities inside the classroom. Teacher’s thinking, planning, interactive decision making (the very act of instructing and assessing their students), and implicit beliefs are interwoven facets that impact their classroom practices every day (Bliem & Davinroy, 1997). Not only designing the classroom activities, designing assessment and how to assess students are also influenced by teachers’ views. They will use their sense and also background knowledge in developing those activities or
assessments. Moreover in alternative assessment there are various assessments that can be used instead of test.

At the end, this paper tries to reveal the teachers’ views of using alternative assessments in Extensive Reading class since the researcher felt unsatisfied to use this assessment as a student. Besides, there are various assessments that can be used instead of test that cause pros and cons on the usage of alternative assessments. By doing this research, it is expected that teachers can consider the use of alternative assessments in Extensive Reading based on the participants’ views toward the benefits and challenges of the alternative assessments application in reading class. This study will apply qualitative research by doing interview with all the teachers in Faculty of Language and Literature (FLL) of Satya Wacana Christian University (SWCU) who teach Extensive Reading in the first semester in 2015/2016. The interview questions will be developed from the research question that is “What are the Extensive Reading teachers’ views toward alternative assessments in Extensive Reading class?”

LITERATURE REVIEW

The importance of teachers’ views

Teachers’ view or some people call it as teachers’ beliefs propose as a guide to teachers’ thought and behavior (Borg, 2001 as cited by Xu, 2007). Teachers’ view
will influence their thinking ways and actions so their thought will lead what they will do in the class. Clark & Peterson (1986) as cited by Bliem & Davinroy (1997) also have the same idea with Xu (2007) that is teachers’ thoughts processes influence their actions inside the classroom. Besides, teachers’ views or teachers’ beliefs also have more influence in planning their lessons, on the kinds of decisions they make, and on their general classroom rather than teachers’ knowledge (Pajares, 1992 as cited by Xu, 2007). It is because teachers’ views are the center or key point in determining the kind of treatment should be used in the class. Teachers’ view will also influence the students’ behavior because they have already experienced many activities that are developed by teachers’ views (Vibulphol, 2004).

The use of alternative assessments

Some teachers seem only focus on the students’ products that are their test results. They might not be aware of the students learning process. That is why some experts offer alternative assessments in assessing students’ ability. Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters (1992) suggested “these new assessments stress the importance of examining the processes as well as the products of learning”. They want to emphasize that learning process is as important as the products. Going along with him, Janisch, et al. (2007) stated that “Alternative assessment is predicated on the view that learning processes are equal to, if not greater than, the resulting products”. Here, Herman, et al. and Janicsh, et al. agree that the students’ products
are not everything. Teachers should also pay attention to their process as well since the ability of each student is different one to another.

In line with Herman, et al. and Janicsch, et al., assessing the products is the same with assessing the processes; teachers should consider the validity and reliability of the alternative assessments used itself. Teachers need to make sure whether the assessments used are qualified to apply for students. Teachers should ensure that the grade or the result of alternative assessments used can give consistency or stability of students’ performance and can give accurate score of students’ performances.

**Assessments in reading class**

Assessing reading is quite difficult for teacher because reading is a complex process as Fisher (2006) said. He suggested that “Reading is a complex process in which a range of knowledge and skills are orchestrated to make meaning from text”. Reading itself has several aspects that should be noticed that are phonemic awareness, phonic, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. To assess these aspects, it is not an easy matter. Teacher should know what kinds of assessments should be used so the result will be valid and reliable.

Using test in assessing reading is not an uncommon thing because test is already used for a long time. Fisher (2006) found that “a test is the test developer’s best way of gaining information about a learner’s performance on tasks selected from
the curriculum acting as a ‘proxy’ for that curriculum”. This statement seems true because test is considered as a media to measure student’s performance after learning something whether they understand the material or not. However, not all reading classes use test to assess students. Sainsbury, Harrison, and Watts (2006) argued that “Any discussion of the validation of an assessment requires consideration of the purposes of its use and the kinds of evidence that can support its appropriateness for that purpose”. Teacher should notice and consider the appropriateness of using test or different types of assessments.

The nature of Extensive Reading

Extensive Reading is reading activity that allows students to read many books which is expected to give pleasure for the readers. Bamford & Day (1997) also suggested that “Extensive Reading is generally associated with reading large amounts with the aim of getting an overall understanding of the material”. Susser & Robb (1990) also argued that “Extensive Reading is reading of large quantities of material or long texts for global or general understanding with the intention of obtaining pleasure from the text”.

By understanding those definitions of Extensive Reading, actually Extensive Reading is appropriate to apply for college students, especially first year students. It is because they are free to choose books to read in large amounts so it will help them
to understand the materials and to find convenience in reading. Bamford & Day (1997) suggested that there are ten characteristics in Extensive Reading program:

1. Students read as much as possible
2. A variety of materials on a wide range of topics is available
3. Students select what they want to read and have the freedom to stop reading material that fails to interest them.
4. The purposes of reading are usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding.
5. Reading is its own reward.
6. Reading materials are well within the linguistic competence of the students in terms of vocabulary and grammar.
7. Reading is individual and silent.
8. Reading speed is usually faster.
9. Teachers orient students to the goals of the program, explain the methodology, keep track of what each student reads, and guide students in getting the most out of the program.
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader for students.

Rather than Intensive Reading, Extensive Reading will give more benefit for the beginner level of students. Lyutaya (2011) argued that Extensive Reading can help students to acquire language subconsciously, develop critical literacy, and gain a range of language skills. It is because Extensive Reading gives students chance to
choose their own materials and they can stop reading when they do not like the materials. Students may get a pleasure in reading so they will keep reading.

**Alternative assessments in Extensive Reading**

Extensive Reading usually uses writing journals, reflections, comparisons, summaries, portfolios, and doing presentation in the assessment (Lyutaya, 2011). Tannenbaum (1996) also suggested that oral performances or presentations, oral and written products, and also portfolios can be used for L2 students as the part of alternative assessments. The use of alternative assessments actually will help teachers to measure students’ ability and to know the development of students learning process. Moreover, students are allowed to choose any level of book they like and teachers cannot define what kind of book and what level it is. That is why alternative assessments become a helpful method to overcome the difficulties in assessing Extensive Reading.

In designing alternative assessments for students, the first step in assessment design or selection is to know the purpose of your assessment (Herman, et al., 1992). It is because the purpose of using alternative assessments will influence the validity and reliability of the result of assessing. Because of that, teachers should know which kinds of alternative assessments should be used to assess their students in Extensive Reading class. Teachers should not use any kinds of assessment as long as students get a good result.
METHODOLOGY

Context of the Study

The study took place in Faculty of Language and Literature (FLL), Satya Wacana Christian University (SWCU), Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia. This faculty had two departments of English that were English Language Education Program and English Language and Literature Program. To be specific, the researcher was conducting the study on a required course for all students of the two departments that was Extensive Reading in which this course was only offered in this faculty. Although the credits were different between English Language Education Program and English Language and Literature Program, the concept of the course was similar. Below is the description of Extensive Reading of each program.

English Language Education Program (5 credits hours):

This course strives to improve students’ motivation to read English language texts. This course will apply 10 principles of Extensive Reading as conveyed by Day and Bamford (2002). Students are required to read many texts both inside and outside the classroom according to their individual speeds and abilities. They will read to acquire general understanding.

English Language and Literature Program (3 credits hours):
The aim of this course is to arouse the student’s interests toward reading in English. By arousing their interests in reading, it is expected that they can be encouraged to read more reading materials in English. It is also that they can be aware of and also experience the benefits of reading, especially in relation to improve their reading, speaking, and writing proficiency. It will also train them to become autonomous learners that are able to complete their knowledge through reading.

**Participants**

The participants of this study were 5 the teachers who taught Extensive Reading class in first semester of 2015/2016. Two teachers (female) were from English Language Education (ELE) Program and three teachers (1 male and 2 female) were English Language and Literature (ELL) Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Length of Teaching Extensive Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yona</td>
<td>ELE</td>
<td>2 semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinta</td>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>1 semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radit</td>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>9 semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setia</td>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>4 semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hani</td>
<td>ELE</td>
<td>4/5 semesters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The kind of sampling used is a purposive sampling with criteria the participants chosen were still fresh with the activities and assessments in the previous Extensive Reading class and they knew how to assess reading skills.
Instrument

In this study, the researcher used interview as the instrument to collect data. The reason why the researcher used interview was that it was easier to gain data and the data obtained would be deeper since the participants were not many. For the interview, the researcher used semi-structured interview because it allowed for flexibility for the interviewer. The flexibility of this interview means that the interviewer could change the order of the questions to provide opportunity for follow-up questions.

Indonesian was used for the interview because it eased the researcher to collect the data such as giving the follow-up questions in the interview or in changing the order of the questions. Besides, using Indonesian also helped the researcher in transcribing the data because misperception between the researcher and the participants could be minimized.

The interview questions were focusing on teachers’ views on Extensive Reading and the alternative assessments used in Extensive Reading. There are seven questions used by the researcher.

1. How long have you been teaching Extensive Reading?

2. What do you think about Extensive Reading?

3. How do you usually assess your students in Extensive Reading class?
4. Have you ever used test to assess your students in Extensive Reading class? Why or why not?

5. What do you think about alternative/informal assessment?

6. What kind of alternative assessments that you usually use?

7. What do you think about using alternative assessments in Extensive Reading class?

Data Collection Procedures

Before the interview with the real participants, the researcher conducted a piloting with one participant who also taught Extensive Reading class in the first semester of 2015/2016. It was done in order to make sure that the interview questions were adequate and could elicit the expected answers. The piloting was also used to prepare the possibility of meeting a problem in the future interview so the researcher could find a solution or fix the problem faced during the interview.

In order to collect the data from the real participants, the researcher needed to contact and made appointment with participants chosen that were Extensive Reading teachers in the first semester of 2015/2016. It was to make sure that they were willing to be the participants of this research.

The interview took time around 15-20 minutes for each participant. The data gained was recorded and transcribed. Since the interview used Indonesian, the data also needed to be translated into English before the researcher analyzed the data.
Data Analysis Procedures

For the data analysis, after doing the interview with the participants, the researcher transcribed the interview result. The transcription model used was clean transcription that was the researcher only focused on and transcribed the content of the interview result. After transcribing, the researcher translated the transcription into English. Then the researcher did coding based on the data gained to determine the themes or heading to analyze. There were three main headings which came up after the coding.

1. Alternative assessments are in line with the nature of Extensive Reading
2. Alternative assessments could be used to strengthen students’ critical thinking
3. Some aspects in alternative assessments are still challenging

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Alternative assessments are in line with the nature of Extensive Reading

Instead of using test to assess students in Extensive Reading class, alternative assessments are often used by teachers. Based on the interview with 5 participants, all participants think that alternative assessments are suitable to apply in Extensive Reading class. Most of them stated that alternative assessments are appropriate for
Extensive Reading because it is in line with the nature of this course. Here is what Sinta thought about alternative assessments in Extensive Reading:

Sinta: Alternative assessments are very good because it is appropriate with the nature of ER. Maybe it can be applied in other courses. (Interview on January 24, 2016; my own translation)

Sinta thought that alternative assessments are good to apply in Extensive Reading since it is appropriate with the nature of this course.

A similar idea is also stated by Yona. She also agreed if alternative assessments are in line with the nature of Extensive Reading.

Yona: Alternative assessments are appropriate for ER class as it is in line with the aim of this course. Besides, ER is not a content course, a course with many theories then they have to take quiz and test, but it is a course that exposes students with stories, passages, and books so alternative assessments is suitable to apply in this course. (Interview on January 15, 2016; my own translation)

Based on the statement above, Yona mentioned that alternative assessments are appropriate to apply in Extensive Reading as it is in line with the aim of the course. Extensive Reading is also not a content course which makes students take test but it is a skill course which exposes students with reading activity. Hani also agreed with Yona that alternative assessments are more suitable than using traditional assessment.

Hani: Alternative assessment in ER is more appropriate than traditional assessment. (Interview on February 18, 2016; my own translation)
As Yona said before alternative assessments are in line with the nature of Extensive reading which is to expose students with the target language – in this case, English - by reading.

Yona: I think the aim of ER is to give more exposure of target language to students in a form of reading. (Interview on January 22, 2016; my own translation)

Instead of exposing students with the target language, Sinta also argued the purposes of Extensive Reading are to make students eager to read and to help students develop their vocabulary.

Sinta: Extensive Reading aims to make students accustomed to read and love reading so they aren’t obliged to read high level but based on their own level in order to make them learn and accustomed to read, love reading and develop their vocabulary. (Interview on January 24, 2016; my own translation)

Extensive Reading is also expected to increase students’ reading interest. This was stated by both Sinta and Hani.

Sinta: ER can increase students’ reading interest. (Interview on January 24, 2016; my own translation)

Hani: By taking ER, students are expected to increase their reading interest since they read outside the class and they can choose the books they like based on their level. (February 18, 2016; my own translation)

Besides, Sinta also defined that Extensive Reading is reading for fun that is reading to enjoy the text.

Sinta: Extensive Reading is reading to enjoy the passage, it is reading for fun. (Interview on January 24, 2016; my own translation)
Going along with Sinta, Setia and Radit also agreed that Extensive Reading is reading for fun. Because of that, they added that alternative assessments used should not burden the students and it should give more fun for the students. Here are their opinions about alternative assessments in Extensive Reading.

Setia: ... However we need to take a look at the nature of ER that is reading for fun. If they have formal test, reading in ER will not be fun anymore since they are burdened. (Interview on February 9, 2016; my own translation)

Radit: Alternative assessments in ER are a compulsory since it gives more fun. (Interview on February 3, 2016; my own translation)

Based on the data above, both Sinta and Yona actually stated the same thing that is alternative assessments are appropriate for Extensive Reading since it is going along with the nature of the course, especially the aim though their opinions are a bit different. Sinta stated if the aim of Extensive Reading itself is to make students love reading and make them accustomed to read. It is same as Shue (2003) statement. He argued that reading practices in a large quantity contributes to English language acquisition, freedom to choose the book to read will stimulate motivation to read and interesting material foster a positive attitude. On the other hand, Yona had her own opinion about the aim of Extensive Reading that is exposing students with the target language by reading. This idea is the same as Bell’s opinion (1998). He suggested that Extensive Reading has some roles, one of them is Extensive Reading can increase students’ exposure to the language. In addition, Yona also emphasized that Extensive Reading is not a content course but a skill course which gives exposure to
students with stories, passages, and books. Being exposed with many kinds of books and texts will automatically help students to achieve their language proficiency.

Giving various types of assessments such as journal, presentation (mini drama, poster, gift), discussion, oral reading report, and marathon reading/individual reading actually can also give chance to students to develop their target language. By writing journal and doing individual reading, students subconsciously learn about grammatical rules and acquire new vocabulary since they are exposed to read many kinds of books. Their writing skill will also improve since the students need to make journal every week and acquire grammatical knowledge while they read the books. Besides, by doing presentation, their speaking skill will develop because they need to present their opinion/idea/work to their friends or teacher whether it is in small group or in front of the class. At the end, their target language hopefully can be acquired by doing those kinds of assessments.

As what Sinta said, “alternative assessments enable to make student eager to read”. It is because the students need to make at least one journal every week and they have target page that should be fulfilled. Having reading diary and reading marathon as their assessment, automatically students will read many books in various topics. Students will not be able to make those assessments if they do not read many books, especially reading marathon. In reading marathon, they need to achieve minimum pages to get full point that are 1000 pages. Realizing it or not, students are forced to read and it will develop students’ desire to read like what Sinta and Hani
stated before that it can increase students’ reading interest. It is because they read books in various themes and they are free to choose what they like so it will give pleasure for students. Besides, they can also stop reading if they do not like the book. As the compliment, students also need to make reading diary after they read a book. This assessment will also encourage students to read many books.

Besides exposing students with target language and encouraging them to read, Sinta also stated the characteristics of Extensive Reading that are reading for fun which is reading to enjoy the passage. It is because they are free to choose their own level and it can increase their vocabulary. Her idea was actually similar to Bamford & Day (1997) opinion that there are ten principles of Extensive Reading. Those principles include students read in large amounts, reading materials are various, free to choose the books what students want to read, the aims are related to pleasure, and reading is used to acquire new vocabulary and learn grammar.

Based on Setia and Radit opinion that Extensive Reading is related to students’ pleasure, various tasks offered are expected not to give them burden since they do not need to memorize everything like in test. Tannennbaum (1996) offered three criteria of alternative assessments in which one of them is “emphasis is on students’ strengths (what they know), rather than weaknesses (what they don’t know)”. Based on this statement, students are given chances to explore what they have to assess. If they do what they like, the result will be better and it is also in line with the aim of Extensive Reading that is reading for pleasure. As the example, while
writing the journal, Radit asked their students to write and explain about interesting part of the book. By doing that, students are expected to get the optimal score since they do what they like and what they know.

Huerta-Macias (1995, p. 9) as cited by Tannenbaum (1996) suggested that the main goal of alternative assessments is to “gather evidence about how students are approaching, processing, and completing real-life tasks in a particular domain”. By looking at this statement, alternative assessments actually can provide the evidence learning process. As the example are journal and presentation. These two kinds of assessments are used to show their language skills that are writing and speaking skills. Besides, giving a task to students to read as many graded reader books as possible also enables teacher to push students to read. It is because students have a minimum required number of pages that should be achieved to get full point. They also need to record their progress so that teacher can check it out.

Having mentioned previously that alternative assessments offer various kinds of assessments, it is perceived that alternative assessments can be considered as a good media of assessing students. Alternative assessments are considered as an acceptable assessment in which its appliance can be adjusted with the characteristics of Extensive Reading as it offers many kinds of assessments. That is why most of the participants agree that alternative assessments are an appropriate assessment to apply in Extensive Reading since it is in line with the nature of the course.
Alternative assessments could be used to strengthen students’ critical thinking

Students often think that assessment is usually thought as a thing that is used as a media to achieve score or grade. It is not wrong actually because the aim of assessing is to assess or to define the score. Yet it is not that simple, especially when teachers use alternative assessments to assess their students. Alternative assessments are not only used to get students’ grade, but it also can be used to strengthen students’ critical thinking. It is like Yona’s opinion toward alternative assessments in Extensive Reading.

Yona: I think alternative assessments can cover/assess student’s performance than formal assessment. Test can only check student’s comprehension, but if using presentation, for example, teacher can take a look at their interpretation, their creativity, and their critical thinking. By using alternative assessments, not only cognition and intellect but also their creativity and collaborative learning are being assessed. (Interview on January 22, 2016; my own translation)

According to Yona, alternative assessments can be used to check students’ performance rather than formal assessment. It is because alternative assessments do not only focus on the comprehension, but it can cover other aspects such as students’ interpretation, creativity, critical thinking and collaborative learning.

A similar idea is also stated by Radit.

Radit: Once in a while, formal assessments are important especially for core elements such as who the character is, what his job is, where he lived, etc. However for interpretation, alternative assessments are more suitable. (Interview on February 3, 2016; my own translation)
Radit thought if formal assessment was appropriate to assess core elements that are something which have exact answer and alternative assessments are more appropriate for something interpretative which answer can be different from one student to the others.

Both of them seemed agree if alternative assessments enable teachers to assess students’ interpretation instead of core elements in which emphasize students’ answer only. Different from alternative assessments, formal assessments are often indicated with pencil and paper. Formal assessments do not give too much attention to the process of how they get the answers. As long as the answers are correct, they will get full point. However, by using alternative assessments, teacher should consider on how they get their answers and the reasons.

Like Yona said before, alternative assessments are not only focusing on the students’ cognition but also focusing on their interpretation and creativity that can develop students’ critical thinking. To develop critical thinking, the application of alternative assessments in Extensive Reading seems suitable. Extensive Reading trains students to think critically since the students not only require reading but also comprehending the passage and be aware toward issues appeared. Graves et al. (2000) as cited by Lyutaya (2011) stated

*critical literacy* requires more than passively absorbing what is on the printed page; it requires attaining a deep understanding of what is read, remembering important information, linking newly learned information to existing schemata, knowing when and where to use that information, using it appropriately in varied contexts in and out of school, and communicating effectively with others.
Critical literacy in Extensive Reading however can be developed by applying alternative assessments. It is because alternative assessments give more chances to students to explore their interpretation or creativity in doing their task while using test teachers can only take a look at the result.

Looking at the participants’ opinions toward alternative assessments, it seems that they agreed if alternative assessments can be used to strengthen critical thinking. Students will not be able to do data analysis, discussion, and reflections if they do not have upper-level thinking skill. Alternative assessments apparently have criteria that can help student to improve their critical thinking since teachers will not only take a look at the result only but also the process of doing the task. Buzzetto-More and Alade (2006) stated that “Successful assessment is an ongoing cycle that involves the identification of outcomes, the gathering and analyzing of data, discussion, suggesting improvements, implementing changes, and reflection”. Teachers will not know students’ ability to think critically if they only take a look at the outcomes. That is why teachers need to take a look on learning process in which alternative assessments give that chance for teachers to do it.

By following the students’ process of learning, actually it will give teachers opportunities to observe their progress in developing critical thinking. Teachers may give comments or suggestion in their journal, for example, to help them think beyond. It is because sometimes students will only write the basic or common things in their journal. Teacher can push them to increase their interpretation ability so what they
write will be meaningful. Besides, having presentation can also increase students’ critical thinking. It is because students, realizing it or not, are forced to master all the material that will be presented. They also need to think what questions that may come up after the presentation.

Janish, Liu, and Akrofi (2007) also suggested “Learners as constructors of knowledge”. As a constructor of knowledge, they have responsibility to master the material. They need to comprehend the material by themselves. How fast and how deep they understand it, their personal thinking skill becomes the determining factor. However, to check their comprehension, instead of using test, alternative assessments are also compatible. If test can only evaluate the final grade, alternative assessments can evaluate the whole performance. Teachers can identify their critical thinking through comprehension and creativity of their works.

Some aspects in alternative assessments are still challenging

Although alternative assessments can be adjusted with the nature of Extensive Reading, it does not mean that alternative assessments are aside from some problems in the application. Some participants apparently find a challenge to deal with appreciating students’ works. They find it difficult to define the objectivity since there is no ‘right/wrong’ answer. The things being assessed are mostly about students’ opinion, creativity, and performance. Here is what Sinta said about the challenge she faced during using alternative assessments in Extensive Reading class:
Sinta: I find no problem in assessing presentation as it already has the rubric so there is not much challenges. It is only how to appreciate their creativity. The challenge is actually how objective we are in assessing them. (Interview on January 24, 2016; my own translation)

According to Sinta, actually she found that appreciating students’ creativity became a problem while she used alternative assessments. Regardless, appreciating creativity is actually related to how objective teachers should be in assessing their students. It is because there is creativity aspect in the assessment used that should be assessed, such as in poster presentation and writing love letter. Sinta also explained before that she found it difficult to define the objectivity itself.

Radit had similar problem to Sinta’s that is about how to appreciate students’ work which is involving the language used by the students. The problem was usually related to grammatical error. Sometimes he found it (students’ work) interesting but they used the wrong form. However, it gave him hesitation since the one being assessed is not about the grammar but their interpretation.

Radit: Time and language used become a challenge in using alternative assessments. Although we are actually excited “oh the letter is interesting”, but when we read it there are several grammatical errors. It is actually related to the ego, it means “why the answer is like that”. However, we cannot do that as the thing being test is not the grammar instead of how they give interpretation toward the book.

How to appreciate while using alternative assessments seems really becoming a challenging matter. It is because the assessments used were various in which most of them were not about definite answers.

By looking at the assessments used, such as book reports and love letter, it is clear that those assessments are using students’ opinion and creativity. Book report
makes students give their comments toward the book they read and love letter makes them write creatively. Those things actually are not easy to measure since it is more about general impression of teachers. It is like what Yona said about assessing book report.

**Yona:** All presentation and continuous assessments use rubric as a guide to assess. However for book report, the assessment is more about general impression. (Interview on January 22, 2016; my own translation)

General impression however will influence the way teachers assess their students’ work. It will define their objectivity and how they appreciate their students’ work. However, defining objectivity and appreciating students’ work are two things which are related to each other. While teachers want to determine the objectivity in assessing, they will consider how they will appreciate them. On the other hand, when teachers come to aspect on how they will appreciate students’ work, the objectivity will also appear.

However, defining objectivity is not an easy matter likewise in appreciating someone’s creativity since it relates to someone’s judgment or sense in which one to the other may be different. Sometimes it might evoke the subjectivity which can influence the credibility and quality of the assessment. Rust (2002) stated that “We actually assess students for quite a range of different reasons – motivation, creating learning opportunities, to give feedback (both to students and staff), to grade, and as a quality assurance mechanism (both for internal and external systems)” . Like what Rust said, one of the reasons in assessing is to show the quality assurance which can
be seen from the reliability of the assessor. Rust (2002) also argued that “If a particular assessment were totally reliable, assessors acting independently using the same criteria and mark scheme would come to exactly the same judgment about a given piece of work”. As what Radit said before, giving judgment toward students’ work sometimes hesitating. He already had the criteria of assessing. However, there is a thing which should not be assessed became a problem, for example the grammatical errors in the love letter. Sometimes this thing can affect the way teacher assess the students’ work. That is why teachers need to be consistent while assessing. It is because when the scoring is inconsistent, it means that the subjectivity has already come up.

However, as a teacher, there are several things to remember while giving assessment to students. There are several objectives that should be fulfilled so that the assessments used are considered as a good assessment. Kellough and Kellough (1999) as cited by Buzzetto-More and Alade (2006) identified seven purposes if assessment:

- Improve student learning;
- Identify students’ strengths and weaknesses;
- Review, assess, and improve the effectiveness of different teaching strategies;
- Review, assess, and improve the effectiveness of curricular programs;
- Improve teaching effectiveness;
- Provide useful administrative data that will expedite decision making; and
- To communicate with stakeholders.

Regardless, appreciating students’ work and being objective in assessing related to the first and second point. How come assessments can improve students and identify
students’ strengths and weaknesses if the validity of an assessment is still being doubted.

The objectivity matter actually becomes a severe problem since it is related to quality of the assessments like what Rust (2002) said before. Moreover most of the assessments used in Extensive Reading involve teachers’ perception. That is why while assessing students’ works, there should be an assessing guideline so the points will be assessed is clear. Saddler and Andrade (2004) offered that rubric is quite useful to determine the objectivity. “A rubric articulates the expectations for an assignment by listing the criteria, or ‘what counts,’ and describing levels of quality from excellent to poor” (Saddler & Andrade, 2004). By having the criteria and the grade, objectivity in using alternative assessments can be reduced so the result will be valid and reliable. Petkov and Petkova (2006) as cited by Buzzetto-More and Alade (2006) added that “the use of rubrics helped to make assessment more uniform, better communicate expectations and performance to students, measure student progress over time, and help to lay the foundation for a long-term assessment program that combines projects and portfolios”. That is why using rubric may reduce subjectivity in assessing since the things being assessed are clear and uniform.
CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to investigate Extensive Reading teachers’ views toward alternative assessments in Extensive Reading class. According to the interview results, all the participants agree if alternative assessments are considered as an appropriate assessment for Extensive Reading class.

As found in the findings, alternative assessments are appropriate to apply in Extensive Reading since the principles of alternative assessments are in line with the nature of Extensive Reading. The aims of Extensive Reading, that are exposing the students with target language and encouraging the students to love reading, can be achieved by using alternative assessments which are various. The various assessments itself also will not give burden to the students since they do not need to memorize or remember everything while doing their tasks and it is going along with the characteristics of Extensive Reading, reading for fun. Besides, alternative assessments can also strengthen students’ critical thinking especially for Extensive Reading as it aims to train students to think critically by reading activity. It is because alternative assessments provide many kinds of assessments that can make students develop their thinking level. If the students have high level of critical thinking, they are expected to improve their analytical skill and creativity in doing their tasks. However, there are some aspects that become the challenges while using alternative assessments. Those aspects are defining objectivity and appreciating students’ works. It can be a matter in using alternative assessments because there is no clear rubric as
the guideline for some assessments. Teachers are only using their general impression while assessing.

Based on the result, there is a need for teachers to overcome the challenges of using alternative assessments so it will give good quality of assessment. Teachers can use assessment rubric as a guideline in assessing yet they need to discuss first the points assessed before they use it in class. Teachers can share the aspects assessed, such as the creativity, language, and content, so they will have the same perception.

This study is only limited to one particular context with five participants only which means that this study covers a small scope. Therefore for the next research, the researcher suggests to enlarge the context of the study so the data gained will be more varied. Besides, the further research can also discuss about the reliability and validity (Herman et al., 1992) of the assessments in alternative assessments due to the various kinds of assessments that can be used.
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