

USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to know whether or not using authentic materials can improve reading comprehension of the grade eight students of SMP Negeri 16 Palu. This research used a quasi-experimental research design. The research population was the grade eight students of SMP Negeri 16 Palu which consisted of 112 students. The sample was selected by using a purposive sampling technique. The number of the sample was 22 students of class VIII A as the experimental group and 22 students of class VIII E as the control group. The data were collected through pre-test and post-test about reading. The students were assigned some tasks consisting of 10 multiple-choices and 5 essay questions. The result of this research showed the mean deviation score of the experimental group was 89.45 and 79.27 for the control group. Therefore, the t-counted value (6.43) is higher than the t-table value (2,018). It is proved that the hypothesis is accepted in which there is development of the students after getting the treatment. It means that the use of Authentic Materials can improve students Reading comprehension. The implication of this finding is that the teachers need to use authentic material as the media in teaching reading.

Keywords: Authentic Materials; Improving; Reading Comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Reading stands as one of the fundamental language skills, and its acquisition is essential due to the numerous advantages it offers to individuals, particularly in terms of information acquisition from the materials they read. To develop proficient reading skills, learners must focus on several key components, including mastering the alphabet, enhancing fluency, expanding vocabulary, and, notably, honing their comprehension abilities. The latter, comprehension, is of paramount importance as it requires students to engage their cognitive faculties to grasp and make sense of the content when reading a text.

Reading comprehension refers to the cognitive process by which readers grasp the content within a written text in order to extract information. As observed by Efriza, Dony, Mukhaiyar, and Desmawati in 2013 (p. 66), this process involves comprehending the text to capture all relevant information. Additionally, reading comprehension entails the critical examination and assessment of the authors viewpoints expressed in the written material to derive insights. In essence, reading comprehension entails readers comprehending the entirety of the information contained in the text, which encompasses the author's perspectives.

According to the educational guidelines (Kurikulum 2013) from the Department of Education and Culture, the process of learning English encompasses more than just reading: it primarily revolves around the comprehension of written material. This understanding of reading serves as the primary objective in the teaching and learning of reading in schools. Secondary school students are expected to master the fundamental skill of comprehending various text types, including narratives, procedures, and descriptions.

The educational goals associated with teaching reading involve a diverse set of skills, including the ability to extract information from the text, discern the social of the text, identify its structural components, and comprehend the linguistic elements within it. In the specific context of this research, the selected material is harmony with the current curriculum followed by the school, emphasizing narrative text. Consequently, the content presented in this study is consistent with the educational materials stipulated in the school's curriculum.

At junior high school level, students are introduced to short story texts or short essays. Such texts require understanding. Students are categorized as good readers if they are able to understand text information. After making initial observations at SMP Negeri 16 Palu, researchers identified several things that had the potential to be improved. The first problem is the lack of reading material provided by teachers properly and appropriately. A second concern is students' need for increased interest in learning new vocabulary.

By seeing the problems above, the researchers tried to do an experiment to improve the students' reading comprehension using an appropriate reading material for the students. The researchers proposed that the use of authentic materials is a good way to attract the students' attention of the lesson and to help the students in comprehending reading text. Authentic materials defined as "real-life texts, not written for pedagogical purposes" (Wallace in Berardo, 2006). The sources of authentic materials that can be used in the classroom are infinite, but the most common

are newspaper, magazine, story book and internet. Authentic materials should be the kind of material that students will need and want to be able to read when travelling, studying abroad, or using the language in other contexts outside the classroom.

The effectiveness of using authentic materials should ideally represent the types of texts students encounter and want to read when they travel, study abroad, or use the language in real-life situations outside the classroom. In this research, the materials used were authentic materials, one of the materials chosen was a story book. Specifically, this research focuses on narrative texts, because the use of authentic materials simplifies the process of understanding and analyzing the content of storybooks.

Based on the explanation above, it is hoped that the effectiveness of authentic material in improving reading comprehension can be known. This study tested the use of real ingredients to see if the results were the same. Overall, the researchers conducted his research using authentic material to improve the reading comprehension of eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 16 Palu.

METHOD

The researchers uses a quasi-experimental research design in this study. This design aims to show a connection between an independent and a dependent variable. With this design, the researchers can change the conditions in the teaching and learning process. There are two classes involved: the experimental class and the control class. Both classes take a pre-test and a post-test. However, the experimental class gets authentic materials as part of the treatment, while the control class uses a traditional strategy. Both classes also take a post-treatment test to see if authentic materials effectively improve the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 16 Palu during the treatment. The research design used in this study is based on Arikunto's proposal from 2020:

$$O^1 \quad X \quad O^2$$

Where:

O^1 : Pre-test for experimental group

O^2 : Post-test for experimental group

X : Treatment

The study includes 112 eighth-grade students from SMP Negeri 16 Palu. Sugiyono (2016) explains that the sample is a portion of the number and characteristics found in the population. In this study, the sample consists of two classes: Class VIII A, which has 22 students, and Class VIII FE, with 22 students. The sampling method employed in this research is purposive sampling, which, as described by Sugiyono (2016), involves specific considerations. The researchers chose purposive sampling because the selection of samples in this study was based on careful considerations made among the available population. These considerations were informed by a recommendation from the English teacher at SMP Negeri 16 Palu, who suggested students facing similar reading skill challenges. Consequently, both Class VIII A and Class VIII E were selected, with Class VIII A serving as the control group, where the authentic material method was used, and Class VIII E as experimental group, where the conventional method was applied.

A variable is a feature or wait of an individual or an organization that a researchers can measure or observe, and it differs among the individuals or organizations being studied (Creswell, 2011). In this research, the researchers frequently manipulates or measures both independent and dependent variables to investigate cause-and-effect relationships. As per the research title, the variables involved are categorized as dependent and independent. Following Creswell's explanation (2011), "An independent variable is a characteristic or trait that has an influence on or affects the outcome or dependent variable." The independent variable is the cause, and its value remains unaffected by other variables in this study. According to Creswell (2011), "A dependent variable is a characteristic or attribute that relies on or is influenced by the independent variable." The dependent variable is the effect, and its value changes in response to changes in the independent variable.

The survey instrument in this study was utilize a reading comprehension test, designed to gauge students' reading comprehension. Two assessments was be conducted: a Pre-test and a Post-test. Each test includes a narrative text followed by 10 multiple-choice questions and 5 essay questions. The researchers created this test using authentic materials as the foundation.

Table 1 - Scoring System of the Tests

No	Kind of test	Number of Item	Correct	Incorrect	Blank	Maximum Score
1	Multiple choices	10	1	0	0	10
2	Essay	5	3	1	0	15
Total						25

Table 2 - Distribution of Essay Test

Test type	Score	Explanation
Essay	0	The students do not answer the questions.
	1	The students answer the questions but the answer is incorrect.
	2	The students answer the questions correctly but not grammatically.
	3	The students answer the questions with the correct answer and grammatically.

In the pre-test, the researchers was administering a multiple-choice test to the students. The pre-test aims to assess the students' existing knowledge of reading comprehension.

The treatment was spend six sessions, with catch session incorporating six Different themes. The researchers was employing real-life materials as teaching resources. The intention behind using these authentic materials is to enhance students' reading comprehension. The researchers utilizes original materials to aid students in reading and comprehending the text provided. Students

are encouraged to read the text and confirm their understanding of its context. This step is taken to ensure that students can read the text with clarity. The researchers prompts students to identify text images both before and after reading the text. Subsequently, students are asked about any unfamiliar words, and finally, a discussion on the text takes place between the researchers and the students, with answers being collected.

Table 3 - Scoring System of the Tests

No	Kind of test	Number of Item	Correct	Incorrect	Blank	Maximum Score
1	Multiple choices	10	1	0	0	10
2	Essay	5	3	1	0	15
Total						25

Table 4 - Distribution of Essay Test

Test type	Score	Explanation
Essay	0	The students do not answer the questions.
	1	The students answer the questions but the answer is incorrect.
	2	The students answer the questions correctly but not grammatically.
	3	The students answer the questions with the correct answer and grammatically.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researchers provided the data of the research conducted in this chapter. Data collection for this study commenced on January 9th, 2024, and ended on February 8th, 2024. A pre-test and a post-test were used as the research instrument in this study. The result of the pre-test was used to find out the basic knowledge of the students' reading comprehension before treatment. The result post-test was used to find out students' reading comprehension after treatment. The researchers then analyzed the results to find out a significant difference of the students' reading comprehension pon narrative text.

The table below illustrated that the acquisition of students' pre-test scores of the experimental group varied substantially. With the result, one student received the highest score 56, and two received the lowest score 32. While, the result of the control group showed five students received the highest score 56 and two students received the lowest score 36. On the other hand, SMP Negeri 16 Palu utilizes a standard score of 70, and there were no students passing it. It demonstrates that many students in the experimental class find it difficult to achieve the standard score, even the maximum score of 100.

Table 5 - The result of pre-tests of the Experimental Group

NO	Student's Code	Type of Test		Raw Scores	Maximum Scores	Standard Scores
		Multiple Choice	Essay			
1	E1	7	3	10	25	40
2	E2	5	3	8	25	32
3	E3	5	3	8	25	32
4	E4	6	3	9	25	36
5	E5	7	4	11	25	44
6	E6	7	3	10	25	40
7	E7	8	4	12	25	48
8	E8	8	3	11	25	44
9	E9	7	4	11	25	44
10	E10	7	3	10	25	40
11	E11	8	3	11	25	44
12	E12	8	5	13	25	52
13	E13	8	5	13	25	52
14	E14	9	5	14	25	56
15	E15	6	4	10	25	40
16	E16	6	4	10	25	40
17	E17	6	5	11	25	44
18	E18	7	5	12	25	48
19	E19	7	5	12	25	48
20	E20	8	3	11	25	44
21	E21	9	4	13	25	52
22	E22	7	5	12	25	48
Total						968

Table 6 - The Result of Pre-test of the Control Group

NO	Student's	Type of Test	Raw	Maximum	Standard
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	Code	Multiple Choice	Essay	Scores	Scores	Scores
1	C1	9	5	14	25	56
2	C2	9	5	14	25	56
3	C3	9	4	13	25	52
4	C4	9	5	14	25	56
5	C5	8	5	13	25	52
6	C6	8	4	12	25	48
7	C7	8	4	12	25	48
8	C8	7	5	12	25	48
9	C9	9	4	13	25	52
10	C10	7	5	12	25	48
11	C11	7	3	10	25	40
12	C12	8	4	12	25	48
13	C13	7	5	12	25	48
14	C14	8	5	13	25	52
15	C15	9	3	12	25	48
16	C16	6	3	9	25	36
17	C17	6	3	9	25	36
18	C18	8	5	13	25	52
19	C19	9	4	13	25	52
20	C20	9	5	14	25	56
21	C21	9	5	14	25	56
22	C22	8	4	12	25	48
Total						1088

Based on the table above, the highest score of both groups was 56. After getting the total score of the students, the researchers computed the students' mean score by using the formula below:

$$\begin{aligned}
 M x &= \frac{x}{N} \\
 &= \frac{968}{22} \\
 &= 44
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 M y &= \frac{y}{N} \\
 &= \frac{1088}{22} \\
 &= 49.45
 \end{aligned}$$

The researchers discovered a difference in the mean scores of the experimental and control groups after comparing the findings of the two groups. The experimental group scored 44, whereas the control group scored 49.45. It demonstrates that the control group's average is greater than the experimental group. The difference, however, is not significant. It explains why their knowledge is at the same level, but the control group outperforms the experimental group. It can be examined

from the acquisition of the highest score, and the scores from other students in the control group were mostly higher than the experimental group.

Following the completion of the teaching and learning process in the experimental group, the researchers administered a final test to both groups. The post-test went ahead on February 8th, 2024. The post-test results are depicted in the table below:

The first table shows the post-test result of the experimental group. The highest score was 96, and the lowest was 80. In terms of the school's passing grade, all of the students passed the post-test, with two students obtaining score 80, two students obtaining score 84, eight students obtaining score 88, six students obtaining score 92, and the rest obtaining score 96. The results demonstrated that the student's reading comprehension and revealed that each student has made a significant comprehension since the pre-test.

The second table shows the post-test result of the control group. According to the table, the highest score was 88 and the lowest was 72. In terms of school passing grades, all of the students passed the post-test, with one student getting an 88, with seventeen students obtaining score 80, two students obtaining score 76, and the other two receiving 72. The results revealed that the student's reading in the control group did not significantly.

Table 8 - The Result of Post-test of the Experimental Group

NO	Student's Code	Type of Test		Raw Scores	Maximum Scores	Standard Scores
		Multiple Choice	Essay			
1	E1	9	15	24	25	96
2	E2	10	13	23	25	92
3	E3	9	13	22	25	88
4	E4	9	13	22	25	88
5	E5	10	14	24	25	96
6	E6	8	15	23	25	92
7	E7	9	12	21	25	84
8	E8	9	13	22	25	88
9	E9	10	12	22	25	88
10	E10	10	12	22	25	88
11	E11	10	14	24	25	96
12	E12	8	15	23	25	92
13	E13	7	13	20	25	80
14	E14	7	13	20	25	80
15	E15	7	14	21	25	84
16	E16	8	14	22	25	88
17	E17	8	14	22	25	88
18	E18	9	14	23	25	92

19	E19	10	13	23	25	92
20	E20	7	15	22	25	88
21	E21	9	14	23	25	92
22	E22	10	14	24	25	96
Total						1968

Table 9 - The Result of Post-test of Control Group

NO	Student's Code	Type of Test		Raw Scores	Maximum Scores	Standard Scores
		Multiple Choice	Essay			
1	C1	9	11	20	25	80
2	C2	9	11	20	25	80
3	C3	7	12	19	25	76
4	C4	7	13	20	25	80
5	C5	8	12	20	25	80
6	C6	7	13	20	25	80
7	C7	8	14	22	25	88
8	C8	7	13	20	25	80
9	C9	7	13	20	25	80
10	C10	9	11	20	25	80
11	C11	7	13	20	25	80
12	C12	8	11	19	25	76
13	C13	8	12	20	25	80
14	C14	7	11	18	25	72
15	C15	9	11	20	25	80
16	C16	7	13	20	25	80
17	C17	8	12	20	25	80
18	C18	9	11	20	25	80
19	C19	7	11	18	25	72
20	C20	9	11	20	25	80
21	C21	8	12	20	25	80
22	C22	8	12	20	25	80
Total						1744

Experimental Group:

$$Mx = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

$$Mx = \frac{1968}{22}$$

Control Group:

$$My = \frac{\sum y}{N}$$

$$My = \frac{1744}{22}$$

$$Mx = 89.45$$

$$My = 79,27$$

The researchers discovered a difference in the mean score between the experimental and control groups following treatment after comparing the results of two groups. The experimental group received a score of 89.45, whereas the control group that did not get any treatment received a score of 79.27. There was a considerable difference in the students' mean scores before treatment, with the experimental groups' mean score on the pre-test being 29.81. There was an immediate improvement after treatment in the experimental group, with a rising score of around 44 points from the initial test.

DISCUSSION

This research aims to find out whether the use of authentic material can improve students' reading comprehension. Based on the result of these findings, the students' levels of understanding were improved by using authentic materials as the teaching media. They can understand the literal meaning of Reading narrative text. The description of data collected through pre-test and post-test as explained in the previous study shows that the use of Authentic Materials gave a positive impact to students' reading comprehension. In this case students' reading comprehension was developed. It can be seen in the percentage of students' scores of pre-tests and post-test. The students' scores have improved after using the Authentic Materials in the class.

Based on the explanation above, this research finding supports some previous researchers. First by Cahyani (2015), the result of her research showed the mean score 13.25 for the experimental group and 7 for the control group. This means authentic materials are also effective in supporting comprehension of the students' low achievement. Second id from Desitarahmi (2013), her research showed that the use of authentic materials is effective to improve students' reading comprehension. The use of these materials is effective. After the actions were implemented, the students showed some improvements. They could focus on the lesson and actively participate in the teaching and learning process. They had more interest and motivation in reading. All the various activities made the class atmosphere enjoyable. Lastly, Manning (2016), the result of her research indicated that the students' reading comprehension achievement in the experimental group is higher than the students' reading comprehension achievement in the control group.

Reading authentic material texts are often more interesting because they reflect real life phenomena. The students have less pressure while reading the text because the txt that was given to them was a narrative short text that related to them. The existence of pictures in the text made the students a lot easier in understanding the text. The application of authentic material made the students able to understand a text. Especially narrative text. They also enjoyed doing the tasks considering their participation in group discussion and individual performance. It is better than the

existing material from the packed book that is usually used for the students with unfamiliar text which is not authentic.

Furthermore, selecting a proper authentic material is very important. This is aimed in order for the researchers to deliver a contextual reading material for the students. For eighth graders one of the reading materials that is often used is narrative text. The narrative text that was used in this research is an authentic material from Disney "363 Story for Boys". The familiarity of the stories with the students' daily life is one of the main reasons for using the book. Also, in terms of syllabus relevancy, the stories from the book are strongly considered to be relevant with teaching and learning process for the eighth grader in SMP Negeri 16 Palu.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis, the researchers can safely conclude that the application of Authentic Material on narrative text significantly improves the students' reading comprehension at SMP Negeri 16 Palu. It can be seen by comparing t-counted (6.43) is much higher than t-table (2.018). It can be seen as well though by comparing the result of the students' pre-test and pots-test of both groups. The mean of the post-test of the experimental group has significantly increased to (89.45). There is a significant difference of the mean between the pre-test and post-test of students' comprehension after the treatment. By implementing an authentic material method by using narrative text on an experimental group is better than the mean of the pre-test before implementing the authentic material.

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