

THE USE OF LITERATURE-BASED INSTRUCTION TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION AND WRITING ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS

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Abstract: This research aimed to investigate whether or not there were significant differences in reading comprehension and writing achievement between the eighth grade students of SMP Islam Az-Zahra 2 Palembang who were taught by using Literature-Based instruction and those who were not. This study used one of the quasi experimental designs: pretest-posttest design. The sample was selected purposively from the whole population based on their reading comprehension scores. Forty six eighth graders were selected as the sample and equally divided into experimental and control groups. Pretest and posttest were given to both groups. Using paired sample statistics, the results of the experimental group showed that the students' reading comprehension and writing achievement—significantly improved. Furthermore, the result of the independent t-test showed that with mean difference of reading comprehension was 8.609, t value 11.111 ($p < 0.05$). Moreover, the mean difference of writing achievement was 6.8043, t value 10.478 ($p < 0.05$).

Keywords: *Literature-based instruction, Reading Comprehension, Writing Achievement.*

English is a global language which serves as a means of communication in many countries in the world. According to the British Council (2010), at least one billion people speak or are trying to speak English and about 300 million people are actively studying the English language.

In Indonesia, English is learned as a foreign language because Indonesians communicate to other people by using Bahasa Indonesia. Based on KTSP 2006, the main purpose of English teaching in Indonesia is to teach students acquiring ability in reading, listening, speaking and writing in English.

Celce-Murcia (1991) states that the interaction between reading and writing skill has often been a focus on the methodology of teaching especially EFL classroom. Teaching reading and writing skills are important in EFL learning because through reading, students are able to write and through writing they are able to communicate. Kellog and Davis (2008) assert that if students cannot read and write, they will not struggle and will potentially fail in learning.

According to Wisconsin State Reading Association (1993), there are five fundamental relationships between reading and writing. First, reading and writing are interdependent. Readers would be at a loss if there were no writers to produce texts. Writers would be equally lost if there were no readers. Second, reading and writing are personal and social activities and are driven by a need to communicate. Writers need responses to the text they are writing; readers need to respond what they are reading and get responses to their interpretations of the text. Third, reading and writing are reciprocal processes. Writers can learn much about writing by reading. Likewise, readers can learn much about reading by writing. Fourth, reading and writing are parallel processes. Both are purposeful, dependent on background knowledge and experiences, and focused on the construction of meaning. Last, both reading and writing naturally intersect in the process of learning about the world.

Through reading, EFL students can improve their knowledge that they do not know before about their target language, for example, about short stories from other countries. They will know

about such things as daily activities in relation to knowing cultures. Chastain (1988) states that reading is a basic and complementary skill in language learning. Not only reading skill should be mastered by students, but also writing skill. Writing is one of the important things in education and it is necessary for students. For example in writing a message for someone, writing assignment from teacher or writing an email for friends. In line with that Langan (2001) states that writing skill is very important for two reasons. First, writing is a basic need for English learners to support their academic success. A good writing skill will help learners to do their written assignment. Second, writing is a practical need to support their future career. According to Abisamra (2001), writing allows us to express ourselves. Through writing we can inform others, carry out transaction, persuade, infuriate, tell how we feel, come terms with problems and learn to shape our thoughts, our ideas, and our lives. Having good writing skill gives us many opportunities to get a job.

Teaching English in Indonesia is a challenging duty for teachers of English because there are some problems which are related to it. OECD/PISA (2012) reported that even the reading ability of Indonesian students in Bahasa Indonesia is still low. The score on the students' ability on the overall reading scale was 396 while the OECD average score was 496. This mean score puts Indonesia at 60th place out of 65 countries and more than half of Indonesian students are proficient only at or below level 1. It also happened in South Sumatera, Ministry of Education and Culture (2012) reported that the illiteracy rate was about 2.49% or about 117.554 people who were illiterate in 2010 and there were about 102.969 people who were still illiterate in 2011. In addition, Diem and Novitasari (2012) found that reading comprehension achievement of fifth graders in Palembang was still low. It was shown by the mean score of the reading achievement test that was only 30.30 and it was below the standard score and the mean score of the writing achievement test was 51.00. It is assumed that students may get more difficulties in their later education at junior high school. It is proved by Andriani (2013) who found that the mean score of reading comprehension achievement at junior high school in Rawa Bening was 58.93.

The second problem is writing skill. Kim and Kim (2005) state that learning the process of writing is a difficult skill for students to develop and learn, especially in EFL context, where exposure to English is limited to a few hours per week. However, it is difficult for students to learn and master writing skill. It related with a survey conducted by Alwasilah (2001) who concluded that (a) writing is the most neglected subject in school because the language skill is the most difficult to learn by students and also to teach by teacher, (b) writing lessons teach grammar and theories rather than the practice of writing, (c) in general the students' writing assignments are not returned to them.

Students' writing skill is still in low level. A study that was done by Hardiyanti (2011) found the mean score of writing at junior high school in Palembang was 53.5. It showed that the mean score of writing is under KKM. It is in line with Faizal reports (2012) that there are only few Indonesian science papers published in international journals from about 40.000 scientific international journals which are currently available in the world today. These facts show that Indonesian students' writing must be improved in order they are able to add the scientific international journals in the future.

For the purpose of this study, the writer had done a preliminary investigation at SMP Islam Az- Zahra 2 Palembang focusing on the students' reading comprehension and writing skill. The result showed that reading comprehension of the students were in level 2 which was very poor (46%), poor (28%), average (22%) and good (4%). Writing skill was also still low; they still got confused about the topic sentence, support sentence and sometimes they did not know the vocabulary of the words, therefore the writers will conducted this study in that school in order to solve their problems.

Celce-Murcia (1991) suggests that EFL students need to be encouraged to a variety of self-help strategies which can help them with the specific purpose of learning new content areas through reading. English teachers can solve their students' problems through Literature-Based Instruction in order to improve their reading comprehension and writing achievement. Teaching literature in the foreign language classroom is important. According to Sell (2005), literature in the target language may enhance language learning through narrative structures like orientation, complication and resolution. Then literature written in the target language or translated into the

target language may give learners information into other cultures, and the last literature's contents may well be truer to life and more relevant to learners than the typical textbook topics.

According to Zarrillo (1989), Literature-Based Instruction can use novels, informational books, short stories, poems and plays in EFL teaching and learning strategies. Arya et al., (2005) describe that the Literature-Based classroom as one strategy in which instructors usually use authentic fiction and nonfiction trade books as a central feature of reading instruction.

Furthermore, according to Chen (2006), the use of literature helped EFL students especially to enhance their knowledge about their target language. In line with that, Hismanoglu (2005) found that literature plays an important role in the English programs of many non English speaking countries. Yilmaz (2012) also reported that literature and language can serve as the complement to each other, which is conducive to the development of language skills.

Based on the background above, the writer applied the Literature-Based instruction to improve students' reading comprehension and writing achievement of eighth grade students of SMP Islam Az-Zahrah 2 Palembang. The focus of this research was to answer the following questions: (1) Was there any significant improvement in reading comprehension and its aspects of the eighth grade students of SMP Islam Az Zahra 2 after they were taught by using Literature-Based Instruction?, (2) Was there any significant improvement in writing achievement and its aspects of the eight grade students after they were taught by using Literature-Based Instruction?, (3) Was there any significant difference in reading comprehension between the students who were taught by using Literature-Based Instruction and that of those who were not by using Literature-Based Instruction?, (4) Was there any significant difference in writing achievement between the students who were taught by using Literature-Based Instruction and that of those who were not taught by using Literature-Based Instruction?

Method

Research Design

This study applied one of the quasi experimental designs, the pre and post-test design. There were two groups in this study; the experimental and control groups. Both groups were given pretest and posttest, yet only the experimental group was given treatment using Literature- Based instruction for 26 meetings.

Population and Sample

This study involved 46 students of SMP Islam Az-Zahra 2 Palembang in the academic year 2014/2015. They were chosen as the sample of this study on the basis of their reading level tested by using reading tests taken from IRI Burn and Roe. The result of the test showed that they were all in Level 2 and categorized as having poor reading achievement. The students involved in this study were taught by the same English teacher and were not having English course. Those 46 students were then assigned to be in two groups equally (23 students in the experimental and 23 students in control groups).

Instrumentations

Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) by Burn and Roe

There was a preliminary reading test which was administered to the whole population which was taken from IRI by Burn and Roe (1985). The test was in form of essay questions consisting of six aspects; main idea, detail, sequence, cause effect, inference, and vocabulary. The IRI test was administered which consists of five graded passages (level 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5), with 46 reading comprehension questions, the result showed that they were in level 2. There were 2 students in below level 1, 7 students in level 1, level 2 consisted of 21 students, level 3 consisted of 14 students and level 4 consisted of 2 students. The writer label the total below level 1 and level 1 as very poor category and it consisted of 9 students, level 2 as poor category consisted of 21 students and level 3 and level 4 as average category consisted of 16 students.

Reading Test

The reading comprehension test was in the form of multiple choice questions consisting of 50 questions taken from several sources in which the readability of the passages in the test was

below level 1, level 1, level 2, level 3 and level 4. Before the test was tried out to the non sample students, two raters helped the writer checking the level of appropriateness and difficulty of the test. The writer also did the analysis of difficulty, discrimination, and distracters based on the result of try out. The result of the try out test showed that there were 34 valid questions with the reliability of Alpha Cronbach coefficient was .908.

Writing Test

In the writing test, the writer gave some stories such as Malin Kundang, The legend of Toba lake and Cinderella for 45 minutes. Then the students chose one title of the story and rewrite the story by using their own words in 100-150 words. There were five aspects measured by raters (1) Focus, (2) Elaboration, (3) Organization, (4) Convention and (5) Integration.

Data Analyses

Reading tests was scored by using the scoring system converted into percentages ranging from 0 to 100 percent for descriptive purposes. The achievement of the students' reading comprehension was categorized as follows: 86 – 100 (very good), 71 – 85 (good), 56 – 70 (average), 41 – 55 (poor), and ≤ 40 (very poor) (*FKIP UNSRI*, 2013, p. 15). Meanwhile, for the writing, two raters with three criteria (a graduate from strata 2 of English study program, having more than 5 years teaching experiences, and achieving TOEFL score above 525) helped the writer score the students' writing achievements.

Furthermore, to see whether there were significant improvements in students' of reading comprehension and writing achievement both in pretest and posttest were analyzed using the paired sample t-test. Independent sample t-test was used to see the significant differences in reading comprehension and writing achievement in post-test and gain score between experimental and control groups. To see the contribution of each aspects to reading comprehension (total) and the contribution of each aspect to each elements to writing (total), stepwise regression analysis was also done after getting the variables which correlated significantly. The computation was conducted by using SPSS 22.0.

Findings

Descriptive Statistics

The pre-test was given to the students both in experimental and control groups before the treatment conducted and the post-test was given to the students after accomplishing the treatments using Literature-based instruction. The scores of reading and writing from the whole sample (n=46) were categorized into 5 levels of achievement in order to know the level of achievement of the students. In purposing the categorize, the researcher converted the raw score into 10-100. The results revealed that as a whole, reading comprehension of the students was in average level, with the mean of 55.88 and writing achievement was in poor level, with the mean of 42.135.

To sum up the descriptive results of reading and writing of the whole sample. Table 1 presents the score distribution of each part.

Table 1. Score Distribution of All Sample Students' Reading Comprehension and Writing Achievement (N=46)

Category	Mean	Frequency and Percentage	SD
READING			
<i>Level of Achievements</i>			
Excellent	88.24	1 (2%)	-
Good	79.41	2 (4%)	4.158
Average	65.97	21 (46%)	5.842
Poor	46.67	15 (33%)	4.432
Very Poor	34.03	7 (15%)	4.450
Total Mean	55.88	46 (100%)	14.907

WRITING

Level of Achievements

Excellent	-	-	-
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Good	-	-	-
Average	59.26	9 (19%)	1,887
Poor	49.99	15 (33%)	3,672
Very Poor	29.76	22 (48%)	7,371
Total Mean	42.13	46 (100%)	13,573

In detail, the condition of students' reading comprehension was as follows: excellent was 2%, good was 4%, average was 46%, poor was 33% and very poor 15%. For the condition of writing achievement, there was no students belonged to excellent and good categories (0%). In the average categories, there was 19% students, while there were 33% and 48% in poor and very poor categories, respectively.

Table 3 presents the score distribution of each group before and after intervention. It can be seen that after intervention reading comprehension of the students (N=23) in experimental group was on average level (mean score= 68.54) meanwhile in control group was on poor level (mean score= 43.22). For writing achievement, in experimental group was on poor level (mean score= 53.47) meanwhile in control group was on very poor level (mean score = 30.79). The score that the writer used was raw score.

Table 2. Score Distribution of Reading Comprehension and Writing Achievement (N=23 each group)

C A T E G O R Y	Experimental Group						Control Group					
	Mean		Frequency		SD		Mean		Frequency		SD	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
E	-	-	-	1(2%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
G	-	-	-	1(2%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
A	-	66.95	-	21 (91%)	-	5.803	-	55.88	-	1 (4%)	-	-
P	45.10	-	15 (65%)	-	3.796	-	44.67	46.66	16 (69%)	15 (65%)	3.078	4.442
V P	37.87	-	18(78%)	-	1.043	-	36.98	34.03	7(31%)	7(31%)	1.577	4.450
Total	42.59	68.54	23(100%)	23(100%)	4.680	7.703	42.33	43.22	23(100%)	43.22	4.499	7.753
Writing												
E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
G	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
A	-	59.26	-	9 (39%)	-	1.887	-	-	-	-	-	-
P	43.30	49.75	1 (4%)	14 (61%)	-	3.69	42.500	47.500	2(9%)	2 (9%)	1.131	8.202
V P	30.60	-	22 (96%)	-	5.890	-	27.54	29.20	21 (91%)	21(91%)	4.913	7.042
Total	31.15	53.47	23(100%)	23(100%)	6.334	5.644	28.843	30.791	23(100%)	23(100)	6.370	8.714

The Results of Paired Sample and Independent Sample t-Test

In order to run a t-test, the two assumptions of normal distribution of scores and homogeneity of variances had to be met. Since all the p-values of the normality and homogeneity tests exceeded .05, it can be concluded that the data on pretest, posttest, and gain scores of reading, and writing were both normal and homogeneous. The score that the writer used was raw score.

Table 3. Mean Difference of Pretest and Posttest of Reading Comprehension and Writing Achievement and its Aspects in Experimental and Control Groups

	Pretest	Posttest	Mean	Mean	Mean			T
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ASPECTS	EXP	CON T	EXP	CON T	difference Pre and Posttest Experimental within	Difference Pre and Posttest Control Within	Difference of Posttest Between Experimental & Control	T Value and Sig. Between pre and post Exp within	T Value and Sig. Between pre and post cont within	Value and Sig. Posttest Between Exp & Control
Reading _Tot	14.48	14.39	23.30	14.70	8.82	0.31	8.609	14.66 4 .000	.696 .494	11.11 1 .000
Main Idea	2.30	2.13	4.04	2.43	1.74	0.3	1.069	8.259 .000	1.283 .213	7.610 .000
Detail	2.43	2.30	3.91	2.48	1.48	0.18	1.435	6.554 .000	2.612 .016	6.649 .000
Inference	2.43	2.61	3.13	2.48	0.7	-0.13	.652	2.577 .017	-1.367 .186	2.755 .008
Cause Effect	2.04	2.26	3.61	2.43	1.57	0.17	1.174	8.899 .000	1.447 .162	5.745 .000
Vocabulary	2.91	2.78	4.91	3.65	2.00	-0.13	2.261	10.06 0 .000	-1.141 .266	9.728 .000
Sequence	2.35	2.30	3.70	2.22	1.35	-0.08	1.478	6.916 .000	-.810 .426	6.198 .000
Writing _Tot	9.348	8.652	16.04 3	9.239	6.69	0.58	6.804	15.58 7 .000	1.834 .080	10.47 8 .000
Focus	2.348	2.630	3.913	2.522	1.56	-0.10	1.391	13.16 5 .000	-.961 .347	8.345 .000
Support	1.913	1.630	3.478	1.870	1.56	0.24	1.608	9.529 .000	1.800 .086	7.925 .000
Organization	1.913	2.152	3.283	1.348	1.37	-0.80	1.934	8.082 .000	-6.075 .000	11.78 8 .000
Convention	2.087	1.065	2.870	2.239	0.78	1.17	.6304	4.720 .000	6.750 .000	2.678 .010
Integration	1.261	1.174	2.500	1.261	1.23	0.08	1.239 1	6.676 .000	1.283 .213	6.166 .000

Literature-Based instruction significantly improved the students' reading comprehension. This could be seen from the results of paired sample t-test that there were significant improvements made by the experimental group students in English literacy achievement (mean difference = 8.826, t value = 14.664, Sig. = .000). On the contrary, the students in control group did not make any significant improvement in reading comprehension the mean difference = .304, t value = .696, Sig. = .494). In detail, they also did not make any significant improvement in the aspects of each aspects but only detail improved significantly. (see Table 3)

For writing, the mean difference was 6.695., t value = 15.587, and Sig. = .000. Then, for five aspects of writing, experimental group also show significant improvement in all aspects with the order from the highest to lowest results as follows: (1) focus = 0.89 (2) support and integration = 0.78, (3) organization = 0.60, (5) convention = 0.43 But in the control group, the mean difference was 5.870, t value = 1.834, and Sig. = .080. Then, for five aspects of writing, experimental group also show significant improvement in all aspects with the order from the highest to lowest results as follows: (1) convention = 1.17 (2) support (0.24) (3) integration = 0.08 (4) organization = -0.80, (5) focus = -0.10. Besides, the results of posttest and the gain score between the experimental and the control group show significant difference with t value of posttest = 4.628 p<.000 and t value of the gain score = 4.999 p<.000. (see table 3)

The Interpretation of The Study

In this study, Literature-Based Instruction was implemented as one of approach that the researcher believed improving the students' reading comprehension and writing achievement. After the treatment through Literature-based instruction, there was evidence scores significantly increased from pretest to posttest. The improvement for reading comprehension of the students in experimental group was significant. They could reach Average, Good and Excellent level in the posttest. It is believed that it was caused by being exposed by the strategy used during the treatment, literature-based instruction can improved reading comprehension of the students because students read many reading material such as short stories, fable and folktale. Arya, et al. (2005) describe that the Literature-Based classroom as one of strategy in which instructors usually use authentic fiction and nonfiction trade books as a central feature of reading instruction.

The result of paired sample t-test of reading comprehension in experimental group showed that there was a significant improvement, since the result of the pre-test in reading comprehension was dominated by poor level. The improvement can be seen from the mean scores of experimental group after having the treatment. It is believed this is caused by the students' being exposed by the strategy used during the treatment. Kush and Watkins (1996) assert that the exposure of reading material is a factor that influences the reading comprehension.

In contrast with the finding from the experimental group, the result of paired sample t test in control group showed all of the aspects were not significant except detail. Probably, the students in control group get easier the specific information from the text and easy to found out the answer of the questions in the text therefore detail aspect affected the significant improvement. According to Cooper, Warncke, and Shipman (1988), information in the text refers to the literal comprehension.

The highest improvement in reading aspects were vocabulary, main idea and detail. It was assumed that the activities of the students during the treatment of Literature-based instruction was to find out the the reading materials which were relevant to the topic of the investigation. Then, the students were assigned to read the text then gave mark in the difficult vocabulary of the text before reading in order the students did not have any difficulties when they did reading. If they had trouble, they were able to open dictionary and asked their friend who knew the meaning of the words. In line with that, Ur (1999) asserts that literature increases vocabulary mastery and improved reading skill. In line with that, Roser, Homan and Farest (1990) reported that literature based can make students respond to such a program in the same positive ways as any students were enthusiasm for books, share ideas and with growth in language and literacy. The aspect of reading that was least improved significantly in experimental group was inference. It was probably, they still got confused about the moral value or message from the story. In line with that, Cain and Oakhill (1999) found in their study that struggling readers just focus on figuring out the unknown words and not on attending to the text which help them to make inferences.

The result of Independent Sample T-test posttest of reading comprehension showed that there was a significant difference between the post-test in experimental and control groups. The difference can be seen from the mean scores between post-test of experimental and control groups. The result of stepwise regression analysis showed that main idea gives much contribution to the students' reading achievement. This might happen because during the treatment the students were able to get the main point and make conclusion from the text. Arya, et al. (2005) state that literature-based instruction frequently includes experiences such as shared, guided, and independent reading, as well as interactive, guided, and independent writing activities as aids to students' literacy development.

In terms of writing, there was a significant improvement made by the students in the experimental group. Before the treatment, most of the students were in very poor level. Meanwhile, after the treatment, most of them could reach Poor level. It was because during the treatment, students had a lot of opportunities to express their feelings, opinions, on what they read in written form. Oster (1989) states "literature helps students to write more creatively". In line with that, Ur (1999) assert that literature gives big effect in discussion or writing.

The result of paired sample t-test of writing achievement in experimental group showed that there was a significant improvement, since the result of the pre-test in writing achievement was dominated by very poor level. The improvement can be seen from the mean scores of experimental

group after having the treatment. They could reach poor level. It is believed this is caused by the students' being exposed how to write a good narrative text during the treatment. In contrast with that, the finding from the result of paired sample t test in control group showed all of the aspects were not significant except organization and convention. Probably, the students in control group also got the information from their teacher how to write a narrative text.

The aspects of writing were also improved and focus, support and organization had the higher improvement. It happened because during the treatment, the researcher explained how to write story of the text based on its text organization. It is also believed that writing about a text improves comprehension, as it helps students make connections between what they read, know, understand, and think (Carr, 2002). According Fisher, Frey and Lapp (2012) writing a narrative text which follows a typical plot structure to make the reader easier in understanding the stories.

The result of Independent Sample T-test posttest of writing achievement showed that there was a significant difference between the post-test in experimental and control groups. The difference can be seen from the mean scores between post-test of experimental and control groups. The result of stepwise regression analysis showed that support gives much contribution to the students' writing achievement. It happened because during the treatment the students focus on the the information of the text.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the results and interpretations of the study, there were some important points that can be concluded. First, at the end of the study, it was found that there was significant difference in reading comprehension between the students who were taught by Literature-based instruction and those who were not. In addition, experimental group showed significant improvement for reading (total) and all its aspects from the highest to the lowest was mentioned as follows: vocabulary, main idea, cause effect, detail and sequence. Meanwhile, there was no significant improvement in reading comprehension except detail in control group. Second, in writing achievement, there was significant difference between the students who were taught by using Literature-based instruction and those who were not. Experimental group showed significant improvement for writing (total) and all its aspects from the highest to the lowest was mentioned as follows: focus, support, integration, organization and convention. Meanwhile, there was no significant improvement in reading comprehension except organization and convention in control group.

Furthermore, the researcher suggest that Literature-based instruction can be used as one of good approach for English learners in improving their students' reading comprehension and writing achievement. The researcher faced many problems during teaching the students by using this approach. Therefore, in order to make this approach more effective to be applied in the future, the researcher gives some suggestions. First, students should listen carefully and pay attention when the teacher explain the material, be active in teaching learning process especially when they did not understand about the material. Second, teacher and future researcher should provide many genre of reading materials in their teaching and learning process. The last, library in school should provide good reading materials in order to attract the student's interest.

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