

Teaching Listening through Islamic Storytelling

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to find out whether or not the use of Islamic storytelling is effective way to improve students' listening comprehension and to find out the students' interest during the process of teaching and learning through Islamic storytelling. The study employed quan-qual method with the quasi-experimental design. The research was conducted to the second year students of Al-Akhyar Islamic School. The data were collected by using listening test, questionnaire and interview. The gathered data from listening test was tabulated and calculated by using t-test in SPSS program, while the collected data from questionnaire and interview were analyzed using Likert scale and open coding. The findings shows that the Islamic storytelling group outperformed the general storytelling group in posttests, indicated by the result of the t-test value ($0.00 < 0.05$). It proves that the use of Islamic storytelling in learning listening is effective to increase students' listening comprehension. Moreover, the result of the questionnaire indicates that students are highly interested in learning listening through Islamic storytelling. Further analysis through interview revealed that there are four main reasons that foster the students' interest in learning through Islamic storytelling, they are; learning through Islamic storytelling is fun and interesting activity, the selected story is suitable to the student' needs, the story contain meaningful lesson which relevant with their life as a Muslim, and the existence of an illustration pictures.

Keywords: Islamic storytelling, listening comprehension and Interest

INTRODUCTION

The use of storytelling in teaching listening becomes popular method especially for young learners. Different with conventional technique that seems like a one way communication where teacher comes to the class and plays the audio tape that she or he has already designed for listening and then asks the students some questions related to the topic, which is more likely testing not teaching. Learning through storytelling allows students to develop their receptive language in an entertaining and meaningful context. The teacher can be a storyteller and the students as listener or the students be a storyteller and share their story to their friends.

Storytelling in learning has the criteria as an effective teaching toward the learners. It is supported by several teaching and learning theories, as follows; First, storytelling create a joyful and meaningful learning situation. An entertaining effect from the story effectively reduces the students' anxiety (Richter and Koppet, 2000). Second, it attracts students on a deeper level that many teaching methods could not (Rossiter, 2002). The power of the story that induce the reader or listener feelings is the key toward the effectiveness of storytelling because learning linked with emotions are easily kept and retrieved (Weiss, 2000). Third, it has an advantage toward the active situational created (Richter & Koppett, 2000). The interaction between the storyteller and the listener engage the student to be an active participant in the learning process.

Applying storytelling, the storytellers should be selective in choosing the story. In Indonesia, storytelling was dominantly used world popular story, fairy tale and legend. Although there are good moral values reflected through fairy tales or world popular story, in other side, it is also endangered for young Muslim learner. There some stories carry the origin value or culture from its country which is not match with Muslim life. In this case, the teacher plays a vital part to filter the western culture and value which not suitable for Muslim students by selecting suitable story.

Concerning toward this issue, Ain (2014) showed a good example of English material that contains Islamic values by using prophets' stories as learning sources at English lesson. As a result, Islamic storytelling could be solution towards this issue. By doing so, the students can learn from noble character of the prophet that retain their Islamic identity, so they will not be easily influenced by a negative western values and at the same time, they will have a good English ability as a modal to face their future.

In line with the statement above, the researcher conducted a research by using authentic materials containing Islamic values and messages in teaching listening. In this case, the researcher used Islamic stories through storytelling technique in teaching listening. It is expected that the use of Islamic storytelling can be a good alternative way in fusing Islamic values to the English teaching material. There are many great stories documented in the holy Quran and authentic hadiths. The

combination of meaningful story and storytelling result in an interactive teaching that fun for both teachers and students.

Based on the illustration above, the purpose of this investigation was to find out:

1. Whether or not the use of Islamic storytelling is effective to improve the students' listening comprehension of the second grade students of SMPIT Al Akhyar Islamic School.
2. The students' interest during the process of teaching listening comprehension towards the use of Islamic storytelling.
3. The reasons beyond the students' interest towards the use of Islamic storytelling.

METHOD

The study employed quan-qual method with quasi-experimental design, where it consisted of two groups of students. The research was held in Al -Akhyar Islamic school. The population of this research was the second year students of SMPIT Al-akhyar Islamic School in academic year of 2017/2018. The total number of population was 54 students. The sampling technique of this research was total sampling, which means all of the population were taken as sample. Then, to decide the experimental and control group of the research, the researcher used random sampling technique. After the drawing, the class VIII (Al-Hamid) was chosen as experimental group which consisted of 27 students. Meanwhile, class VIII (Al-Majid) was taken as control group also consisted of 27 students.

In collecting the required data to answer the research questions, the researcher used three kinds of instruments; they were listening test, questionnaire, and interview. Listening test were used to answer the first research question, which was to investigate the students' listening comprehension in learning through Islamic storytelling. There were two tests in this research, pre-test and post-test, where the pre-test was given at the first meeting to measure the students' prior listening comprehension, while the post-test was intended to find out the improvement of the treatment.

The questionnaire was given in order to answer the second research question that was to find out the students' interest towards the use of Islamic storytelling. The obtained data from respondent was analyzed and tabulated based on the degree of Likert scale. The questionnaire consisted of 10 positive statements and 10 negative statements.

The interview was used to answer the third research question related to the reasons beyond the students' interest in learning through Islamic storytelling. The researcher

used semi-structured interview. The interviewees were selected purposively by taking 40% of students which categorized as highly interested. From 17 students, 7 students were selected as the representative.

RESULTS

1. Students Listening Comprehension

Table 1: The Percentage of Students' Pre-test Score.

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Experimental group</i>		<i>Control group</i>	
		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Excellent	96 – 100	–	–	–	–
Very good	86 – 95	–	–	–	–
Good	76 – 85	1	3.7%	2	7.4 %
Fairly good	66 – 75	5	18.6%	4	14.9 %
Fair	56 – 65	18	66.6%	19	70.3%
Poor	36 – 55	3	11.1%	2	7.4%
Very poor	< 35	0	–	–	–
Total		27	100 %	27	100 %

Table 1 illustrates the pretest score of the students in both groups. The percentage of the experimental group, those who classified as “good” is 1 (3.7%) student, “fairly good” is 5 (18.6%) students, “fair” is 18 (66.6%) students and “poor” is 3 (11.1%) students. While in control group, those who classified as “good” is 2 (7.4%) students, “fairly good” is 4 (14.9%) students, “fair” is 19 (70.3%) and “poor” is 2 (7.4%) students. Based on the table above, it is indicated that both of the group still need to be improved.

Table 2: The Percentage of Students' Post-test Score.

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Experimental group</i>		<i>Control group</i>	
		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Excellent	96 –100	2	7.5%	–	–
Very good	86 – 95	11	40.7%	4	14.7%
Good	76 – 85	11	40.7%	6	22.3%
Fairly good	66 – 75	3	11.1%	15	55.5%
Fair	56 – 65	–	–	2	7.5%
Poor	36 – 55	–	–	–	–
Very poor	< 35	–	–	–	–
<i>Total</i>		27	100 %	27	100 %

Based on the Table 2. In the experimental group, out of 27 students, 7.5% or 2 students obtain “excellent” classification. 40.7% or 11 students obtain “very good” classification. 40.7% or 11 students obtain “good” classification and 11.1% or 3 students obtain “fairly good” classification. While, in the control group, out of 27 students, there are none of them obtain “excellent” classification. 14.8% or 4 students obtain “very good” classification. 22.2% or 6 students obtain “good” classification. 55.5% or 15 students obtain “fairly good” classification and 7.5% or 2 students obtain “fair” classification. Based on the table above, it is indicated that both of the group are improved.

Table 3. Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Students’ Pre-test and Post-test

GROUP	Mean Score		Standard Deviation	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Experimental	60.18	83.74	6.09	7.46
Control	61.07	74.18	6.44	8.33

In regarding with the result of the students’ the listening achievement, the means score of the students’ pretest and posttest of both group can be as the reference. In pre-test, the mean score of experimental group is 60.18 and the standard deviation is 6.09, while the mean score of control group is 61.07 and the standard deviation is 6.44. The result of the student’s for both experimental and control group are categorized as fair classification. Conversely, the result of the posttest shows an improvement after the treatment conducted. The mean score of experimental group is 83.74 and the standard deviation is 7.46, while the mean score of control group is 74.18 and the standard deviation is 8.33. The experimental group gets higher score compared with the control group.

Table 4. The Independent t – test Value of Students’ Achievement

Variables	t-test value	Level of significance (α)	Remarks
Pretest of control and experimental group	0.605	0.05	Not significant
Posttest of control and experimental group	0.000	0.05	Significantly different

In regarding with the result of the students’ the listening achievement, further analysis through independent t-test was applied to know whether or not there is a difference from both groups. Based on the t-test value in the pretest, it can be seen that there is no significant difference between the groups’ score because the t-test value is higher than α score ($0.605 > 0.05$). Based on that finding, thus, indicates that sample condition in pretest is homogenous or both of groups have the same prior knowledge. Therefore, the research proceeded on both groups.

Conversely, the result of the t-test value in posttest, it is found that the result score is lower than the alpha score ($0.00 < 0.05$). It proves that after giving the treatments, the students' listening achievement of both groups is significantly different. This finding indicates that teaching listening through Islamic storytelling is more effective than general storytelling.

2. Students' Interest

The questionnaire and interview are given to the students of experimental group in order to know their interest toward the use of Islamic storytelling in learning English listening skill.

a. Questionnaire

Table 5. The Percentage of Students' Interest

Interval Score	Category	Result	
		F	Percentage
85 –100	Very high	17	63%
69 –84	High	10	37%
53 –68	Moderate	0	0
37 –52	Low	0	0
20–36	Very low	0	0
Total		27	100

From the result analysis of the questionnaires distributed to the experimental group, the interest of the second grade students of Al-Akhyar Islamic School was categorized as very high and high. Out of 27 students, there were 63% or 17 students showed a very high interest and 37% or 10 students were showed a high interest. Therefore, it can be indicated that all of the students in the experimental group which were taught through Islamic storytelling were highly interested in learning. It can be seen in the table below.

b. Interview

The analysis of interview then reveals the reasons beyond the students' interest in learning through Islamic storytelling. They were;

1) *Enjoyable and interesting learning activity*

Based on the interview, all of the students agreed that learning through Islamic storytelling is interesting and enjoyable activity. The combination of Islamic stories and storytelling allows students to develop their listening skill in an entertaining and

meaningful context. If the students are interested, they will be successful in the learning process no matter how difficult the listening material might be. For instance, Student 4 says:

“Bagi saya storytelling itu menyenangkan, enak pada saat diceritakan dan membuat kita santai. Storytelling jg dapat mengasah pendengaran saya, hal ini jg baik untuk orang yang jarang mendengarkan cerita”. [“For me storytelling is exciting, it is nice when we listen to the story and I fell comfortable. Islamic storytelling can enhance my listening skill, it is also good for students who rarely listen to a story”]. (Interview/December 6th 2017).

Student 1 also states:

“Kalau pake storytelling ini lebih mudah dipahami karna kita bisa relaks lagi, lebih santai, lebih enjoy belajar, tidak terlalu tegang, hati juga enak belajar”. [“Learning through storytelling is easier to understand because the learning situation are relaxing, enjoyable, without tension] (Interview/December 6th 2017)

2) Meet the students’ needs

The second reason why Islamic storytelling can help the students in learning listening better is because it is suitable with their needs. In applying storytelling, we must be open minded and carefully analyze the selected story, because considering students’ needs in the teaching material selection for EFL class is very important. For instance Student 3 states:

“Menurut saya Islamic Storytelling itu sangat penting dan sesuai kebutuhan kami sebagai siswa sekolah islam terpadu karna tidak hanya mempelajari ilmu duniawi tapi juga ilmu tentang akhirat”. [“In my opinion, Islamic storytelling is very important and suitable with our necessities as students of Islamic integrated school because we do not only learn about general knowledge, but also knowledge about life in hereafter”]. (Interview/December 6th 2017).

In line with Student 3, Student 7 states:

“Penerapan Islamic Storytelling sesuai dengan kebutuhan siswa di Al-Akhyar Islamic School karna sekolah ini berbasis islam. Selain itu, banyak anak-anak jaman sekarang tidak mengetahui cerita-cerita dari nabi yang terdahulu, mereka hanya tahu tentang cerita-cerita kartun. Hal ini sangat bermanfaat terutama untuk siswa-siswa disini”.

[The use of Islamic Storytelling is suitable with the necessity of the students in Al-Akhyar Islamic School because it is an integrated islamic school. Now, there are many students who do not know the stories of the prophets, they only know about

cartoon movie. This is very useful to students in Al-Akhyar]. (*Interview/December 6th 2017*)

3) Meaningful and relevance stories

The students showed a great interest in Islamic storytelling because this story was real and written in the holy Quran and an authentic hadith. They realize that as a Moslem, it is important for them to know more about Islamic story. Through this story the students learn the history of the prophets. As a result, the students listen to the story enthusiasm. For instance, Student 2 says:

“Dalam pembelajaran Islamic Storytelling ini saya merasa belajar bahasa Inggris itu lebih efektif dan efisien karena setelah mendengar cerita, ceritanya itu bisa diambil amanatnya. Ketika belajar seperti ini saya pun diajarkan bagaimana menyembah kepada Allah SWT dan menjauhi segala larangannya”. [“In learning through Islamic storytelling, I feel learning English is more effective and efficient because after listening a story, we can learn and get a messages from the story. We can also learn how to worship Allah Swt and avoid His prohibition”] (*Interview/December 6th 2017*)

In line with the statement, Student 6 states;

“Sebagai orang muslim kita harusnya lebih tahu cerita Islam, kan melalui cerita Islam kita bisa tahu perjalanan nabi-nabi mulai awal hingga akhir. Kalau cerita dongeng itu cerita yang tidak nyata atau hanya dibuat-buat”. [“As a moslem we should know more about Islamic story, we can learn the history of the prophets from the beginning till the end. Conversely, fairy tale or legend is an unreal story or fiction”] (*Interview/December 6th 2017*)

4) The existence of an illustration pictures

The fourth reason why the students like to use Islamic storytelling is because it contains an illustration pictures which help them to understand the story better. According to the students, it is difficult for them to learn only through audio, the use of an illustration pictures is very useful. Students 7 stated:

“Kita dapat meningkatkan kemampuan mendengar Bahasa Inggris melalui storytelling ini karna selain mendengarkan apa yang diceritakan, kita juga bisa melihat gambarnya sehingga kita lebih memahami isi cerita tersebut”. [“We can enhance our listening skill through storytelling because not only listen to story but al/so we can see the ilustration pictures, so that we can understand the story better”]. (*Interview/December 6th 2017*)

In line with the statement, Student 6 states;

“Penggunaan Islamic Storytelling dengan menampilkan gambar-gambar lebih mudah dipahami”.

[“The use Islamic Storytelling by illustration pictures are easier to understood”]
(Interview/December 6th 2017)

DISCUSSION

The research objectives in this study were concerned with the use of Islamic storytelling on the listening comprehensions of the students and their interest towards the use of Islamic storytelling. The results indicate that both Islamic storytelling and general storytelling groups have positive effects on the students’ listening comprehension; however, the comparison through independent t-test between these two groups shows that the superiority of Islamic Storytelling toward general storytelling is proven. This finding is in line with the results of other studies carried out previously by other researchers who tried to investigate the effect of using storytelling on listening skills such as Hemmati et al (2015) and Abu Skhela (2010) which found that storytelling method was effective in improving the students’ listening comprehension.

In relation with the students’ interest, the result of the questionnaires show that the interest of the second grade students of Al-Akhyar Islamic School towards the use of Islamic storytelling is categorized as very high and high. According to Ainley et al (2002), individuals show more tenacity, commitment, and positive attitude toward tasks that they are excited in. From this point, it can be indicated that the high interest of the students in experimental group in learning listening through Islamic storytelling is the key point of the successfulness of their achievement.

Then, further analysis through interview reveals the reasons beyond the students’ interest in learning through Islamic storytelling, they are;

The first reason is that Islamic storytelling is enjoyable and interesting learning activity in the English teaching and learning process. The fact that relaxed environment created by stories and the emotions evoked by them can contribute to remove affective filters in second language learning. Weiss (2000) stated that the association of learning with emotions induced by stories result in a better learning output.

The second reason why Islamic storytelling can help the students in learning listening better is because it is suitable with the students’ needs. Considering students’ needs in the teaching material selection for EFL class is very important (Gebhard, 1989, Cray

(1988). The disparity between students' expectations in relation to their needs and interests can result in students' dissatisfaction, which might imply failure on a listening course. Conversely, interest in the themes might make the learning process more engaging and successful.

The third reason is that Islamic storytelling also has meaningful and relevance stories. By listening to the stories, the students can differ between good and bad deeds. The moral value which reflected through the stories makes the Islamic storytelling relevant with the life of students of Al Akhyar Islamic School. The purpose is to lead the students to understand that the listening process will contribute to their knowledge. It is supported by the research finding of Sandaran and Kia (2013) that the students showed high of interest, motivation and attention if they are taught about positive values in life.

The fourth reason why the students like the use Islamic storytelling is because it contains illustration pictures which help them to understand the story better. According to the result of the students' interview, they felt difficult in understanding the event of the story completely through audio, the use of pictures is very useful. The storytelling with pictures not only assists them in learning but also can provoke mood and emotion which stimulate them in learning. It is supported by the research finding of Rasul et al (2011) that the use of audio visual aids makes teaching and learning process more effective.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

At the end, the current research has brought out enough indication to come to the conclusion that the use of Islamic storytelling has positive effect on the learners' listening comprehension and interest. In other words, students who took part in the Islamic storytelling were able to get better progress in their listening comprehension.

The result of this research covers the effectiveness of Islamic storytelling in enhancing students' achievement and interest in learning listening becomes a good reference for teachers to apply Islamic storytelling. It is also as alternative solution toward the issues of the needs of English material which contain Islamic values faced by teachers and students in the integrated Islamic school, Islamic boarding school and Madrasah.

This research was limited to the two groups at Smpit Al-Akhyar Islamic School Makassar and the results cannot be seen as universal but rather as an image of what the situation that represented at integrated Islamic school. For further research, it is recommended that more researches should be investigate a larger number of the students for longer period of time.

Furthermore, more researches about the use of Islamic storytelling should be conducted to the others skills or elements, for example; speaking, reading, writing, structure or vocabulary with more specific and deeper analysis to reveals the aspects and how it can affect students' achievement and interest in learning.

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