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TEACHING LISTENING THROUGH ISLAMIC STORYTELLING IN INDONESIAN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CONTEXT

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were to find out whether or not the use of Islamic storytelling is effective in improving students' listening comprehension and to find out the students' interest during the process of teaching and learning through Islamic storytelling. The study employed mix-method design. The participants of the study were eight years 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 results of the study showed that the Islamic storytelling group outperformed the general storytelling group in posttests and it was indicated by the result of the t-test value ($0.00 < 0.05$). It proves that the use of Islamic storytelling in learning listening was effective to increase students' listening comprehension. Moreover, the result of the questionnaire indicated that students were 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: learning through Islamic storytelling is a fun and interesting activity; the selected story is suitable with the student's needs; the story contains meaningful lessons which are relevant with their life as a Muslim; and the existence of an illustration picture.

Keywords: Islamic storytelling, teaching listening comprehension

Introduction

The use of storytelling in teaching listening becomes a popular method especially for young learners. Different from conventional techniques that seem like a one-way communication where the 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 than teaching. Learning through storytelling on the other hand, allows students to develop their receptive language in an entertaining and meaningful context. The teacher can be a storyteller and the students as listeners or the students can be a storyteller and share their story with their friends.

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

In Indonesian teaching and learning contexts to date, the use of storytelling in teaching listening is still dominated by the use of world popular stories, fairy tales, and legends. Although there are good moral values reflected through fairy tales or world popular stories, on the other side, it may have some contents which are not good for young Muslim learners. Some stories carry the origin value or culture from their country which is not in line with Muslim life. Concerning this issue, Ain (2014) showed a good example of English material that contains Islamic values by using prophets' stories as learning sources in English lessons. As a result, Islamic storytelling could be a solution toward this issue. By doing so, the students can learn from the noble character of the prophet that retains 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.

There are several studies have been conducted to find out the effectiveness of the application of storytelling in teaching listening comprehension. The results of the study showed that it is effective to improve the student listening comprehension (e.gHemmati, Gholamrezapour, &Hessamy, 2015), improve the student interest and motivation (e.gSandaran& Kia,2013) and could make the learning process to be more effective (Rasul, Bukhsh,&Batool, 2011). All those studies applied popular stories, fairy tale or legend. There is no study especially in Indonesian context, on the other hand have been applied to assess the use of Islamic storytelling in teaching listening. In line with the statement above, this article would like to investigate:

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.

Research Method

The study employed mixmethod research design. Listening test, questionnaire, and interview were used to collect data. Listening test were used to answer the first research question. The questionnaire was given to answer the second research question, and interview was used to answer the third research question. The participants of this research were the second year students of SMPIT Al-Akhyar Islamic School in academic year of 2017/2018. The quantitative applied quasi-experimental design consisted of two groups of students. The total number of population was 54 students. The study applied total sampling technique. In deciding the experimental and control group, the study used random sampling technique. All experimental groups (27 students) completed the questionnaire and eight of them were selected purposively to participate in the 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.

Results and Discussion

Students Listening Comprehension

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

Classification	Score	Experimental group		Control group	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
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.

Classification	Score	Experimental group		Control group	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
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	–	–	–	–
Total		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-testvalue	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

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.

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 interview responses reveal the reasons beyond the students' interest in learning through Islamic storytelling, as follows:

1) Enjoyable and interesting learning activity

Based on the interview, all students agreed that learning through Islamic storytelling is interesting and enjoyable activity. For instance, Student 4 says:

For me storytelling is exciting, it is nice when we listen to the story and I feel 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:

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. For instance, Student 3 states:

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 argues:

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. Nowadays, 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. For instance, Student 2 says: *"In learning through Islamic storytelling, I feel learning English is more effective and efficient because after listening a story, we can learn and get 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;

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 6 stated: *"The use Islamic Storytelling by illustration pictures are easier tunderstand"* (Interview/December 6th 2017). In line with the statement, Student 7 states:

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).

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, 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 to the students' interest, the results 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. Further analysis through interview reveals the reasons beyond the students' interest in learning through Islamic storytelling, they are; (1) 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 interest 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. 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 last reason why the students like the use Islamic storytelling is because it contains illustration pictures which help them to understand the story better. 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, such as picture can make teaching and learning process more effective.

Conclusions

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 only 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. Therefore, further research involving larger number of the students for longer period of time is recommended. Furthermore, it is important to assess the impact of the application of Islamic storytelling to other language skills, such as speaking, reading, and writing.

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