Using Authentic Materials in Improving Students’ Achievement in Reading Comprehension of the Ninth Year Students of SMP Negeri 1 Bantaeng

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Abstract

This research aims at answering the problem (1) Do authentic materials improve the third year students’ reading achievement of SMP Negeri 1 Bantaeng?

The method employed in this research was quasi-experimental research. The subject of this research was the ninth year students of SMP Negeri 1 Bantaeng in academic year 2014/2015. The number of population was 165 students. This research employed cluster random sampling technique with 66 students as the sample. The technique of collecting data used reading test. Data on the students reading skills were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

The findings of this research result showed that using authentic materials improve students’ reading achievement. It could be seen from the students’ mean score of posttest 76.36 for experimental group 68.18 for control group. (76.36 > 68.18).

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah penggunaan materi otentik dapat meningkatkan prestasi siswa dalam membaca pemahaman pada siswa kelas III SMP Negeri 1 Bantaeng?

Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian eksperimen kuasi. Subjek penelitan ini adalah siswa kelas III SMP Negeri 1 Bantaeng pada tahun pelajaran 2014/2015 yang berjumlah 165 siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan teknik *cluster random sampling*, dengan jumlah sample yang dipilih sebanyak 66 siswa. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan tes membaca. Data kemampuan membaca siswa dianalisis dengan menggunakan analisis deskriptif dan statistik inferensial.

Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan materi otentik dapat meningkatkan prestasi siswa dalam membaca pemahaman. Hasil ini dapat dilihat pada skor rata-rata tesakhir yaitu 76,36 pada kelompok eksperimen dan 68,18 pada kelompok kontrol (76.36 > 68.18).

1. **Introduction**

In Indonesia, English as one of the foreign languages has influenced many aspects of people’s life. It is signed by the changes of their mindset about social life. Furthermore, it has played an important role either in economic, health, industry, career, or education. Therefore, we have to admit that the mastery of English is quite necessary for Indonesian people. Because of this fact, Indonesian people are demanded to be able to communicate in English either in spoken or in written form.

Based on the Regulation of National Education Ministry No.22 in the year of 2006, one of the objectives of teaching English in junior high school is to improve students’ competence to use English as a means of communication either in spoken or in written form. This objective is exposed in The School Based Level Curriculum (KTSP) and elaborated in standard competence (SK) and basic competence (KD). This curriculum emphasizes on the students’ competence to understand and express ideas both in interpersonal and in transactional form, some functional texts, and essay in the form of procedure, descriptive, recount, narrative, dan report text either in oral or in written form.

Nowadays, teaching English is not only concerned with the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but it also focus on the four language elements: vocabulary, grammar, spelling and pronunciation. Listening and speaking are categorized as the oral language skills, while reading and writing are categorized as the written language skills. In addition, listening and reading skills are included in receptive competence, while the aspect of speaking and writing are called as productive competence. In teaching English, Those four language skills and elements are served integratedly in the sense that these aspects cannot be separated each other because one cannot master the language fully if one of these aspects is lost. Thus, it can be said that these four aspects are interrelated.

Reading comprehension is the act of understanding what you are reading. It is an emotional, active, and interactive process that happens before, during and after a person reads a particular piece of writing. Reading also is a complex array of cognitive process. There are two important elements that make up the process of reading comprehension: vocabulary knowledge and text comprehension. Reading is classified as a hard-working skill. Because of it, many students of junior high school have difficulties and spend long hours in the classroom with poor achievement.

The poor achievement was proved by the result of National examination (UN) in 2013. The mean score of students’ achievement in reading comprehension in functional text is 5.94 for SMPN 1 Bantaeng level, 6.12 for Bantaeng regency level, 5.67 for South Sulawesi province level, and 6.19 for national level. The data itself above reflects how difficult the reading comprehension especially in functional text is.

Learning material is one of the factors that can influence students’ difficulties in reading comprehension. Many teachers perceived unauthentic materials like text books are the source of learning material. They took the materials from the text books. They served it easily because the available text books at school are completed with texts, questions based on the text and also the key answer of the questions. They did not design the materials. As the consequences, the students were boring with the materials. They were unfamiliar with some functional texts like newspaper, magazine, advertisement, and manual book about how to do something, and so on. They did not know what certain expressions mean. Finally, they spent long hours in the classroom with poor achievement, especially in national examination (UN).

As a way out of this problem, the teachers should familiarize their students with authentic materials such as magazine, newspaper, brochure and other printed materials. Teachers should apply them in the classroom from the early level. In applying the materials above, teachers also should consider some factors that relate to learning materials. Those factors are level of the text, length of the text and authencity of the content of the text because students’ performance varies according to the type of reading texts given to them. As significant amount of research shows that there is something about the type of reading text that should be looked into and analyzed carefully.

In connection with the problems found above, the writer encouraged himself to do a research related to using of authentic materials in reading comprehension in order to improve students’ achievement in reading comprehension. At last the writer was motivated to conduct a research entitled using authentic materials in improving the ninth year students’ reading achievement of SMP Negeri 1 Bantaeng.

1. **Literature Review**
   1. Definition of Reading

Reading is now regarded to be an important language skill which is most needed for both academic purposes and lifetime learning. By reading people can catch the writer’s idea from the written symbols. By reading people can also improve their knowledge and get new experiences especially with the growing interest in using the internet to communicate globally. Reading is very complex to learn and to teach.

According to Wallace (1992 : 4), reading acts as interpreting means reacting to a written text as a piece of communication; in other words, intent on the writer’s part which thereader has some purpose in attempting to understand. In addition, Harmer (1991: 190) states that reading is an activity which is dominated by the eyes and the brain. The eyes receive messages, and the brain has to process meaning of the messages. Also Ur in Asgari (2012) says that reading means understanding the meaning what the writer has been written in the text as nearly as possible.

From some definitions made by the experts above, we can draw conclusion that reading is a process of understanding, evaluating, utilizing of information gained through a piece of written form or symbol of text by involving brain to process the meaning.

* 1. Kinds of Reading

Burn et al (1984: 177 – 178) have categorized reading comprehension into four levels: (1) Literal Reading: Reading for literal comprehension involves acquiring information that is directly stated in a selection. Answer to literal question simply demands the students from memory what the book says. Literal comprehension is the lowest level type understanding. (2) Interpretative Reading: The imperative involving reading between the lines or making is not directly stated in the text, but suggested or implied. Interpretive levels of reading comprehension go beyond literal comprehension. (3) Critical Reading: Just like the meaning of the critical reading revealed before, Burn views that the essential reading is evaluation of the ideas in the materials with known standard and conclusion about accuracy appropriateness. In the critical reading, a reader must be collected, analyze and synthesize the information. (4) Creative Reading: The creative reading involves going beyond the material presented by the author creative and requires the students to think as they read and to use their imagination. In creative reading, the reader tries to come up with a new or alternative solution to those presented

* 1. Purposes of Reading

Whatever our activity in daily life, we actually have reasons why we do that. If we relate the statement to reading activity, we can say we read because we are curious to know some information from reading activity. The reason for reading depends very much on the purpose of reading. According to Wallace (1991) in Al-Jabari and Al-Omari (2008: 1), there are three major purposes of reading, such as: (1) Reading for Survival. Reading for survival is considered to be in response to our environment, to find out information. It can include street signs, advertising, and timetables. (2) Reading for Learning. Reading for learning is considered to enlarge our knowledge. This type can be either in or out of the classroom. (3) Reading for Pleasure. Reading for pleasure is considered as activity that *does not have to* be done. It is only done for its own sake or to have enjoyable situation

* 1. Teaching Techniques in Reading

In teaching reading, a teacher should apply some teaching techniques. Harmer (1991) categorized 5 phases in teaching reading: (1) Lead-in: Teachers try to stimulate students’ interest by reading subject matter. (2) Direct Comprehension Task: In this step, teachers ensure the students know understand what they will do in the learning process. (3) Read for Task: Students read the texts carefully then do its exercise based on the teachers’ instruction. (4) Give Feedback: Teachers’ role is to check the students’ assignment, and how far their success in the learning process. (5) Direct Text-Related Task (Follow Up): Teachers organize one activity by giving follow up as the next activity for students. Moreover, Wallace (1992) classified 3 steps in teaching reading. They are: (1) Pre-Reading Activities: In this part, teachers’ roles are to try to attract students’ interest by introducing the topics, to motivate the students by explaining the reasons why they read the text, to ensure the students have prior knowledge relating to the text. (2) While-Reading Activities: This activity stimulates students to be flexible, active and reflective reader by reading the text, then answering some questions. (3) Post-reading activities: In Post-reading activities, students give reflections about what they have read, by relating with the text and their knowledge.

* 1. Authentic Materials

The definition of ‘authentic material’ varies throughout the literature. According to Tomlinson (1998), there are two kinds of materials that can be used for teaching reading, pedagogic materials and authentic materials. Authentic materials are those which are taken from real life communication and not designed for language teaching and learning purposes. Moreover, Harmer (1991 ) stated authentic text (either written or spoken) are those which are designed for native speakers: they are real text designed not for language students, but for the speakers of the language in question.

Furthermore, Roger and Medley (1988) defined that authentic materials are materials which are taken from situational context that would be applied to the students in the language classroom. Meanwhile Wallace in Anthony Sacha Berardo (2006 : 10) stated that authentic material is authentic texts that have been adopted from real-life, not written for language learning purposes but referred to fulfill some social purposes in the language community.”

Related to the definitions above, it can be said that authentic material is text or material which is not designed or produced for language teaching purposes but it can be used for teaching material as a material supplementary in teaching and learning process.

* 1. Kinds of Authentic Material

According to Ianiro (2007), there are two main categories of authentic materials. They are auditory materials and printed materials. Auditory materials cover radio broadcasts, movies, videos, television programs, speeches and printed materials which include: (1) Brochures: Brochures are easily to get almost all aspects of our lives. Some kinds of material which relate to the brochure are handouts, poster, over head. We can find them in a doctor’s waiting office, travel agencies or airports, or in educational institutions when enrolling in a course. (2) Product Labels: The other kind of authentic material is product labels. We can find them especially in a certain product of manufactures. (3) Recipes: Recipe is one kind of authentic material. This material can be easily found in especially in a female magazine, tabloid or recipe book. Recipes are categorized as a great authentic material because they tend to be written with limited set of vocabulary and grammatical forms. (4) Print Medias: Print media involves articles in newspaper, or magazine, advertisements of a product, newsstand copy or download from the World Wide Web. Newspaper, many of which are now available through the internet, provide and easily available source of authentic language material. (4) Postcards and Greeting Cards: Because postcard and greeting cards offer low cost, and always available in bookshop, so the students can get them easily. They are also particularly adaptable for wide variety of teaching purposes. (5) Maps: Being able to read maps is an essential part of basic literacy. Travel agencies very often provide maps for the tourists. Knowing the key cities in a country and being familiar with its important geographical features is an integral part of knowing about the target culture. Maps are used to familiarize students with the geography of the target country. They are further used as a point of departure for focusing on the language of directions and providing targeted practice in asking and giving directions. (6) Menu: Menu is one of the authentic materials. Teacher can apply it by copying it from restaurants, hotels, etc. (7) Transportation Schedules: Transportation schedule offer a wide variety of language teaching possibilities, including teaching students how to tell time, acquainting them with the geography of the country, and providing practice asking for and giving directions. In conjunction with other, travel information (maps, travel brochures), transportation schedule can provide the raw material for an extended class project involving planning a trip, writing a travel journal, and like. These materials can be applied for beginning through advanced level of students.

1. **Methodology**

This quasi-experimental research aimed at finding out whether or not authentic materials improve the third year students’ reading achievement of SMP Negeri 1 Bantaeng.

* 1. Population and Sample

The population of this research was all of the ninth year students of SMP Negeri 1 Bantaeng in academic year 2014/2015 which consisted of five classes. Each class consisted of 33 students, so the total population of this research was 165 students. For the sample of this research, cluster random sampling technique was used to select the sample. The samples chosen were IX A class as the experimental group and IX C class as the control group. The researcher applied chose these classes because the two classes had similarity in readiness, ability and characters.

* 1. Instrument of the Research

Instrument is a means of data collection. In collecting the data, the researcher used a test as the instrument. The test distributed is a reading test. Reading test is a kind of a test to know the students’ reading comprehension. The type of reading test used here is objective test in multiple choice forms which consisted of 40 multiple choices in that 20 items for advertisement and 20 items for recipe. The pretest was adapted from UAN SMP in 2010 until 2014 and it must be finished in 60 minutes. Moreover, it was employed before (pretest) and after giving treatments (posttest).

* 1. Data Collection Procedures

There were some kinds of procedures that the researcher passed through to collect the data as to the students’ reading achievement. The procedures of collecting data consisted of administering pretest in that both experimental and control groups were given a pretest. The test was delivered to identify the students’ prior reading ability. The result of this test was compared to the posttest result. The next is giving treatment. The treatments had been conducted for six meetings for each group. The researcher taught authentic materials: advertisement and recipe for the experimental group and non-authentic materials such as text book for the control group. After that, administering posttest was done. The posttest was employed to both groups. The result of the tests was calculated in order to measure whether or not the students had progress after learning reading skills through authentic materials. The posttest used was the same as the pretest.

* 1. Technique of Data Analysis

The researcher collected and analyzed the data from the instrument by passing some steps. The steps were scoring the students’ answer of pretest and posttest, classifying the students’ scores and then calculating the mean score of the students’ answers. To find out the analysis result of the data, the researcher used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program version 18.

1. **Findings and Discussion**
   1. Findings

Based on the findings, it is seen that most of the students in the experimental group were still categorized as fair and poor in reading comprehension before they learned reading skills through authentic materials. In fact, no one student could get excellent, very good, and good category, there were 2 students (6.06 %) who got fairly good, 23 students (69.70 %) who could merely reach fair, 8 students (24.24 %) who got poor, and no one got very poor category.

Furthermore, like in the experimental group, majority of the students in control group were also still indicated to be fair and poor category in reading comprehension before learning through non authentic materials. This statement is confirmed by the data shown that no one student could get excellent, very good, good and fairly good category, there were 19 students (57.58 %) categorized as fair and 14 students (42.42 %) categorized as poor, and no one got very poor category. Based on the aggregate percentage of the two groups, it can be said that low achievers are bigger than high achievers in reading comprehension.

In order to confirm the hypothesis formulated and to support the findings above, inferential statistics was used by the researcher. In this case, the researcher used t-test (testing of significance) for independent sample test, that is, a test to know the significance difference between the result of the students’ pretest and posttest mean scores either in experimental or control group by assuming that the level of significance (α) is 0.05. Based on the test of significance result, it is clearly found that the probability value identified is 0.65 which is higher than the level of significance of 0.05. Certainly, this finding declares that there is no significant difference between the students’ reading achievement of the experimental and the control group before teaching them with different materials. This statement is confirmed by a preposition said by Gay (2006:124) that when variables have equal interval, it is assumed that the difference between close score is essentially the same.

Otherwise, based on the posttest scores of significance result, it was found that the probability value identified is 0.00 which is smaller than the significance value of 0.05. For this finding, it can be confirmed that H1is accepted, while H0 is rejected. In conclusion, using authentic materials significantly improved the ninth year students’ reading achievement of SMP Negeri 1 Bantaeng.

* 1. Discussion
     1. The Students’ Reading Comprehension Achievement at Pretest

After having data calculation through descriptive and inferential statistics, the researcher found that the ninth year students’ reading achievement of SMP Negeri 1 Bantaeng was still at fair level in that the experimental and control group, the samples of this study, were only able to get fair scores either in advertisement or in recipe text before they learned through materials provided by the researcher. These data findings were also supported by the t-test analysis results that said there is no significance difference in their reading achievement. This finding certainly indicates that the ninth year students of SMP Negeri 1 Bantaeng were having some problems in reading comprehension. The problems were that the students were boring which was caused by the English teachers who always used non authentic materials when teaching reading. As a result, as stated at the background, the students spent long hours in the classroom with poor achievement, especially in the national examination (UN).

* + 1. The Students’ Reading Achievement at Posttest

Like the pretest scores, the posttest scores gained by the experimental and control group after they were given treatments were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. After doing all the calculation process, the researcher found that the ninth year students’ of SMP Negeri 1 Bantaeng in the experimental group treated with authentic materials had better achievement in reading comprehension both in advertisement and recipe text than those in the control group which were treated through non authentic materials. Based on these findings, the researcher concluded that authentic materials were effective in improving the ninth year students’ reading achievement of SMP Negeri 1 Bantaeng. Certainly, these findings prove that authentic materials are more interesting to the students in learning reading skills.

This research result is in line with some previous related research findings as Al-Jabari and Al-Omari (2008) stated in their article that using authentic reading material could improve students’ reading comprehension and it also could promote students’ positive reading attitudes. In addition, this research result also supports a research result found by Jaenal (2011) that the use of authentic material could significantly developed the students’ speaking achievement in classroom.

1. **Conclusion and Suggestion**

Based on the research findings and discussion, the writer concludes that authentic materials are more effective in improving the students’ reading achievement than non-authentic materials and it is properly recommended to all English teachers to prefer using authentic materials to non-authentic materials when teaching reading in order that the students will not bored and finally their reading comprehension can improve significantly like what the researcher found in this study. For these conclusions, it is strongly suggested that in teaching reading comprehension, teachers should be always creative by applying authentic materials, not books oriented. As authentic materials are easily to find around students’ environment. Besides that, the writer also suggests to the teachers particularly for SMP Neg.1 Bantaeng to use authentic materials especially for reading comprehension.

As the writer states in the scopes of the research that focused on using authentic materials in teaching reading skill especially literal comprehension ability through advertisement and recipe text. Therefore, the writer recommends to the future researchers to conduct a research in using authentic materials in different materials. The writer hopes that this research finding will give some advantages to the further researchers who conduct a research related to authentic materials and it can be used as a reference and empirical evidence.

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