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## THE EFFECT OF USING ENGLISH AUTHENTIC READING MATERIALS ON THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS'

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### **Abstract**

*Reading is one of many ways to get information, where people can find it from television and internet. As reading dominates all activities in the English subject, the language components, namely pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary should also be learnt to support the language skills. Based on the English teacher interview result that authentic reading materials have never been used by the teachers, reading comprehension on the eighth grade students of junior high school of SMP Swasta MMA UISU Medan so it was necessary to conduct a research in this school. The research design was quasi experimental. It began from conducting homogeneity test, deciding the experimental class and the control class, giving activities to the control class using the common technique and material usually applied by the English teacher and treatments to the experimental class that was using authentic materials in teaching reading, then giving the same post-test to both classes, and the last analyzing the results of the post test by using t-test. The result of this research The analysis of the post test results showed that there was a significant effect of using English authentic that of reading materials the experimental class got higher mean score than the control class (65, 1>57, 5) of the students' reading achievement. Then, the result of data analysis using SPSS showed that the t-test value (2-tailed) 0.000, was less than 0.05. is expected to provide useful information for the English teacher to use interesting materials, that is, authentic materials in the English teaching learning process, especially in teaching reading comprehension, since the authentic materials have never been used at SMP Swasta MMA UISU Medan.*

**Key Words :** Authentic Materials; reading; comprehension.

### **Abstrak**

Membaca merupakan salah satu cara untuk mendapatkan informasi, dimana masyarakat dapat memperolehnya dari televisi dan internet. Karena membaca mendominasi semua kegiatan dalam mata pelajaran bahasa Inggris, komponen bahasa, yaitu pengucapan, tata bahasa, dan kosa kata juga harus dipelajari untuk mendukung keterampilan bahasa. Berdasarkan hasil wawancara guru Bahasa Inggris bahwa bahan bacaan otentik belum pernah digunakan oleh guru, pemahaman bacaan pada siswa kelas VIII SMP Swasta MMA UISU Medan sehingga perlu dilakukan penelitian di sekolah ini. Desain penelitian adalah eksperimen semu. Mulai dari melakukan uji homogenitas, menentukan kelas eksperimen dan kelas kontrol, memberikan kegiatan kepada kelas kontrol dengan menggunakan teknik dan materi yang biasa diterapkan oleh guru bahasa Inggris dan perlakuan pada kelas eksperimen yang menggunakan bahan otentik dalam pengajaran membaca, kemudian memberikan post-test yang sama kepada kedua kelas, dan terakhir



menganalisis hasil post-test dengan menggunakan uji-t. Hasil penelitian ini Analisis hasil post test menunjukkan bahwa ada pengaruh yang signifikan menggunakan bahasa Inggris otentik bahwa bahan bacaan kelas eksperimen mendapat skor rata-rata lebih tinggi dari kelas kontrol (65, 1>57, 5) siswa ' membaca prestasi. Kemudian, hasil analisis data menggunakan SPSS menunjukkan nilai t-test (2-tailed) 0,000, kurang dari 0,05. Diharapkan dapat memberikan informasi yang berguna bagi guru bahasa Inggris untuk menggunakan materi yang menarik, yaitu materi otentik dalam bahasa Inggris. Proses pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, khususnya dalam pengajaran membaca pemahaman, karena bahan autentik belum pernah digunakan di SMP Swasta MMA UISU Medan.

**Kata Kunci :** Bahan Otentik; membaca; pemahaman.

## INTRODUCTION

As reading dominates all activities in the English subject, the language components, namely pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary should also be learned to support the language skills, especially reading. Usually, vocabulary or grammar or writing are taught through reading texts. Grellet (1996:8) states that it is important for the students to link the different language skills of the language through the activities. In fact, reading comprehension skill is the basic skill in learning English. Therefore, every activity in English class involves reading.

Rivers (1987:44) recommends authentic reading materials because of the following advantages. First, the authentic reading material will bring the students into contact with the language as it is used to meet actual communication needs. Second, it will bring the students to use the new language authentically themselves to communicate meanings in meaningful situation rather than for demonstrating knowledge of grammar of lexical items.

Reading is a receptive skill, where a reader decodes meanings from the author's thinking. To support the idea, Carrell et. al. (1988:2) state: "reading is viewed as the decoding process of reconstructing the printed letters and words, and building for a text from the smallest textual unit at the "bottom" (letter and word) to larger and larger unit at the "top" (phrases, clauses, and intersectional linkages)".

Readers are expected to do more than just read the text. They must recognize the printed materials and gain the meaning. They at last can identify the message of the author in expressing the written text. Carrell et. al (1988:56) exemplify that reading is a dialogue between a reader and the text. Therefore, readers are expected to involve their prior knowledge that plays an important role in the reading process. Grellet (1996:3) states that reading comprehension is about understanding a written text, which means extracting the required information from it as



efficiently as possible.

While Grellet (1996:4-5) claims that reading involves a variety of skills. The main skills are identifying the main point or important information, distinguishing the main idea from supporting details. Wood (1996:186-187) says that in all communication, writers and speakers present the main idea, support that idea with specific details. Readers are expected to be able to differentiate between the general information and the specific information.

Furthermore, Wood (1996:189) says that the general information or the main idea is what most of paragraph or longer section of material is about. Sometimes it is directly stated or indirectly stated in the paragraph. Further, the main idea of a paragraph is the author's message about the topic and it is often expressed directly or it can be implied. The main idea of each paragraph is usually expressed somewhere in a paragraph by one sentence (topic sentence), and it is usually found at the beginning of the paragraph, but can come at the end or even in the middle of the paragraph (Gillet, 2011). One way to discover the stated main idea is by finding the topic sentence, because it introduces the discussion that may go on for one or several paragraphs (Wood, 1996:189).

Examples:

- The main idea is stated in the first sentence.

Hexa and I camped in the mountain last weekend. It was very beautiful and very quiet there. The air was fresh. The location of our campsite was on the top of a hill, so we could see the scenery around us. It was amazing. It was green everywhere. It was also easy to get water as it was near a small river. You see the water is as clear as a crystal. We brought a lot of food from home. There were noodles, cans of sardines, soft drink, and biscuits. Hexa brought cooking utensils for cooking noodles (Adopted from LKS Yudhistira 2006):

- Question: What does the paragraph above tell about?
- Answer: Hexa's and the author's experience on the mountain. The main idea is stated in the first sentence of the paragraph.

Implied main idea

Hexa and I camped in the mountain last weekend. It was very beautiful and very quiet

there. The air was fresh. The location of our campsite was on the top of a hill, so we could see the scenery around us. It was amazing. It was green everywhere. It was also easy to get water as it was near a small river. You see the water is as clear as a crystal. We brought a lot of food from home. There were noodles, cans of sardines, soft drink, and biscuits. Hexa brought cooking utensils for cooking noodles (Adopted from LKS Yudhistira 2006):

- Question: What does the paragraph above tell about?
- Answer: How to plant sunflower.

The main idea is not stated in a certain sentence but it is implied in the whole paragraph. Specific information is the information that is the details of the general information; it deals with sub idea or supporting details. Wood (1996:195) says that the sub idea supports and develops the major idea; very often begins with sentences that indicate those paragraphs will give further information about prior ideas.

Example:

The following steps tell how to wash clothes using a washing machine. First, separate the colored clothes from others. Then, put them in the washing machine, turn the machine on, set it to the wash selection and pour the detergent powder in. Next, wait for the tub to fill with water. After the process of washing has finished, let the clothes drain through the drain hose. After that...(Adopted from ujian nasional SMP 2009/2010).

- Question: What does the first thing to do before washing clothes by using a washing machine?
- Answer : Separating the colored clothes from others.
- Question: Why must the colored clothes separated from others before washing clothes by using a washing machine?
- Answer : To avoid the colored clothes fade contaminate the others.

The two specific information above support the main idea that is how to wash clothes by using a washing machine. According to Sutisna (2010), there are two factors that influence the students' reading comprehension achievement and they are related to each other, they are: internal factor (motivation and interest) and external factor (reading materials and the teacher).



According to Sutisna (2010), motivation plays an important role in comprehending the text. The students will be motivated to read when they feel that they need something from the text. As authentic reading materials can motivate the learners, the researcher uses authentic reading materials in this research, while interest according to Sutisna (2010) interest is one of the important factors that can increase the students' reading comprehension achievement. If one has interest to read, it means that he or she will get good achievement. On the contrary, if the reader has no interest to read, it can influence his or her reading achievement. So, there is no doubt to use authentic reading materials in teaching reading, because it is original, interesting, motivating and useful.

There are some definitions for authentic materials. Wong (1995:318) defines authentic materials as the materials which are used in genuine communication in the real world and it is not specifically prepared for the teaching and learning of English. Grellet (1996:8) gives another definition that authenticity is no change of the original text and its presentation and lay out are retained. A newspaper article, for instance, should be presented as it first appeared in the paper with the same typeface, space devoted to the headlines, and pictures.

As it is stated in Collier's Encyclopedia (1993: 443-446), a newspaper is a publication that appears regularly and carries news about a wide variety of current events, daily or weekly. Newspapers bring news of general to larger portions of the public in specific geographic area gathered and then written up by reporters. They are printed periodically whose purpose is to deliver the up to date news and other information (Brennan, 2011).

A magazine is a publication, issued at regular intervals, they provide information and entertainment. The World Book Encyclopedia (1966:27-28) and according to Manser (1995), magazines are printed periodical which is usually issued weekly or monthly. The contents of magazines vary, such as: articles, stories, pictures, sports, travel, etc.

The advantages of using authentic reading materials are original, interesting, motivating and useful. According to Lee (1995:324), authentic reading materials are motivating, interesting and useful, with the content that does not cause the students to experience culture shock or discomfort, but it should be appropriate to the learners' needs and learning purposes.

Martinez (2002) mentions that authentic materials may be too culturally biased and too many structures are mixed, causing lower levels have a hard time decoding the texts. It means that sometimes authentic reading materials contain difficult structures and difficult vocabularies,

especially for the students in the lower level. So, the teacher should find the appropriate authentic reading materials for his/her students based on the students' need and level. Here, the research will be done in the seventh grade students, with the procedure texts or short functional texts in the form of instruction texts as the authentic reading materials.

Martinez (2002) says that the materials can become outdated easily, e.g. news. Different from the other authentic reading materials such as news and articles, the authentic reading materials in the form of procedure texts or short functional texts in the form of instruction texts, would be always or almost in the same pattern and information, so it can be used every time we want.

Derewianka (1990) identified three types of recount text, namely personal recount, factual recount and imaginative recount. First, a personal recount exposes events in which the writer or the author involves or acts in those events, such as funny incidents, entries of diary and so on. Second, a factual recount is a note of an event, such as scientific experiment report, police report, newspaper report, history explanation and so on. The last, an imaginative recount is an unreal event or story such as reading texts for language lesson, a story about life of a slave and so on.

From the explanation above it can be concluded that the first type and the second type of recount text are suitable with authentic material. The general characteristics of recount text:

- Communicative purpose/social function

Reports of incidents, events or activities in the past to deliver news or to entertain the reader.

- Text structures Orientation

- Introduction: provide information about whom, where and when.
- Events record: events or activities which are usually presented in chronological order.

- Re-orientation

- Personal comment:

Re-introduction which summarizes a series of events or activities.

- Language features

- Using pronouns, such as: David, the monkey, we, and so on.
- Using action verbs, such as: go, sleep, run, and so on.



- Using past tense, such as: we went to the zoo, he was very happy, they ran veryfast, and so on.
- Using conjunctions and time connectives to sort incidents, events or activities, such as: and, but, then and so on.
- Using adverb and adverb phrases to reveal places, time and ways, such as: yesterday, at my house, slowly and so on.
- Using adjectives to describe nouns, such as: beautiful, funny, wise and so on.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The design that was used in this research was a quasi experimental research design, with Nonequivalent-Groups Post test-Only Design (McMillan, 1992:175). It was intended to know whether or not the use of Authentic Materials had a significant effect on reading comprehension achievement in experimental group. The design of this research was described as follows:

K1	X	T1
K2	O	T1

Notes:

- K1 : The experimental Class
- K2. : The control Class
- X : Treatment
- O : No treatment (common way/using text book)
- T1. : Post-Test (readingcomprehension test)

The procedures of this research were as follows:

First, Conducting the homogeneity test. (Adapted from Setiyadi, 2006:142).

Second, Analyzing the scores of homogeneity test using ANOVA (Analysis of Variance). The value of variance was significant (less than 0.05) which means that the population was homogeneous, so, one class from the population which had the closest mean score was chosen. It was class VIII. Deciding the experimental class and the control class by lottery.

Third, Giving the treatment to the experimental class that was, teaching reading comprehension by using authentic materials (recount text taken from Kang-GURU Magazine), while the control class was taught reading comprehension by using textbooks as the English teacher of the eighth grade students usually uses.

Fourth, The teaching learning process was conducted in two meetings; each meeting was conducted in 80 minutes.

Fifth, Administering try out test to establish reliability and validity of the teacher-made test. The try out was given to class VIII as this class had the closest mean score to the control class and the

experimental class.

Sixth, Administering reading comprehension post-test to both classes to know the result of the experimental treatment given with 20 test items in 60 minutes.

Seventh, Applying the independent sample t-test formula to find out the mean difference of both classes.

Eighth, Comparing the results of the reading test between the control class and the experimental class to know the significant mean difference to find the effect of the use of authentic reading materials on the eighth year students' reading comprehension achievement.

Ninth, Drawing a conclusion from the results of the data analysis to answer the research problem.

The area of the research was SMP Swasta MMA UISU Medan. This school was determined purposively. In the purposive method, the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic (Mc Millan, 1992:76). Cluster random sampling was one kind of sampling procedure that was used in this research. According to Setiyadi (2006:42), cluster random sampling is taken when the population has several different groups and the groups are not a stratum. Since the result of the homogeneity test showed that the population was heterogeneous, two classes that had the closest mean score were taken and determined to be the experimental class the control class by using lottery.

There were two kinds of data that were used in this research; they were primary data and secondary data. The primary data were the students' scores of reading comprehension test. Then, the supporting data were the results of the interview (with the English teacher of the eighth grade students as the interviewee) and the school documents of the grade VIII students at SMP Swasta MMA UISU Medan 2022/2023 academic year.

Djiwandono (1996:22-23) states that there are two kinds of test used to measure the students' achievement; they are teacher made test and standardized test. The test that was used in this research, was teacher made test in the form of objective test and subjective test for the exercises and reading comprehension test as the post test. In this research, the post test was used in this research to measure the students' reading comprehension achievement after the treatment was given to the experimental class was taught reading by using authentic materials and the control class was taught reading by using textbook.

Interview with the English teacher of the eighth grade students was conducted to know the techniques/methods of teaching or the media used by the English teacher in teaching reading comprehension. In this research, the informal interview was done with the English teacher to get the information needed to complete the main data. During the interview, a list of questions related to the information needed were used as the interview guide.

Documentation is one method that is used to support the primary data. Setiyadi (2006:249) states that documentation is natural data source that is easy to get, it could be private or formal data. In this research, documentation was used to get the supporting data about the respondents' names from both of the experimental class and the control class. Post-Test Only Control class Design was used in this research. Setiyadi (2006:142) claims that Post-Test Only Control class Design is a kind of research design that uses one class.





## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

To support the primary data, the supporting data were obtained through the interview with the English teacher and documentation. The interview was conducted with the English teacher of the eighth grade students with The curriculum used for the eighth grade students of SMP Swasta MMA UISU Medan was Institutional Based on Curriculum. According to the English teacher, the English lesson was taught twice a week with “Yudhistira” as the textbook and the students got difficulty in understanding the general and specific information of the reading text. The English teacher only taught the material from the textbook, and he or she had never used the authentic reading material. The Documentation was used to get the supporting data about the respondents and the total number of the eighth grade students of in the 2022/2023 academic year., The total of the eighth grade students of SMP Swasta MMA UISU Medan in the 2022/2023 academic year was 30 students.

The homogeneity test was conducted to class VIII. It was conducted on september 05<sup>th</sup> 2022. This schedule was consulted to the English teacher, vice headmaster for curriculum and some teachers for using their teaching periods to conduct the homogeneity test. The try out was administered on october 5<sup>th</sup> 2022.

The try out was conducted to find out the test validity, the reliability coefficient, and the difficulty index of the test items.

The results of the main data were the results of the post-test given after the reading activities of the class and The post test was administered on October 06<sup>th</sup>.

From the result of the independent sample t-test, the mean score of the post-test of the class was 71.7647 and then the result of data analysis was consulted to the t-table of 5% significance level (confidence interval 95%) to know whether the result was significant or not. Based on the output of Independent sample t- test by using SPSS software, the value of Levene’s Test of Equality variances was 0.486. Itupun means there was a significance effect on the eighth grade students’ reading comprehension achievement by using English authentic reading materials.

Based on the output of independent t-test by using SPSS, the value of significant column was 0,000 and it was lower than 0,05. It could be said that the hypothesis which says “There is a significant effect of using authentic material on the eighth grade students reading comprehension achievement at SMP Swasta MMA UISU Medan” was accepted.

The analysis of the post test results showed that there was a significant effect of using English authentic reading materials on the students’ reading comprehension achievement in the reading comprehension test. Then, the result of data analysis using SPSS showed that the t-test value (2-tailed) 0.000, was less than 0.05., that was 0, 486.

The previous research done by Cahyono (2011) revealed that teaching reading comprehension by using authentic materials was effective to increase the students’ reading comprehension achievement at SMAN 2 Kisaran.

Comparing to the previous research, there were some similarities and differences. The first similarity was both the researchers used English authentic reading material as the source of texts. The second similarity was both of dependent variables focused on the students’ reading comprehension achievement. On the other side there were differences between the previous research and this research. Firstly, Cahyono chose senior high school students as the population but the population of this research was junior high school students. Secondly, this research used



Kang-GURU as the source of the texts while the previous research used Jakarta Post as the source of the texts.

From the discussion above, it could be concluded that there was a significant effect of using English authentic reading materials on the eighth grade students' reading comprehension achievement at SMP Swasta MMA UISU Medan. It means that the class that was taught reading by using English authentic reading materials got good scores in the reading post test that was taught reading by using textbooks.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

the result of the data analysis showed that the statistical value of significance column was lower than 0.05.(0,486) it could be concluded that the use of English authentic reading material had a significant effect on the eighth grade students' reading comprehension achievement at SMP Swasta MMA UISU Medan in the 2022/2023 academic year.

Based on the research result above, some suggestions are given to the English teacher, the students, and the other researchers:

First, it is suggested to the English teachers of SMP Swasta MMA UISU Medan to use the English authentic reading materials to increase the students' reading comprehension achievement because they were interesting and motivating.

Second, the students of SMP Swasta MMA UISU are suggested to enhance their reading comprehension achievement by practice reading using English authentic materials from magazines or newspapers.

Third, the other researchers in the future are suggested to use the research result as information or input to conduct a further research with different research design as such as a class action research to improve the students' reading comprehension achievement by using authentic reading materials such as brochures, booklets, food packs, and beverage cans.



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