

Increasing Students' English Reading Comprehension Through Fiction Novel Text in Extensive Reading Class

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of fiction novel texts in improving students' English reading comprehension skills. This study used an experimental approach using a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The sample of this research was postgraduate students of the English Education Study Program, at Indraprasta University, Jakarta. There were 50 students involved in the research process. The process of collecting data using tests and observations. The data that has been obtained will be tested for its normality level using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the data homogeneity test using the Analysis of Variance test with a confidence level = 0.05. Data that has been declared normal and homogeneous is then processed using a two-sample paired t-test for the average. The results showed that $t_{stat} < t_{table}$ ($-28.767 < 2.0638$). This means that novel texts have a positive influence on students' English reading comprehension and that for literal, inferential and critical understanding. This finding has implications for lecturers that the learning resources provided by the problems faced can have a good impact on student learning outcomes.

Keywords: English, Reading, Novel

1. INTRODUCTION

The process of reading comprehension for students in tertiary institutions has a different purpose than the high school level. Reading comprehension is important, not just for understanding the text, but for broader learning, success in education, and employment. It is even important for our social lives, because of email, text, and social networking sites. Reading comprehension is a complex task, which requires the orchestration of many different cognitive skills and abilities (Oakhill et al., 2015). Therefore, learning to read must pay attention to the achievement of goals in context and learning outcomes. In tertiary institutions, students must have a level of understanding ability up to a critical stage.

However, this situation has not been achieved by the learning outcomes. As the results of the one-year learning evaluation in the 2022-2023 academic year concluded that 1) the level of students' reading comprehension in English was still dominated by inferential comprehension, 2) students did not understand the meaning of the reading context, 3) students did not yet show an interesting reading process, and 4) students still have difficulty in determining the meaning of the words in the text. From the results of interviews with 25 students who were conducted at the end of the 2022-2023 odd semester lectures, it was concluded that students like non-academic reading materials or literary

genres. From the findings of these problems, a breakthrough solution is needed related to improving reading comprehension skills in English.

Moreover, the activities in this extensive reading class require students to read a lot of books outside of class. Extensive reading is one way for students to develop their competence. However, most students do not read much in English (Niati, 2017). Even though extensive reading activities (fiction) have a positive effect on students' reading abilities in other non-fiction (Abdellah, 2013). In addition, extensive reading activities can also increase vocabulary enrichment (Chun et al., 2012). Overall, an extensive reading program that accommodates students' freedom in reading is an alternative that can successfully foster L2 students' reading motivation if implemented by considering several possible meetings (Puspitasari, 2020). The same research also shows that reading affects student motivation (Ro, 2016). Extensive Reading Programs (ERPs) are effective in improving language skills related to reading and promoting motivation and attitude towards reading (Lin, 2014).

Thus, this study examines more deeply the effectiveness of literary works in the form of novels to improve English reading comprehension skills. The novel is light reading material, easy to understand, interesting, authentic and related to everyday life (Puspitasari, 2016). In addition, literary texts provide authentic and engaging material for language learners, expose them to different cultures and ways of life and help them develop cultural awareness and understanding (Rachidi, 2023). So, it is assumed that novels can improve students' reading skills (Aswir et al., 2021; Jeni, 2020; Palupi et al., 2021; Rachmijati & Anggraeni, 2019; Sari & Nasution Yusnita, 2023). The use of this novel is a novelty that the research wants to present because the increase in English reading comprehension is targeted to the critical stage and the novel has a story framework that can make it easier for students to understand the critical meaning of the text. Moreover, the novel that is presented as reading material in this extensive reading class is a fiction novel that has an interesting and fun imagination from the author. This can help students develop their English reading comprehension skills to a critical stage. The target of achieving English comprehension from literal to critical is the research gap that you want to present and is different from previous studies.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of fiction novel texts in improving students' English reading comprehension skills. The results of this study are expected to provide benefits to teachers and students, especially in providing authentic teaching materials for reading classes because reading activities for students must be oriented towards the values of everyday life.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Method of Research

This is an experimental approach that used a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The quasi-experimental research was conducted in only one group, known as the experimental group, with no comparison or control groups. The research design of the one-group pre-test and post-test design was measured using a pre-test administered before treatment and a post-test administered after treatment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). So, in this study, the novel text is used to improve students' English reading comprehension.

2.2 Participants

The sample of this research was postgraduate students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Indraprasta Jakarta. There are 50 students involved in the research process. The research was carried out between March and May of 2023.

2.3 Data Collection Technique

The process of collecting data used tests and observation. The test gave to the students before and after using novel text. The English reading comprehension test assesses three reading comprehensions, namely 1) literal understanding related to the process of retelling or recalling facts or information presented in a text, 2) inferential understanding related to the reader's ability to retrieve information that is inferred or implied in a text, and 3) critical understanding related to reasoning abilities and critical judgment on texts (Meinawati et al., 2022). The form of the test given is multiple choice questions which contain three aspects of reading comprehension. While observation is used to know students' activities in the teaching and learning process.

2.3 Data Analysis

The data that has been obtained will be tested for its normality level using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the data homogeneity test using the Analysis of Variance test with a confidence level = 0.05. Data that has been declared normal and homogeneous is then processed using a paired t-test of two samples for means.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This extensive reading class uses a type of fiction novel to improve English reading comprehension. The use of fiction novels is based on the reason that fiction novels describe the imagination of the author which is made to target the emotions of the reader so that the reader can have a message or moral message in the story he reads. In addition, fiction novels also often have vocabulary that has difficult meanings and this can develop readers'

understanding not only literally, but also in context. The results of the analysis of the test data that have been carried out are presented in several sections, namely 1) descriptive statistics of the results of the final test, 2) the percentage of achievement in each indicator of the English reading comprehension assessment component which presents a comparison between pre-test and post-test, 3) results from t-test.

Table 1. The Comparison of Percentage for Indicators in English Reading Comprehension

Component	Indicators	Pre-test	Post-test
Literal	- Identify word meaning	- 66%	- 97%
	- Meaning context	- 53%	- 93%
Inferential comprehension	- Identify the main idea	- 68%	- 85%
	- Identify context-meaning relations in the text	- 55%	- 88%
Critical comprehension	- Analyzing the process of text that implemented to comprehend daily life	- 47%	- 95%

Table 1 describes the achievement of the success level of English reading comprehension for each component of reading comprehension and presents developments from before and after being given treatment by learning English reading comprehension using novel texts. From the initial findings of the problem, that is, the lowest level of critical understanding has increased quite well because the percentage level is considered high after being given treatment. The average value also shows a pretty good increase. The details of the results of descriptive statistical data are as follows.

Table 2. Statistic Descriptive of English Reading Comprehension Test

	Pre-test	Post-test
Average	53.02	91.26
Median	58	87
Mode	62	90
Standard Deviation	4.68	5.64
Sample Variance	22.06	24.56
Minimum	50	72
Maximum	66	93

The average score from the pre-test to the post-test has increased to 38.24 and has entered a very good grade. The highest score obtained was 93 and the lowest score was 72. The two scores indicated that students had made quite good progress in understanding English reading. The value of the t-test results also shows an increase in English reading comprehension.

Table 3. t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means

<i>The result of the T-test</i>	
t Stat	-28.767
P(T<=t) one-tail	6.7387
t Critical one-tail	1.5108
P(T<=t) two-tail	1.1917

t Critical two-tail

2.0638

The average score from the pre-test to the post-test has increased to 38.24 and has entered a very good grade. The highest score obtained was 93 and the lowest score was 72. The two scores indicated that students had made quite good progress in understanding English reading. The value of the t-test results also shows an increase in English reading comprehension. The results of observations on the process of teaching and learning also showed a change in students' reading habits. Students have good reading habits. If students are already fond of reading and are always motivated to read, their level of reading literacy and reading engagement can be good (Cheung et al., 2016). Thus, it can be said that the results of this study also provide a clear understanding of proper instructional reading with reading sources.

The results of another study showed a significant effect of instructional reading strategies on the reading comprehension performance of the treatment group (Raissi & Roustaei, 2013). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant influence between reading habits and students' reading comprehension. This means that the more students have high reading habits, the higher their reading comprehension (Al Baironi Haka et al., 2015). This finding is also consistent with other studies which conclude that literary texts can improve critical thinking skills, vocabulary and grammar skills, and reading comprehension (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014; Rachidi, 2023). So, literary texts provide the right challenge to improve English reading skills. Thus, literary works can be used as authentic teaching materials in learning English reading, enabling students to understand the meaning of reading not only at a literal level but also at a deeper level based on context (Khusniyah, 2022).

The results of these findings also found several benefits from the use of literary texts in improving English reading comprehension, including 1) students' better understanding of how to apply the contextual meaning of reading texts to their daily life, 2) students can develop contextual meanings from literary texts related to critical thinking skills and has an impact on problem-solving patterns in learning to read English, 3) students can have a habit of reading academic texts, and 4) students can develop their reading comprehension in a critical reading framework. Critical thinking is at the heart of higher education and is very important for students. This has been shown from research into ethnographic studies of three EAP teaching-learning contexts in Australia and linking this classroom pedagogy to the critical thinking theory identified by Davies and Barnett. Critical reading pedagogy can be realized in different ways, but nurturing students' critical dispositions, in particular, requires subtle scaffolding (Wilson, 2016).

So, reading comprehension becomes very important which can also have a big influence on reading patterns and critical thinking patterns. This finding makes a very big contribution to teachers regarding the importance of students' reading comprehension skills because, in addition to being able to understand

the context of meaning from reading sources, this can also influence reading comprehension as a learning resource for other subjects. Moreover, the daily life of students in Indonesia does not use English as the main means of communication. So reading comprehension of English learning resources plays a big role in the learning success of English study program students. This finding also recommends the use of literary texts as a student reading resource that can be used as a learning resource in class or outside of class.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the study concluded that there was a significant influence of novel texts on improving English reading comprehension. This can be seen from the average test scores which increased before being given treatment and the t-test also showed a positive effect on English reading comprehension before and after treatment. This finding has implications for lecturers that the learning resources provided by the problems faced can have a good impact on student learning outcomes. So, the results of this study recommend that lecturers be able to understand the essence of the problem of learning English reading comprehension to be able to provide the right solution, as in this study related to learning resources (reading resources). However, the results of this study are still limited to an analysis of English reading comprehension through the three components of reading comprehension and the priority aspect is reading sources. So, future researchers can still develop this research from aspects of student personality or teaching and learning strategies. Thus, the results of this research can contribute more to teaching and learning to read English. The results of this study also provide advice to the study program consortium to guide lecturers on the importance of developing authentic reading sources that are by student personalities and current global needs. Moreover, learning resources that are easily accessible through the internet make it easy to get reading sources.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

RB is responsible for preliminary research in identifying research problems and providing treatment to students. SA is responsible for designing research procedures and data analysis. However, RB and SA also jointly discussed the results of this data analysis to find answers to research problems.

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