

# THE EFFECT OF USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS ON THE TENTH GRADE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT AT MA ISLAMIYAH SYAFI'YAH SUMBERANYAR-PAITON IN THE 2012-2013 ACADEMIC YEAR

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***Abstract :** Reading is an activity that can be considered as a crucial aspect of one's language ability because this skill deals with information and communication. Almost all of the teaching learning processes involve reading in the activities. Though reading is regarded as an important skill, many students experience difficulties in comprehending the reading text. Those difficulties appeared because the students had low motivation and possess limited vocabulary. The use of authentic materials in teaching reading is appropriate since they relate directly to the real world. This research applied a quasi-experimental with non-equivalent pretest-posttest design. The research was conducted at MA Islamiyah Syafi'iyah Sumberanyar-Paiton with the tenth graders as the research population. Two classes were chosen as the research sample by using lottery. Class XB which had 28 students was the experimental class and class XC which consisted of 20 students as the control class. The students' pretest and posttest scores from experimental class and control class were calculated by using ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariance) through SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Science). The result of ANCOVA showed that the use of authentic materials had a significant effect on the students reading comprehension achievement.*

***Key Words :** Reading comprehension achievement, authentic materials, ANCOVA.*

## INTRODUCTION

As a part of the society, human being cannot live alone. There must be an interdependent relationship among them, and they need to interact with other people to fulfill their needs. The interaction can be in the form of communication, and that communication is done through a certain medium called language. Richard and Rodgers (2001:180) say that language is viewed as a vehicle of communicating meanings and messages. From that quotation, language is seen as the tool to transfer one's ideas or views to others. In today's life, English is a very important language to be learned, it is all because the fact that English as an international language is used in world communication.

However, since human life is surrounded by written words, the ability to read becomes a great concern for many people. Reading is claimed to be the source of much of our vocabulary knowledge and writing style. Carrel et al., (1995:1) state that for

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many students, reading is the most important of the four language skills in a second language. Therefore, it is undeniable that reading is one of important activities in learning process. According to Grellet (1996:3-8) reading is a process of understanding a reading text. It is a skill which constantly involves guessing, predicting, checking, and asking oneself question. From that definition, reading is viewed as an activity of taking, understanding and interpreting the information in the passage.

After conducting the interview with the English teacher at MA Islamiyah Syafi'iyah Sumberanyar-Paiton, the researcher found that the English teacher has never used another source of material except the textbook in teaching reading. Consequently, the students feel bored and unmotivated in joining the teaching and learning process. The limited vocabulary also became a problem that destroyed the students' comprehension in reading, such as sentence comprehension, paragraph comprehension and text comprehension.

Regarding the reasons above, the selection of good materials is needed in language learning to motivate the students in learning reading since there are abundant materials that can be used in English classroom. The materials may come from course books or authentic materials. By considering the third objective of English language teaching in 2006 curriculum, which is to build awareness about language and culture, the use of authentic materials seems appropriate to be used in the classroom. Since the aim of language learning is to communicate, the process involves in learning is not only making students to produce grammatical sentences but also enabling students to function the language effectively in appropriate context and society.

Reading is an activity that we usually do every day. We read short message, film subtitle, song lyric, recipe, newspaper and so on. This activity can be considered as a crucial aspect of one's language ability because this skill deals with information and communication. Farbrin and Winch (1996:8) define reading comprehension as gaining meaning from the text. Furthermore, Johnson et al., (2004:3) say that reading comprehension is an active process, directed by intentional thinking that allows young readers to make connections between their thinking processes, the textual content, and their own knowledge, expectations, and purposes for reading. The students' comprehension ability will guide them to understand the text, they will get the information, whether the information is clearly stated or implicitly stated.

To know the result of students' reading comprehension, an achievement test was conducted. Students' achievement is the result of the students' learning that has been tested using a certain tool. Moreover, Grellet (1996:6) says that reading comprehension achievement can be defined as the successful result of students' comprehension in guessing, predicting, and understanding the written text by doing such an achievement test. Reading comprehension achievement in this research covered some aspects as proposed by McWhorter (1989:90), they are: word comprehension, sentence comprehension, paragraph comprehension and the text comprehension. The genre of the reading text was recount text. Recount text is defined as a text which tells past events, someone's adventures or experiences.

The researcher used authentic materials to teach reading. Authentic reading materials are written for native speakers of certain language and will be used by the speakers of the language in communication circumstances outside language classroom. Thus, most everyday object in target language whether spoken or written such as magazines, newspaper, tourism brochure, advertisement, menus, recipes and any articles in Internet can be included as authentic materials. The authentic reading materials in this research were taken from Internet.

There are some advantages of using authentic materials in the classroom, they are: original, interesting, motivating and useful (Peacock, 1997:144-145). The term original relates to authenticity. Authenticity means that nothing of the original text is changed and also that its presentation and layout are retained (Grellet, 1996:8). Authentic materials are often regarded as more interesting than the textbook materials because they can be up to date and related to the everyday issues and activities. The use of authentic materials in the classroom can motivate the students because there are three layers of learning that are: language learning (the structure and vocabulary), cultural insight, and practical application (Speller, 2002:1 in Rizqiyah, 2009:15). Authentic materials are useful because they help the students to break the gap between the language classroom and the real life situation. They introduce students to the culture that surrounds them and provide them the opportunities to see where different grammatical structures and types of discourse are used.

Along with the advantages, the uses of authentic materials also bring some disadvantages. The grammar and vocabularies in authentic materials may be too

difficult for foreign language learners because authentic materials are used for communicating and informing in the society, thus they might use some abbreviation, slang or informal words. Besides, the content of the text sometimes is not appropriate for the students. In order to avoid the disadvantages, the teacher should be selective in choosing the materials before delivering them to the students. Teachers should consider the suitability and the readability of the text. Additionally, in teaching and learning process, the teacher guided the students in understanding the text and also in finding the difficult words. To help the students cope with the materials, the difficulties that the students found in the text were discussed together with the whole member of the class.

The previous researches done by Lestari (2007) and Pramediastuti (2007) showed that the authentic materials have an effect on the students' reading comprehension achievement. Lestari found that authentic materials can improve the students reading comprehension achievement from 59.47% in cycle 1 to 78.37% in cycle 2. Furthermore, Pramediastuti also found that the use of authentic materials could increase the students' reading comprehension achievement. Her research focused on the application of authentic materials from magazines and Internet as the reading materials. From those findings, it was known that the use of authentic materials have a significant effect on the students reading comprehension achievement.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The design of this research was quasi-experimental with non equivalent pretest and posttest design. The area of the research was MA Islamiyah Syafi'iyah Sumberanyar-Paiton. The population of the research was the tenth grade students of MA Islamiyah Syafi'iyah Sumberanyar-Paiton in the 2012-2013 academic year which was consisted of 96 students from three classes (XA, XB and XC). Two classes from three classes were taken as the research subjects. Lottery was done to determine the experimental class (XB) and the control class (XC).

The researcher firstly gave the pretest to the students from control class and experimental class to know the students' basic scores. Before conducting the pretest, the test items were tried out to the students from another class (class XA). The try out was aimed to know the test reliability, difficulty index and the time allocation. The reading test items consisted of 25 multiple choice items with five options. After pre-testing, the teaching and learning activities were given twice to the experimental class and the

control class. The experimental class received authentic materials as the reading text while the control class was taught by using materials from textbook. Both classes were then post-tested with the same test items in pretest. Finally, the pretest and posttest scores were analyzed by using ANCOVA through SPSS.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Before conducting the pretest, the try out was administered on November, 28<sup>th</sup> 2012 to the XA students. The result of the try out was used to calculate the reliability coefficient and the difficulty index. In this research, Split half Odd-Even technique was applied to calculate the reliability coefficient. The test items of the try out were divided into two halves. The first half consisted of odd number and the second half consisted of even numbers. Those two sets of data were correlated using Pearson's product moment correlation to know the reliability of the half test. The reliability of the half test was 0.55. In order to know the reliability of the whole test, the value 0.55 was taken into Spearman-Brown formula. From the estimation, the reliability of the whole test was 0.71. Based on the criteria of reliability proposed by Arikunto (2011: 75), the test had a high reliability because it was in range of 0.61-0.80.

After analyzing the reliability of the test, the analysis was continued to the difficulty index. The difficulty index for each item could be found by finding the number of the students who answered correctly and was divided by the number of students who answered the questions. The result showed seven items of 25 items (28%) were categorized as easy item, three items (12%) were categorized as difficult items, and the rest 15 items (60%) were categorized as average items. The most difficult test item was the test item number 25 that had difficulty index 0.26 and the easiest test item was the test item number 9 that had difficulty index 0.97.

Overall, it could be concluded that the test items were appropriate because most of the items were categorized as average and the rest were categorized as easy and difficult (Sudjana, 1990:135). Dealing with the time, the researcher found that the time allocation for the try out was appropriate because the students were able to do all the test items within the available time (40 minutes). From the clarification above, it could be concluded that the test items did not need to be revised.

The main data that were taken from students' scores in pretest and posttest were calculated by using ANCOVA. ANCOVA is defined as a procedure where participants' posttest scores (scores on the dependent variables obtained after the experimental treatment is given) are statically adjusted for differences in pretest scores (pretest scores are obtained on the dependent variable before the experimental treatment is given) (Lodico et.al 2006:186). The result of ANCOVA can be seen in the following Table 1.

Table 1. The output of ANCOVA.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	801,854 <sup>a</sup>	2	400,927	13,336	,000
Intercept	429,697	1	429,697	14,293	,000
PRETEST	673,701	1	673,701	22,410	,000
CLASS	126,885	1	126,885	4,221	,046
Error	1352,813	45	30,063		
Total	289216,000	48			
Corrected Total	2154,667	47			

The table above shows the significant value of the class was 0.046. Since the sig. value was lower than 0.05, the null hypothesis "There is no Significant Effect of Using Authentic Materials on the Tenth Grade Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement at MA Islamiyah Syafi'iyah Sumberanyar-Paiton in the 2012-2013 Academic Year" was rejected. On the other hand the alternate hypothesis "There is a Significant Effect of Using Authentic Materials on the Tenth Grade Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement at MA Islamiyah Syafi'iyah Sumberanyar-Paiton in the 2012-2013 Academic Year" was accepted.

The result of the research showed that the students of the experimental class who were taught reading comprehension by using authentic materials got better result on the reading comprehension achievement test than the students of the control class who were taught by using materials from text-books. The effectiveness of the use of authentic materials can be seen in the sig. value of the class. The sig. value of the ANCOVA was 0.046 and it was less than 0.05. It means that there was a significant mean difference between experimental and control class.

Authentic materials are suitable for the students since they could increase their motivation to participate in classroom activity. Students with greater second/foreign

language learning motivation, in most cases, receive higher grades and achieve better proficiency in the target language (Rueda and Chen, 2005 in Wu and Wu, 2008:213). In line with that, Akar and Yildirim (2000) as quoted in Pandian (2011:9) found out that by using authentic materials, students' motivation and their reading skills developed. Besides, the use of authentic materials is believed to be very useful for it bring the students to the direct use of the language in a certain community. The language used in the authentic text is natural, in which the writer intention is not to educate someone, rather to express their self using language. That is why the language used in the authentic text and those in the textbook are quite different because the text in the textbook has been modified and designed for the formal use. By using authentic materials, the students found vocabularies and expressions that they had never heard and they could not even found in the text books.

The effect of using authentic material to teach reading comprehension was also supported by the previous researcher who proved that teaching reading by using authentic material was able to improve the students' reading comprehension achievement. The previous research with authentic materials was done by Widi Cahyono (2011) through experimental research at SMAN 1 Arjasa. Cahyono's research used authentic reading materials that were taken from magazines and newspaper. The research result showed that the use of authentic materials have a significant effect on the students' reading comprehension achievement.

Although the experimental treatment showed a successful result, there are some weaknesses found in this research. Firstly, the scores given for all test items in reading test were the same although the items had different level of difficulties Secondly, the total number of the students in experimental class and control class did not fulfill the requirement of a normal distribution because they were less than 30 students in each class (28 students in class XB and 20 students in class XC).

Apart from the weaknesses, the research result showed that authentic material was an appropriate material for teaching reading comprehension. It was proved by the result of this research which indicated that the use of authentic materials had a significant effect on the tenth grade students' reading comprehension achievement.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Regarding the finding of the research, it can be concluded that there was a significant effect of using authentic materials on the tenth grade students' reading comprehension achievement at MA Islamiyah Syafi'iyah Sumberanyar-Paiton. It was showed with the significant value of ANCOVA which was 0.046, it was less than 0.05. It proved that there was a significant mean difference between the experimental and the control classes.

Since there is a significant effect of using authentic materials on the tenth grade students' reading comprehension achievement, the authentic materials can be used as materials to teach reading comprehension in the class room. Thus, the researcher proposed some suggestions. 1) It is suggested that the English teachers of MA Islamiyah Syafi'iyah Sumberanyar-Paiton use authentic materials in teaching reading comprehension because authentic materials can improve the students' reading comprehension achievement as well as their motivation. 2) It is suggested that the students of MA Islamiyah Syafi'iyah practice reading from the authentic text that they usually meet in everyday life to enhance their knowledge and reading comprehension. 3) The result of this research indicated that the use of authentic reading materials had positive effects on students' reading comprehension achievement. Therefore, it is expected that the other researchers conduct further researches dealing with the use of authentic materials in teaching other English language skills or components by using similar or different research design.

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