



THE USE OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

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Article History

Submitted 10 February 2021
Revised 1 March 2021
Published 30 March 2021

Abstract.

This research was conducted to reveal the use of authentic assessment in improving students' reading comprehension. The research method used in this study was quantitative method with the quasi-experimental design and it was conducted at one of Islamic Senior High School in Garut. The data were collected through the result of students' pre-test and post-test. The result of this research showed that the post-test score was higher than the pre-test score. The result of data analysis showed that the t'_{observed} in pre-test was -0.136 with the $-t = 2.0570$. Because the criterion was H_0 accepted if $-t \leq t'$, so it meant t'_{observed} was in area of H_0 accepted or H_a rejected. So, there was no significant difference in reading comprehension between two groups in the pre-test. While, after giving treatment to the experimental group, the result of post test showed that the t'_{observed} was 5.32 with the $-t = 2.056$, it meant the result showed opposite from the pre-test because t'_{observed} was in area of H_a accepted or H_0 rejected. So, there was significant difference in reading comprehension improvement on students who are treated by authentic assessment. This result hopefully would motivate the teachers to use authentic assessment in improving students' reading comprehension.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Authentic Assessment

INTRODUCTION

Reading becomes an important part of language teaching, and it has complicated problem. Hulme and Snow (2011) argued that reading is critical because a great deal of formal education depends upon being able to read with understanding. Therefore, English teacher should find strategies to face this problem. They are expected to find appropriate strategies activities to make students understand reading text and moreover enjoying reading.

One of the current teaching-learning models is the authentic assessment model designed. In this model of learning, Ianiro (2007) stated that both authentic assessment and authentic material usually can't be separated. The use of authentic assessment related to the "real-world" or simulation of real-world situation. If in traditional assessment of reading comprehension students just memorize and cross the true answer based on the information that is contained in text, authentic assessment not only works on it. According to Ayo (2015, p. 50), "Authentic assessment moves beyond learning by rote and memorization of traditional methods and allows students to construct responses". He also stated that authentic assessment captures aspects of students' knowledge, deep understanding, problem solving skill, social skill and attitude. So that, students can not only answer the explicit written answer just only based on the text but also they can construct their own response by giving questions.

The researcher would like to propose one teaching model in form of authentic assessment which has been consider to have benefits in improving students' reading comprehension. This research is aimed to find out the influence of authentic assessment in improving students' reading comprehension.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading Comprehension

Reading is one of activity where the students get the information from the written text or reading on screen such as in smartphone, computer or other electronic forms. Grabe (2009) stated that reading is a process when readers learn something from what they read and involve it in academic context as a part of education. In classroom, some teachers use texts as media to deliver material to the students. Furthermore, teacher asks students to read the texts to get information in order they could understand its material.

Therefore, reading consist of two related process: word recognition and comprehension. word recognition refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one's spoken language. While comprehension is the process of making sense of word, sentence, and connected text.

Getting meaning from the text is not a simple as is said. Readers often had difficulties in finding clues or implied meaning. Main factor which affect their endurance in overcoming difficulties are their motivation and awareness. Therefore, in maximizing the outcomes, they should be in a proper level of anxiety and be provided with the proper content of the text. Duke and Pearson (2001, p. 423) have numbered factors that affect students to comprehend the text, there are motivation, vocabulary, automaticity to decoding, fluent reading, understanding strategies employed by effective reader, the nature of text itself, and the amount of reading done.

- 1) Use guessing technique if we are not certain.
- 2) Analyzing vocabulary.
- 3) Distinguish between literal and implied meanings.
- 4) Capitalize on discourse markers to process relationship

Testing Reading

The activity that is done after the teaching learning process is test. It is used to measure what students got after the learning had been taken. In the reading test students encounter questions like those asked in a lively, thoughtful, and evidence-based-discussion. There are some criteria of scoring based on the theme-based curriculum:

- 1) The achievement of social function
- 2) The completeness and the harmony of procedure text structure
- 3) The accuracy of the language element: linguistics, vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation, spelling and hand-written.
- 4) The suitable written or oral format

Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessments focuses on students using and applying knowledge and skills. It usually focuses on tasks that students have to perform. It also helps students contextualise their learning. Olfos and Zulantay (2011, p. 137) argued that authentic assessment connects teaching to realistic and complex situation and context.

In other hand, authentic assessment according to Gulikers et al., (2004) as cited in Ayo (2015, p. 315) is involved the students in the processes such as identifying an issue from their community, planning to solve the issue, exploration and demonstration of their understanding to the community.

The characteristics of authentic assessment according to Mueller (2016) is illustrated below:

- 1) Constructing Responses
- 2) Real life
- 3) Application
- 4) Student-structured
- 5) Direct Evidence

There are some types of authentic assessment that adopted from the authentic assessment toolbox by Mueller (2016), the types is mentioned below:

1. Constructed-response
2. Product
3. Performance

In constructed-response, students is prompted to answer the question by constructing knowledge. Livingston (2009, p. 1) stated that in constructed response, the kind of tests contain questions that require the test taker to produce the answer, rather than simply choosing it from a list. Self and group assessment in form of open-ended test is one of forms of authentic assessments. Students are given the question that ask them to response it with the answer in words, don't provide specific answer option.

A little different from constructed-response, in product, students is prompted

to construct a substantial product that reveals their understanding of certain concepts and skill or their ability to apply, analyze and evaluate those concepts or skill.

Last, in the performance students, it similar to constructed-response item in that students are required to construct new knowledge, but they should also construct a performance that reveals their understanding of certain concept and skill.

Newspaper as Authentic Material

The authentic materials are not written for the language learner. However, in fact, using authentic text in reading reflects the real world purpose and situation in which language is used. If learner use only unnatural texts in the classroom, they will be deflated with their first experience of authentic language outside the classroom. Moreover, real life materials provide one way of building confidence with original texts and make students learning in real simulation.

Newspaper is one of authentic materials that is illustrated in this study. It produced for public consumption, but they can be useful in the class because of their relevance and interest. As Akila (2013, p. 18) stated that newspaper, magazine, and specialist journal can be used for pre-experienced learners when the context is relevant. Newspaper as authentic material offers more than real language use, but authentic and personal responses. It is rich of relevant topics and cultural ideas that may motivate learners for reading. Newspaper is a set of written sheet that contain information about local, new stories, advertisements etc. Newspaper in the classroom, therefore is expected to coincide with the learners' level.

METHODOLOGY

The quantitative method by using quasi-experimental design was used in this study. The researcher needed the students' reading comprehension score to determine whether the authentic assessment can improve students' reading comprehension or not. The reading comprehension score before and after experimental group were needed, so the instruments that were used in this research were tests; pre-test and post-test.

Pre-test

In the pre-test, the students were given an authentic assessment. The material and assessments were authentic. The text was about "how to get to one place" and it was taken from the Jakarta Post newspaper and New York Times. The test was in form of open-ended test.

Treatment

After giving pre-test, the researcher gave treatments. It has been conducting for four meetings.

Post-test

In the post test, the students were given an authentic assessment again. The material and assessments were authentic. The text was about "how to make something" and it was taken from the Jakarta Post newspaper and New York Times. The test was in form of open-ended test.

Two classes of twelfth grade of Islamic Senior High School were chosen as

participants. The sampling method that was used was non-equivalent pretest-posttest group design. In this design, the experimental group A and the control group B were selected without random assignment.

In the present study, the quantitative data analysis process was carried out some steps there are compute the validity and reliability of the instruments, after getting the data of pre-test, the next step was compute for its normal distribution test, homogeneity test, t-test, and normalized gain. The same procedures were also done for the post-tet data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Validity and Reliability Test

The result of validity test for pre-test and post test showed that both test were valid. The reliability test for both tests were also categorized very high.

The Result of Pre-test and Post Test

The experimental group accounted 28 participants with the pre-test total score 1429 and average score was 51. While, the post-test total score 2042 and average score was 70. In another hand, the control group accounted 24 participants with the pre-test total score 1273 and average score was 53. While, the posttest total score was 1313 and average score was 53.

The Normal Distribution Test

The normal distribution test computation of pretest for the experimental group showed L_{max} 0.1332, $L_{critical} = 0.168$ and the control group showed $L_{max} = 0.079$, $L_{critical} = 0.179$. So, the data of pre-test had normal distribution.

The normal distribution test computation of post-test for the experimental group showed L_{max} 0.117, $L_{critical} = 0.168$ and the control group showed $L_{max} = 0.175$, $L_{critical} = 0.179$. So, the data of post-test had normal distribution.

Homogeneity Test

The criteria of homogeneous is if $F_{observed} < F_{critical}$, but if the result showed opposite, then it categorized not homogeneous. The $F_{critical}$ of pre-test was 1.98 and the $F_{observed}$ was 2.58. It meant the variance in experimental group was not homogeneous.

While in the post-test, the $F_{critical}$ was 1.98 and the $F_{observed}$ was 2.95. It meant the variance was not homogeneous. Because the variance of both datas was not homogeneous, so the next statistical analysis that used was t' test.

T' test

The researcher tested hypothesis by applying t'-test with the significance level (α) = 0.05. The researcher formulated the hypothesis as follow:

Ho: There is no significant difference in reading comprehension improvement on students who are treated by authentic assessment.

Ha: There is significant difference in reading comprehension improvement on students who are treated by authentic assessment.

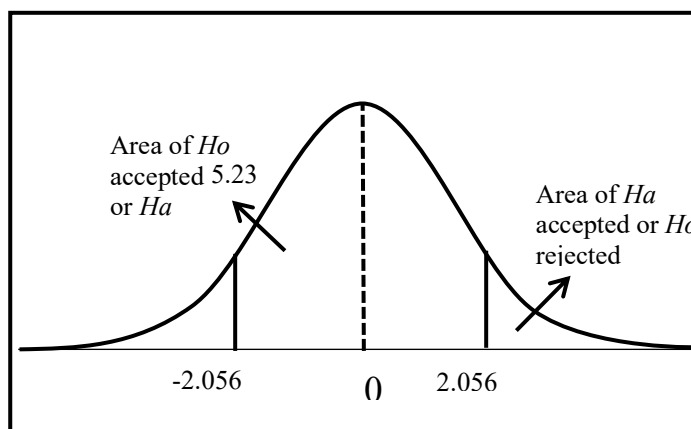
The criterion of this hypothesis was *Ho* accepted or *Ha* rejected if $-t \leq t'$, but if $-t > t'$ it meant *Ho* rejected or *Ha* accepted.

In the pre-test, The result showed that between groups had no significance difference in reading comprehension. It was proved by the statistical analysis before that showed t'_{observed} for pre-test was -0.514 which meant t'_{observed} was in area of H_0 accepted or H_a rejected.

While, in the post-test The result showed that between groups had significance difference in reading comprehension after the experimental is treated by authentic assessment. It was proved by the statistical analysis before that showed t'_{observed} for post-test was 5.32 which meant t'_{observed} was in area of H_a accepted or H_0 rejected.

Here are the curve of determination of H_a :

Figure 4.9 The Curve of Determination of H_a



Based on all findings above, the researcher conclude that authentic assessment made students interesting and familiar to the topic as Harmer (2007, p. 100) stated that when we ask student to read, the success of the activity will often depend on the level of the text we are asking to them to work with. Ideally, we would like students to read authentic texts.

Besides that, authentic assessment also requires students to explore their real life and constructed their response as Gulikers et al., (2004) as cited in Ayo (2015, p. 315) stated that authentic assessment is involved the students in the processes such as identifying an issue from their community, planning to solve the issue, exploration and demonstration of their understanding to the community.

The researcher could see the two strengths in this research. The strengths might not available in another research, there are:

- a. The first strength was the result of this research. The result can be used by the teacher when they teach reading comprehension. It helps teacher to know one of model learning that they can use in their classroom
- b. The second strength was beside the use of text that can make students connect it to their real life and a kind of question that is used can help teacher to know how far their students comprehend the text

Beside the strengths that have been explained before, the researcher realize that those are weaknesses in this research, there are:

- a. Using authentic assessment takes effort to locate it. Some students are not accepting it as being learning source
- b. The researcher cannot always keep the extraneous variables such as the

situation of the class, the students' readiness in doing pre-test and posttest, and the time allotment to conduct the test

There are also the uniqueness of this study:

- a. The material is taken from the students' real life or where the students can connect it to their daily activity or their life.
- b. The kind of questions that is open-ended test in both pre-test and post-test are also used to know do the students comprehend about the text. The students not only choose the answer available such as in multiple choice or true-false question but also they can write out the answer that also connect to the real life. The teacher also can know how far their students comprehend the text.

CONCLUSION

The researcher found that the result had answered the research question. The question had been answered by the result of pre-test and post-test.

The research question was to find out the improvement of students' reading comprehension. Based on the result of pre-test where the t' observed was -0.514. It meant t' observed was in area of H_0 accepted or H_a rejected. So, there was no significant difference between the experimental group and control group before treatments conducted.

While after conducting the treatments, the researcher gave the students posttest and the result showed that the t' observed was 5.32. It meant t' observed was in area of H_a accepted or H_0 rejected. So, there was significant difference in reading comprehension improvement on students who are treated by authentic assessment.

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