

## Using Authentic Materials to Improve Reading Comprehension of the Eighth Grade Students of SMP PGRI Kasihan in the Academic Year of 2015/2016

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**Abstract :** The objective of this research is to improve the eighth grade students' reading comprehension in SMP PGRI Kasihan Bantul through the use of authentic materials in the academic year of 2015/2016. The research was action research. The subject of the research was the students of VIII-B class. The English teacher, the researcher, and the students of VIII-B class were the team members of the research. The data were obtained through observations and interviews with the students and the English teacher as the collaborator. The data were in the forms of field notes and interview transcripts. To support qualitative data, quantitative data were obtained from the pre-test and the post-test scores. The actions implemented in this research were using authentic materials in the reading activity to improve students' reading comprehension. The text used in the teaching and learning process of reading were authentic texts of invitations and announcements. The research was conducted in two cycles. Every cycle consisted of some steps; reconnaissance, planning, acting and observing, and reflection. The data validity was obtained by applying democratic validity, outcome validity, process validity, catalytic validity and dialogic validity. The result shows that the implementation of using authentic materials in this study is successful to improve the students' reading skill. The indicators of the success of the implementation were that the students showed good comprehension about the text of the given topic. By answer the questions from the researcher, the students showed good motivation in the reading activity. The students were able to practice reading through various given topics. From the result of the scores, it was found that the students' reading skill improved by the use of authentic materials. There was an improvement between the mean of the pre-test (5.3) and that of the post-test (7.6).

**Key Words:** Authentic Materials, Students' Reading Comprehension.

**Abstrak:** Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk meningkatkan pemahaman membaca kedelapan siswa kelas di SMP PGRI Kasihan Bantul melalui penggunaan bahan otentik pada tahun akademik 2015/2016. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian tindakan. Subjek penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VIII-B. Guru bahasa Inggris, peneliti, dan siswa kelas VIII-B adalah anggota tim penelitian. Data diperoleh melalui observasi dan wawancara dengan siswa dan guru bahasa Inggris sebagai kolaborator. Data yang dalam bentuk catatan lapangan dan transkrip wawancara. Untuk mendukung data kualitatif, data kuantitatif yang diperoleh dari pre-test dan skor post-test. Tindakan yang diimplementasikan dalam penelitian ini adalah menggunakan bahan otentik dalam kegiatan membaca untuk meningkatkan siswa 'membaca pemahaman. Teks yang digunakan dalam proses belajar mengajar membaca yang teks otentik dari

undangan dan pengumuman. Penelitian ini dilakukan dalam dua siklus. Setiap siklus terdiri dari beberapa langkah; pengintaian, perencanaan, bertindak dan mengamati, dan refleksi. Validitas data yang diperoleh dengan menerapkan validitas demokratik, validitas hasil, validitas proses, validitas katalitik dan validitas dialogis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pelaksanaan menggunakan bahan otentik dalam penelitian ini adalah sukses untuk meningkatkan kemampuan membaca siswa. Indikator keberhasilan pelaksanaan adalah bahwa siswa menunjukkan pemahaman yang baik tentang teks dari topik yang diberikan. Dengan menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan dari peneliti, mahasiswa menunjukkan motivasi yang baik dalam kegiatan membaca. Para siswa mampu berlatih membaca melalui berbagai topik yang diberikan. Dari hasil skor, ditemukan bahwa kemampuan membaca siswa ditingkatkan dengan penggunaan bahan otentik. Ada peningkatan antara rata-rata dari pre-test (5,3) dan bahwa dari post-test (7,6).

Kata Kunci: Bahan Authentic, Pemahaman Membaca Mahasiswa.

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## **Introduction**

Nowadays, people have been living in the globalization era in which the development of most aspects of life grows rapidly. Consequently, they try to find a lot of information through many ways such as reading books, watching television, and listening to the news. However, the information they found is mostly in the form of written materials such as newspapers, internet articles and journals, text books, and so on which enable them to access the information easily.

In relation to the situation above, reading skills play an important role in facilitating people to comprehend the written materials. By reading, they can get a lot of information from various resources. Unfortunately, many people find problems on reading such as difficulties in understanding meaning of the words, sentences or even texts that they read. Regarding to this, reading comprehension is needed to help them get the idea of the information clearly.

In Indonesia, particularly in the English teaching and learning process, reading plays significant roles for students as manifested in the Basic Competency and Standard of Competence of School-Based-Curriculum (*KTSP*). In Basic Competency and Standard of Competence of junior high schools, students are expected to have some abilities in understanding short functional texts, monologues, and essays in the form of procedure, descriptive, recount, narrative, and report texts. It means that in the English teaching and learning process, students need to have a good reading comprehension in order to comprehend those materials well.

In reference to the observation conducted by the researcher, many students of SMP PGRI Kasihan still get difficulties in understanding English texts because of some factors. One of them is that the teaching strategy focuses only on the cognitive aspect, such as translation and vocabulary, without considering the affective and psychomotor aspects. This teaching strategy cannot arouse the

students' motivation and involvement in the reading activity. As a result, it is difficult to improve students' reading comprehension.

With regard to this condition, the researcher is interested in conducting an action research on improving students' reading comprehension in the English teaching and learning process by providing the appropriate reading materials for the students. It is important to enhance their motivation in reading activities. However, it is not enough to tell them to read a lot, Harmer (2001:210) states that the students need to be offered a programme which includes appropriate materials, guidance, tasks, and facilities. The Communicative Language Teaching highlighted the fundamentally communicative properties and the teaching and learning process characterized by authenticity and real-world simulation (Brown: 2001). One of the methods is to include the use of authentic materials in the reading activities. Many authors and researchers have asserted that authentic materials have a positive effect on learners. The use of authentic materials helps to bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and students' capacity to participate in real-world events. In other words, incorporating authentic materials helps students acquire an effective communicative competence in the target language. From the consideration above, the researcher decides to investigate the use of authentic materials to improve the reading comprehension of the students of SMP PGRI Kasihan.

### **Research Method**

This research was action research that followed the design proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart in Burns (2010). This research consists of planning, action, observation and reflection. This research involved 26 students of VIII B at SMP PGRI Kasihan Bantul. It was conducted on 15 April until 13 May 2016. The research instruments were in the form of observation checklist, interview guidelines, questionnaire. The data of the research were in the form of field notes, interview transcript and students' reading score. The data were through observation, interview and test. The observation was conducted during the implementation of the research by observing the condition and the teaching learning process. The interview was conducted to collect the collaborator and the students' opinions, comments and ideas for the research. The reading test was also conducted to gain the students' reading score before and after the implementation of the portfolio assessment.

The data collected from this research were qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data consisted of field notes and interview transcript and the quantitative data were in the form of the students' reading score. The qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were analyzed using t-test to compare pre-test and post-test score. The data validity in this research involved, suggested Anderson in Burns (1999:161-162) democratic validity, outcome validity, process validity, dialogic validity and catalytic validity. In order to get the data's trustworthiness, time triangulation and researcher triangulation were applied.

## Findings and Discussion

The results of the research by applying authentic materials in teaching reading were significantly improve the students' reading comprehension. The use of authentic materials also influenced the students' behavior toward teaching learning English. Before the actions were implemented, the students had difficulties in generating ideas, organizing text, using language feature, vocabulary and mechanics. In order to solve the problems, the researcher and the collaborator made plans and agreed to apply authentic materials to improve the students' reading comprehension through five reading stages proposed by Harmer (2004:4) namely planning, drafting, editing and final version.

In the first cycle, the authentic materials was proven to slightly improve the students' reading comprehension. This conclusion was derived from the interview, the observation conducted during the implementation of the action and the students' works. From the interview, the students said that the authentic materials had helped them in reading that they had made some improvements in their reading although they still made some mistakes on grammar, punctuation, vocabulary and text organization. In addition, based on the observation, the students were more likely to engaged to the teaching learning process as there were more students who paid attention to the teaching learning and asked question during the teaching learning. From their works in first meeting to third meeting, the students made some improvements. As the authentic materials enabled them to collect and revise their work with the help of feedback given directly to their work, the students were able to made the improvements as what they also said in the interview and the self-reflection. Although the improvement and changes had been made, some students' reading score still did not meet the minimal requirement therefore the researcher and the collaborator decided to conduct cycle 2.

In the second cycle, the plans and the actions were still focused on the students' reading comprehension through the use of authentic materials. The authentic materials was also implemented through the stages of reading. After the actions were implemented, the problems raised and the problem during the second cycle were all dismissed. Through the use of authentic materials, the students were able to collect their work which gave them access to learn and recall their work. The students also could track their learning progress and current abilities from it and self-reflection. In addition, form the interview conducted, the students felt that the comments and feedbacks given to their work in the test helped them improve their readings. The chance of revision also developed their motivation in reading. the students also became more interested in teaching learning as they became brave to write their sentences and ask question in they need it. From their work, the students made significant improvements in terms of generating ideas, language feature, vocabulary, text organization and punctuation. Their reading comprehension improvements also reflected in the following table.

In this part, the result of the students' score was shown as in the pre-test and post-test. Those scores are displayed in the Table.

**Table : Students' Mean Score**

Pre-Test	Post-Test
5.3	7.6

The result of the pre-test and the post-test above showed the difference of the mean score. The mean of the pretest was 5.3. Meanwhile, the mean of the posttest was 7.6. It means that the mean of the pretest improved. The mean was obtained from the 26 students. From the result above, it could be concluded that Authentic Materials improve the students' reading comprehension in class VIII-B.

### Conclusions

From the first cycle, the researcher found that the authentic materials could improve the students' reading comprehension. Furthermore, those could improve the students' interaction between the teacher and the students. However, the authentic materials could not really improve the students' awareness. That was why the researcher felt that he had to add some accompanying actions in Cycle II. Shortly, the use of authentic materials is shown to have improved the students' reading comprehension. From the second cycle, the researcher found that the accompanying action could improve the students' awareness in the teaching and learning process of reading. He also found that the use of authentic materials is able to improving the students' reading comprehension.

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