

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING HUMOR STORIES TO IMPROVE THE READING SKILL OF SEVENTH GRADERS

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Received: November 11, 2021

Accepted: February 11, 2022

Published: April 18, 2022

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DOI: 10.53947/tspj.v1i3.88

Abstract: The study aimed to find out the use of The Humor Stories to improve the students' reading skills. The subject of this study was the seventh grade of An Nuriyah Islamic Junior High School 22 Jagakarsa in the academic year of 2018/2019, consisting of 25 students. The method of this study was a quantitative method with the design of a pre-experimental study. The data from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed statistically. This study showed that the average score of the students in the pre-test was 64.8, while the average score of students in the post-test was 80.4. This research analysis obtained that t-observation (t_o) of 1.997. Meanwhile, the t-table (t_t) is 1.708 with a significant 5% which means that t_o is higher than t_t . So, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, and the null hypothesis (H_o) is rejected ($1.997 > 1.708$). It can be concluded that the use of the humor stories of students of An Nuriyah Islamic Junior High School 22 Jagakarsa of 7th-grade students enhanced reading skills.

Keywords: Humor, Reading, Short story.

Introduction

English was originally the language of England. Nowadays, English is the secondary language for several countries in Asia, such as India, Singapore, Malaysia, and other Asian nations. English is introduced to elementary-level students until higher education as a foreign language in Indonesia. It is taught as local content at the Elementary level, in instruction to arrange the students to look globalization period. English develops a compulsory subject in Junior High School, Senior High School, and University.

Students should possess four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Reading is one of the skills that students should learn among these four skills because it is a necessary aspect that impacts one's action in communication.

Thus, English teachers should select and apply practical and varied techniques in teaching reading. It aims to motivate the students to enjoy learning reading. Teaching reading is a complex progression. The best teachers improve a comprehensive knowledge base and draw on a repertoire of plans to reach their teaching goals.

Reading is the progression of observing sequences of written signs and receiving meaning from them. When people read, they use their eyes to get written signs (letters, punctuation marks, and spaces), and they use their brains to change those symbols into words, sentences, and paragraphs to communicate. Reading can be silent (in the head) or aloud (so that other people can hear).

Not all students obtain reading skills at the same speed. Reading begins with the mastery of pre-literacy skills, including learning the alphabet and increasing phonemic awareness. Because beginner readers obtain more and more terms, the process is accelerated by introducing all words or views. Being a fast and efficient reader is essential for class lessons, fulfilling homework requirements, and performing well on standardized examinations.

Students in secondary school often discover difficulties in learning to read text, and students are opposite this problematic when they hardly discover suitable books for their age and struggle to comprehend a text (Marchand-Martella et al., 2010). Thus, these students should be supplied with appropriate reading passages to make them easy to comprehend the content. There are many varieties of reading materials that can be used to bring the lesson, and one of them is humor stories. Humor stories represent a unique literary. Secondary school students also have a problem with reading long and plain text in which they tend to lose concentration quickly during the process of comprehending the narration. At the stage of early cognitive development, they have less concentration span than adults, resulting in a lack of enthusiasm and motivation to learn further. Secondary school students are more interested in learning by using visual cues and media that encourage them to use their imagination and creativity to develop their own. Thus, the choice of fun and practical text should be considered.

According to Amanda (2010, p. 32), "language humor is a language that gives birth to a good mind with words that can cause sympathy and entertainment." So, the language of humor is words, sentences, or utterances that can invite someone's laughter listening or reading. In general, the language of humor aims to entertain someone with play style, jokes, and others. Everyone smiles and laughs can be caused by the existence of humor or funny situations spontaneously or intentionally by the language humor creator. The creator of the language of humor deliberately creates a form of humor through puns, pictures, language styles, and the reason so that intentions delivered can be digested and accepted with a relaxed and refined feel.

Humor is one form that humans cannot eliminate. Humor can be a vehicle for entertainment for someone. It can also be a means of education, and a means in a social context for the community. Humor is a language characteristic used to balance feelings to become more attractive. No less critical humor is often used to convey development messages, criticism, and suggestions on various forms of social interests and the problem of the universe that collided with society.

There are several positive ways to include humor in the classroom. Humor can contain funny stories and comments; jokes (especially self-destruction); professional humor, linking content to a mnemonic device; cartoon; wordplay; puzzles; Top 10 lists; and comic verses. Humor can be used as an opening conversation, allowing

students to share their comic experiences in class. Humor can be used effectively to deal with problems in class, such as the top 10 instructors. Humor can also discuss sensitive topics, so students feel comfortable discussing these topics in class. Humor can be helpful for topics that are annoying and difficult. These positive ways can reach the goal.

In TEFL, humor is also needed. Based on the writers' experience, English is considered a scary subject for students. Thus, learning should be fun so that the goals can be achieved. One of the critical skills that are reading in language skills can be taught in such a way to maximize the results, and one of them is by providing the students with appropriate materials. Humor stories can be the choice. Humor stories can be used to teach any level of students, including 7th-grade students in Junior High School. Teaching reading for this grade aims to develop abilities, control speed, and measure word power topics.

Therefore, the writer tries to reduce the students' reading skill problems to find out what can be done to help them improve their reading skills. So, in this research, the writer would like to propose "The Effectiveness of Using Humor Stories to Improve Reading Skill for Seventh Grade Students."

Theory And Concept

A. Reading

Reading is one of the four primary skills that students require to acquire in order to be able to gather information from written language. Like listening, reading is considered a receptive skill requiring students to collect any provided information and process them together into comprehensible input. Reading is a process of information in which the author tells the reader the idea or message. For example, the author is considered an informant (sender), and the reader is not the recipient (Rayner et al., 2001)

Additionally, Wallace (1992, p. 5) stated that reading is so much of daily life for those who live in literate communities in which people hardly consider either the purposes or progressions complicated. Reading is a means of getting information from communication and sharing ideas. People can get information from many resources to improve their knowledge by reading.

Reading can be helpful in four steps (Blanton et al., 1990). The four steps are interrelated, namely:

- a) Word perception is the capability to identify an idea
- b) Comprehension is the capability to infer ideas from words
- c) The response is a step in which the reader interrelates intelligently and expressively.
- d) Integration is fascinating the ideas in the context of one's background.

This theory further explained the elements involved during the reading process. The process begins by recognizing groups of words and inferring some ideas, stimulating intellectual and emotional reactions that resonate with the reader's background knowledge. Thus, it is not uncommon for readers to develop a different amount of information or varied reactions to the exact written text.

B. Reading Skill

Before explaining reading skills, it is required to define the words read and understand. English speaking students must learn these skills. Reading skills can help increase other language skills. Reading ability develops in society with literary tastes because it can lead to understanding and vocabulary enrichment. Reading with other skills is more fun to do. Based on Patel and Jain (2008, pp. 113–114) explained that reading is an important activity in life that renews one's knowledge. Reading skills are essential tools for academic success. Reading is an important activity in any language course. Reading is not only a source of fun information and activities but also a means to consolidate and expand language knowledge. Reading is necessary to expand the mind and understand foreign cultures.

Furthermore, Pang et al. (2003, p. 6) stated that reading skills are connected to understanding written texts. Reading is a complex activity that involves perception and thought. Reading comprehension consists of two related processes: recognition and understanding of words. First, word recognition refers to observing how written symbols fit a person's spoken language. Understanding is also how related words, phrases, and texts are understood.

1. Benefit of Reading

Reading skill is one of the basic requirements for people to reach out for new information from a different perspective. Harmer (2007, p. 99) stated that reading is helpful for language acquisition. Reading will improve people's knowledge because the more they read, the more exposed to new information. Reading also positively affects students' vocabulary, spelling, or writing knowledge. To understand text, students must focus on what they read because reading is not only reading but also a systematic understanding of the text. He also said that reading is a very active activity. To be successful, the reader must understand what the word means, look at pictures, paint words, understand the topic, and understand whether the reader agrees. These statements show that students cannot know what the text means without understanding the word.

According to Harmer (2007, p. 98), there are four reasons for reading, that is:

- a) Reading in language learning.
- b) Reading for language learning.
- c) Reading for information.
- d) Reading for pleasure

2. Types of Reading

Reading is classified into 3;

- **Reading Aloud.**

Reading aloud, students will experience producing sounds that must be practiced as much as possible.

- **Silent Reading**

Silence reading strengthens the reader to find the meaning of words.

- **Reading Fast**

Reading fast is used to increase reading speed and comprehension.

3. Strategies of Reading

- **Skimming**

Skimming is reading text superficially quickly to obtain the idea or main idea. It is a skill that needs focus.

- **Scanning**

Scanning is reading a text to locate a specific point of information. It is used to plan the process of locating a specific word, phrase, sentence, and fact of the figure with a selection quickly.

- **Intensive reading**

Intensive reading is for recall or total correctness. It is an activity in a class way of using reading. It deals with explicit content and language study.

4. Reading for Secondary School Students

Reading skill is defined as the level of understanding of writing. Skillful reading depends on the capability to identify words quickly and naturally. If word recognition is problematic, students use too much of their processing capacity to read individual words, interfering with their ability to understand what is read. The primary purpose of reading is to discover and get information, fill in the contents, and understand the meaning of reading. Reading like this is called reading to obtain facts (reading for details or facts) following the 2013 curriculum in Indonesia.

C. Short Stories

The short story is about critical elements that construct history itself. All of these elements have their part in making history meaningful. They are themes, plots, settings, characters, and points of view. (Anderson & Anderson, 1997).

As stated above, the short story is a part of a literary genre: fiction. The short story can be classified as fiction since most of it relies on fantasy stories, such as fairy tales. It is further clarified by Klarer (2013, p. 13) that the roots of short stories lie in antiquity, and the Middle Ages story, myth, and fairy tale relate to the oldest types of textual manifestations, "texts," which were primarily orally transmitted. The short story as a part of literary works is interesting to be analyzed. Although it has a pretty short plot, a small number of characters, and a few places and times assets, the story can be fully developed. Many short stories have been examined. Typically, the analysis is related to intrinsic elements of the story.

D. Humor

1. What is humor?

Humor is a quality that makes something look fun or funny: humor, it also means humor, humor, must be fun, but humor is not humor but a symptom of it. Funny is used in small sizes to refer to humor and action, which they can use to smile.

2. Theories of Humor

Humor in modern usage means comic or silly. The teacher of humor theory can be divided into two classes; we find all innocent, harmless, and pleasant humor and laughter. More precisely, theories of humor can be divided into three groups;

- a) Theories of advantages of degradation
- b) Theories of incongruity dissociation
- c) Theories of relief of tension of release from inhibition

There are many theories about funniness, comics, and gags, but none can fully explain humor.

- a) Superiority and Degradation
- b) Incongruity and Dissociation
- c) Relief of tension humor

3. The function of Humor Stories

According to Sujoko (1982) defines that humor stories could work to make all intentions in every aspect, humor can show problems from all sides, humor can entertain, humor can speed up the mind, humor can increase one's intelligence, humor can cause someone tolerates something, and even humor can help someone understand complex problems. Our society has achieved a kind of humor as a political function or refresher tool to allow people to focus their attention for a long time. In the country of promotion, employees sometimes make humor as long as it helps facilitate their work or shooting to achieve their goals. Another important function of humor is recreation. In this case, the role of humor is to obscure boredom in people's routine activities, such as work or study.

Besides being entertaining, humor also serves as a tool for delivering criticism, usually indirect. Recently this type of humor has grown enormously when our society has become more critical and has been able to see betrayal in our environment. Humor also serves to explain things interestingly. If they find a complex subject, they look for humor relevant to it.

4. Kinds of Humor

Setiawan (1990) said to classify humor according to its expression as follows;

- 1) Performing comedy. Do the game. As a joke, mime, and other types. Humorous graphics such as funny caricature photos and others.

- 2) Literary humor. Such as funny humor stories, anecdotes, and other types.

5. The Features of Humor

There are some features of humor (anecdotes) as follows:

- 1) It is a short and straightforward story
- 2) It usually relates to one incident
- 3) It begins close to the main idea
- 4) Includes important concrete detail
- 5) It often contains several quakes
- 6) It close quickly after the climax
- 7) Requires punctual for the punch time

6. Why use humor stories?

A humorous story is a type of anecdote and is a short story from an engaging, funny, or biographical episode that can encourage students to read because it is interesting, fun, and fun for students.

The benefit of using humor stories;

- a) Get student attention
- b) Give entertainment or pleasure
- c) Stimulating

During teaching, English teachers must present humorous stories as an alternate way to give students variations in the teaching and learning process. Humor stories can show different problems to someone, humor can be entertaining, humor can speed up the mind, and humor can increase. Someone intelligent, humor can also help someone to understand complex problems. Students can understand the implicit meanings and phases of theoretical progress in written texts in the form of narratives, descriptive, codification, relationships, narratives, and new elements.

7. Humor in Reading Skill

According to Motlagh et al. (2014), reading helps gain knowledge, new information, and pleasure. Humor plays an excellent role in promoting reading skills. Sometimes, when readers face many obstacles in reading comprehension, humor can help overcome those. Hayati et al. (2011) mentioned that laughter and humor are potent ways to involve learners in reading comprehension. Insertion of humorous reading materials can promote reading skills among learners'.

Further, the author added that jokes in reading materials arouse enthusiasm. Also, it helps to pay more attention to the main content. Different types of comic strips are a good source for developing reading habits. Again Motlagh et al. (2014) said that if students like the teachers' sense of humor in a second language classroom, they get intrinsic motivation. This intrinsic motivation helps learners read target language materials for pleasure.

Research Method

The methodology used in this research is quantitative. Muijs (2012) points out that researchers analyze the data obtained in numerical form in a quantitative study. It means that mathematical calculation is used in this study to examine whether the hypothesis can be proven. This statement is in line with Creswell (2012), who states that quantitative research is suggested to be applied to examine the relationship between variables. Williams (2008) also says that the quantitative method requires the researchers to use a statistical or mathematical approach in the study's data analysis. Thus, the writer uses numerals instead of narrative words to analyze the data in this study. The writer used experimental research. Experimental research is a study that creates a condition for the subject of research as a treatment. So, the meaning of the word experiment in this research is a way of trying something new, significantly to gain experience. The writer used pre-experimental research with one group pre-test and post-test design conducted upon one studied group without a comparative or control group.

This research was conducted in An Nuriyah Islamic Junior High School 22 Jagakarsa, located in South Jakarta, DKI Jakarta. It was conducted in the second semester of 2018/2019, consisting of 25 students.

In collecting the data, pre-test and post-test will be used as the instrument. Before, a pre-test was given to know the basics of students' reading comprehension skills. The treatment was using humor stories to improve students' reading skills. The time to do this research is from October 30, 2018, to August 28, 2019. After getting the treatment, the last post-test was conducted to determine students' reading skills. After collecting the data, the writer will analyze the test result statistically. A formula used in the study is a t-test for one group.

Results And Discussion

After the field research was conducted, the writer analyzed the data gained from the research. Furthermore, the result of the data analysis could be described as follows:

Table 1 Criteria of Students' Pre-test and Post-test Reading Skill

CRITERIA	SCORE
Excellent	5 (90-100)
Good	4 (76-89)
Enough	3 (66-75)
Poor	2 (40-65)
Very Poor	1 (00-39)

Table 2 Experimental Class Students' Pre-test Reading Skill

Students' Reading Skill Level	Total Number of Students	Total Number of the Students in Percentage
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Excellent	0	0%
Good	3	12%
Enough	10	25%
Poor	12	48%
Very Poor	0	0%

From the table above, it can be described that in the Experimental Class, three Students were good (12%), ten students were enough (25%), and twelve students were poor (48%). No student got excellent or very poor (0%).

Table 3 Experiment class students' post-test result

Students' Reading Skill Level	Total Number of Students	Total Number of the Students in Percentage
Excellent	7	28%
Good	11	44%
Enough	7	28%
Poor	0	0%
Very Poor	0	0%

From the table above, it can be described that in the Experimental Class, seven students were excellent (28%), 11 students were good (44%), and seven students were enough (28%). Furthermore, there was no poor student (0%).

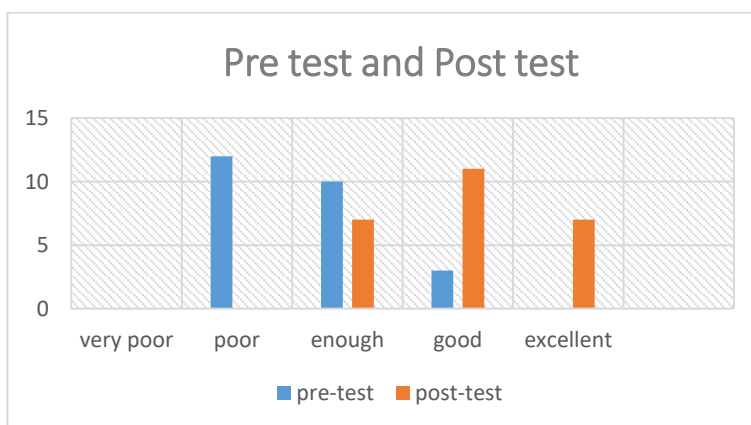


Figure 1 Students' Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Conclusion

Based on the writer held in the eighth-grade students at An Nuriyah Islamic Junior High School Cipedak, Jagakarsa. It can be decided that using humor stories in reading skills. It shows that the result after the humor stories are applied is higher than before the treatment. The data were collected from the multiple-choice test (pre-test and post-test).

The result of the student's post-test was higher than the pre-test result—the result of this analysis obtained t_o (t-observation) of 1,997. Meanwhile, t_t (t-table) is

1.708 with a significant 5% which means that t_o (t-observation) is higher than t_t (t-table).

From the explanation above, it can be decided that teaching reading skills using humor stories in the seventh grade of An Nuriyah Islamic Junior High School 22 Jagakarsa is reasonable enough to improve students' reading skills.

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