THE ROLE OF ILLUSTRATION IN ENHANCING READING COMPREHENSION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRAK

Rendahnya minat baca siswa di Indonesia ditandai dengan frekuensi membaca yang kurang, sehingga siswa kurang mampu membaca dan menafsirkan suatu teks dengan benar. Penelitian ini ditujukan untuk menganalisis peningkatan tingkat keterampilan membaca mahasiswa melalui penerapan metode pengajaran menggunakan ilustrasi. Data yang dikumpulkan adalah skor pretes dan posttest, serta penjaringan pendapat siswa melalui kuesioner dan wawancara. Data skor berupa hasil pretest dan posttest dianalisa secara kuantitatif, sedangkan opini siswa yang diperoleh dari kuesioner dan wawancara dianalisa secara kualitatif. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa terdapat peningkatan yang signifikan dalam keterampilan membaca siswa. Perubahan signifikan ini tidak hanya terdapat pada pembaca ahli tetapi juga pada pembaca tingkat menengah dan pembaca tingkat rendah.

Kata kunci: ilustrasi, keterampilan, membaca, minat baca

ABSTRACT

The low interest in reading makes the students have less reading frequency, thus the students are not much experienced in reading correctly. This problem leads them to have a low level of comprehension skill. This research is intended to check and find out whether the students can improve their level of comprehension skill after being given a certain teaching completed with some treatments. The research investigates the impact of using illustrations and its effects on students' attitude. The data are in the form of scores and students' opinions. Score data is obtained from the result of pretest and posttest which are calculated quantitatively. While questionnaire and interview are analyzed qualitatively to support the explanation. The results show that there is significant enhancement in student reading skills not only of the expert readers but also of the average readers and of poor readers.

Keywords: illustrations, reading comprehension, illustrations as source information, word decoding.

Introduction

Reading comprehension is a complex and difficult activity for many readers. Reading comprehension describes comprehension as an active process where readers, with their knowledge and skills, attend to text information, consider what is important, and connect information with the goal of constructing a coherent mental representation of text ideas (Berger and Perfetti, 1997). Comprehension is a cognitive process where readers construct and integrate text information. Readers assemble phrase and sentence-level text propositions and integrate information within and across paragraphs to construct a text base representation in reading program (Gately, 2008).

In understanding language, people need a communication tool to give and take messages. Communication will not occur if speaker and listener have a lack of understanding the meaning. By language communication will be delivered because speaker can point out the surrounding objects and describe the surrounding events. Language consists of four skills those are reading, listening, speaking and writing. Besides communication between speaker and listener, there is also a communication between reader and writer. When the reader is able to understand reading text that would be better for him/her because reading text provides some messages. So that writer and reader are able to arrange some proportion and information in their message through language (Fox, 2009).

People use language as a tool. By language people support their social life as a human being. People cannot avoid using language as a common phenomenon in human life. There are three characteristics in communication, those are the sender who delivers the message, the receiver who interpret the message, and the message itself that contains information. The reader is supposed to be able to understand the text which is put forward by the writer. There are three characteristics in communication, those are the sender who delivers the message, the receiver who interpret the message, and the message itself that contains information. Reading text provides language feature information knowledge and it is constructed by words. Hence, understanding words, it plays an important role as the first step to comprehend reading and to get some information.

In school, method should be able to increase students' motivation in learning English especially in speaking English. Method has to be able to manipulate, able

to see, able to listen, and able to read. At least the teacher hopes that the method can motivate students to speak English to communicate with their need especially in the classroom and in their daily need in general. In teaching reading comprehension, there is a suitable method which can be implemented.

The material put forward for students should be explained in the sequent activity and should have purposes. To reach the purposes, teacher needs media that contribute a lot in his/her teaching process during putting forward the material and implementing the procedural activity. A relevant media will make it easier both the theory of material and the practice of procedural activity in classroom. Implementing pictures is a suitable strategy in reading comprehension because pictures are important tools and have many superiorities.

Pictures can make students more interested in learning especially reading comprehension so that they do not worry since the first section has started. Second, the students will not only read but see and experience the nuance of the text. Third, pictures have function as a learning drill to aid memorization (Carney, 2001).

The origin of the word "illustration" is the verb illustrate. An illustration is a decoration, interpretation or visual explanation of a text, concept or process, designed for integration in published media, such as posters, flyers, magazines, books, teaching materials, animations, video games and films. Illustration can be expressive, stylised and realistic or highly technical depending on the purpose itself. Illustration using a wide range of styles covers drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, montage, digital design, multimedia, and 3D modelling.

If the potential of illustrations is to be fully exploited in the normal classroom, picture effects must be documented and understood in normal or average readers. Eye-gaze patterns of images demonstrate that viewers show a strong preference for the human figure in illustrations (Buckley, 2013).

Method

1. Sample

Population can be defined as a group to whom the researcher would like to generalize the result of the study. The population of this research was the first year of industrial engineering at Sekolah Tinggi Teknologi Bandung. The reason for choosing the first year is mostly because English subject is taught in the first year as English 1 and English 2. The researcher

has a chance to teach them English 1 and English 2. There are ten classes as population and each class has vary students that is 29-35 students. The research considers that it will be challenging for her to investigate students' achievement in reading comprehension through informational text by using illustrations.

2. Design

In order to find answer of the problems mentioned above, this study uses mixed-method design which involves "The use of quantitative and qualitative data in a single study". This mixed-methods concurrent embedded design collected the data both qualitatively and quantitatively at the same time (Kendeou et al., 2016). Besides quantitative, the researcher uses qualitative data and use this as the secondary data to support the primary data.

In this research, the researcher collected data by conducting experimental studies and observation at the same time in experimental group. Besides, the researcher also collected data by conducting control studies and observation at the same time in control group. The conducted study was about the use of illustrations in reading informational text on students' reading comprehension. The conducted observation was about the students' attitude towards the use of illustrations in reading informational text on students' behavior. From conducting studies (experimental and control group) and observation, the researcher collected data both quantitative and qualitative.

3. Procedure

The research design has several procedures as follows: (1) It has two groups of subjects namely the experimental and control groups; (2) The two groups are compared with respect to measurement or observation on the dependent variable. (3) Both group are measured twice; the first measurement serves as the pre-test and the second measurement serves as post-test. (4) Measurement on the dependent variable for both groups are conducted at the same time with the same test. (5) The experimental group is manipulated with particular treatment. In this study, the experimental group is taught using illustrations as the treatment in reading informational text, then students' reading comprehension will be measured. On the other side, the control group was taught without treatment or illustrations in reading informational text, then students' reading comprehension will be measured. In order to answer the first research questions, pre-test and post-test were conducted as the research instruments

while the observation, questionnaires and interview were admitted to answer the second research question.

From the design above, participants of research were grouped into two groups those are one experimental group and one control group. The quality of participants (both experimental and control group) was checked at the first time by conducting pre-test. In conducting pre-test, there were 3 sessions those are session 1, session 2, and session 3 to get an appropriate measurement. The result of pre-test was measured in number. Then, the experimental study taught by using illustrations was applied to the experimental group, while the control group was taught without illustrations. After giving treatment to experimental group and non-treatment to control group, the researcher hold post-test. There were 3 sessions of post-test those are session 1, session 2, and session 3. It happened to get a concrete data. It is the same with pre-test data, post-test data was measured in number.

From both result of pre-test and post-test, the researcher then compares and find out whether there is a difference or not between the experimental group treated by illustrations and the control group treated without illustrations. When there is a difference, the researcher will find out whether the difference is in positive category or negative category. In this research, the independent variable was the group that is treated by the use of illustrations in reading informational text. This was the treatment or manipulated variable in order to assess their possible effects on one or more other variables. The dependent variable is students'' speaking scores. This was the variable that depends on what independent variable does not do it (Walter, 2014)

The quantitative data consists of the result from the treatment which was conducted in experimental group and non-treatment which was conducted in control group. The data will be displayed in pre-test and post-test. The qualitative data consists of the result of observation, questionnaire and interview. This data explores the students' behavior during learning process. Behavioral component means the students pay fully attention during the learning process and trying hard to learn.

This article aims to investigate the effect of using illustrations in teaching reading informational text on the students' reading comprehension.

Results and Discussion

Based on the data, it was found that posttest mean score of experimental group was 78.9517 which is higher than the mean score posttest of control group 58.3517. It means that the mean of N-Gain score in experimental group is higher than in

In experiment group, there is a difference between mean score in pre-test and post-test, that is +18.7138. While in control group, there is also a difference between mean score in pre-test and post-test, that is -1.7242. From the data, it can be seen that both groups have difference. In experimental group, the difference is positive. The mean score in post-test is higher than mean score in pre-test. It differs from the control group. In the control group, the difference is negative. Besides, the mean score in post-test is lower than mean score in pre-test.

From the result above, it can be seen that the use of illustrations is effective in improving reading comprehension

control group. The different result of experimental group is +18.7138 which is higher than the different result of control group -1.7242. It means that the data distribution in the control group was more equal than in the experimental (Table 1). proficiency. The variances of two groups' pretest scores were equal.

The result of post-test computation showed difference between the experimental group who was treated using illustrations and the control group who was not treated using illustrations. Based on the information above, it can be concluded that the implementation of illustrations gave positive effect toward students' reading comprehension.

The findings showed that the students in experimental group have higher improvement than the students in control group. It means that teaching reading comprehension using illustrations can improve students' reading skill. Visual evidence is a powerful and decorative tool.

Table 1. Questionnaire Result

	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Gain Score	Std. Deviation	Variance
Control	29	60.0759	58.3517	-1.7242	7.87131	61.958
Eksperiment	29	60.2379	78.9517	+ 18.7138	6.02469	36.297
Valid N (listwise)	29					

Visual evidence offers a stimulus to further study, reading and research. Decorative illustrations which were functioned to boost students' interest and entertain the reader (Seaton, 2002).

The implementation of illustrations here is also an appropriate strategy in teaching reading comprehension. Since the posttest result of experimental group is higher than the posttest of control group, it can be seen that content in illustrations also contributed in the students' reading comprehension partially in eye-gaze. This is also in line with the statement as follows, eye-gaze patterns of images demonstrate that viewers show a strong preference for the human figure in illustrations.
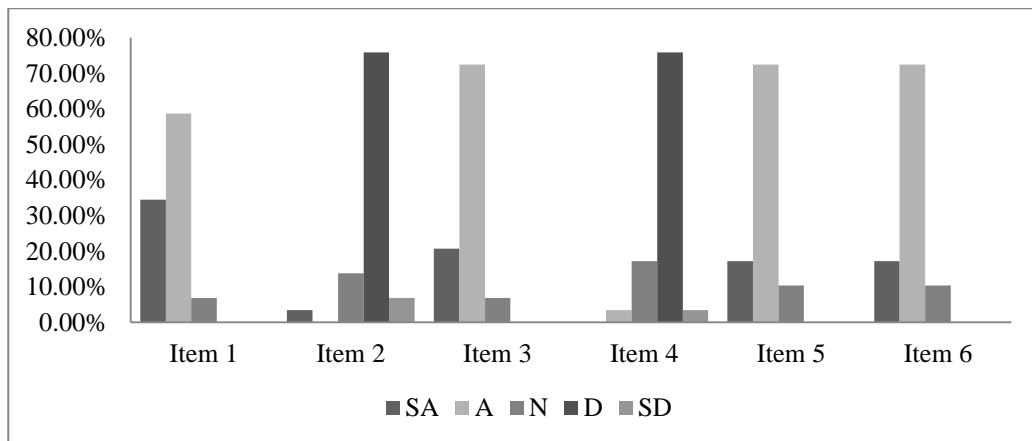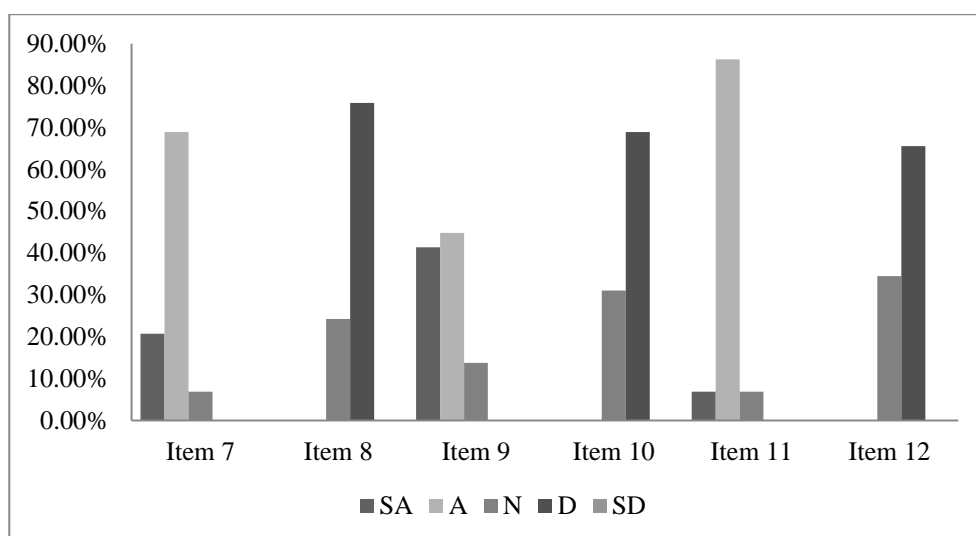

Figure 1. Students' Cognitive Response

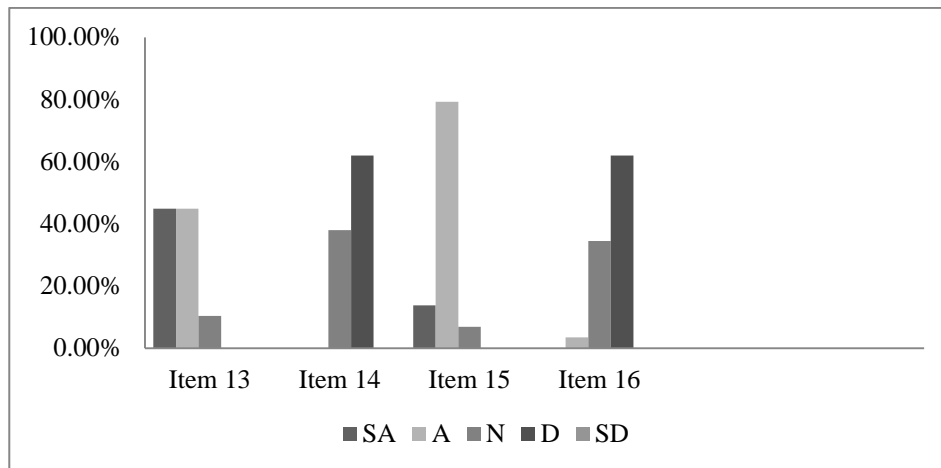**Figure 2.** Students' AffectiveResponse

Figure 3. Students' Behavioral Response

Based on the data, the students showed positive response in three aspects of attitudes those are cognitive, affective and behavioral (Figure 1-3). In cognitive aspect, it explains clearly that the students show positive attitude toward the implementation of illustrations in reading comprehension (Figure 1). Those positive responses were expressed as the following statements. First, the implementation of illustrations is an interesting way to learn reading comprehension. Second, the implementation of illustrations is an effective way to learn reading comprehension. Third, the implementation of illustrations is an appropriate way in learning reading comprehension. Fourth, the implementation of illustrations is easy to understand and read.

Those positive statements above can be seen from the mean of cognitive aspect 3.96 which is higher than neutral score.

The students disagree with mentioned that illustrations are not easy to understand. They also disagree that illustrations are not appropriate and effective way to learn reading comprehension. Besides, the students disagree with the statement that mentioned illustrations are not easy to understand.

The students' positive response in cognitive aspect above is in line with some theories mentioned in chapter two. The students have positive response that illustrations are **interesting** way to learn reading comprehension. Since the illustrations were interesting way, the students were interested in illustrations. From the theory, it is mentioned that students' interest can be reached by using illustrations in text.

The students also mentioned that using illustrations is **effective** in teaching reading comprehension. When reading the text, the

students were supposed to find out the meaning of the content of the text. Since informational text has more complex text, illustrations help the students to understand the complex content. Besides, interpretational pictures help to clarify difficult text. It is proven by the high presentage againt the learning comprehension without illustrations.

The next point, the students have positive response to illustrations are **appropriate** way to learn reading comprehension. This indicated that illustrations facilitate the students the content understanding and the memory of the content.

Besides, related to the characteristic of illustrations, the students believe that illustrations are **easy** to understand. It is showed from the high percentage from those who answered agree in this item. The normal and average readers here mean that illustrations exploited in the class can be understood by both good reader and poor reader. This is also supported by the researcher who design the illustrations based on the way to use illustrations and who considered the advantages and disadvantages of illustrations itself. In chapter two, it was mentioned that there are three disadvantages of illustrations those are size, color and distance. The

researcher considers those disadvantages when designing illustrations so that the illustrations could be distributed and exploited well.

Concerning affective aspect, the students believed that illustrations are **safe** media to learn reading comprehension (Figure 2). This means that illustrations were helpful for the students to learn reading comprehension. The students also agree that the implementation of illustrations in practicing reading comprehension could help them to **improve** their reading comprehension proficiency.

Besides that, the students also agreed that they **felt motivated** when they learnt English text by using illustrations. The existence of illustrations can make them feel motivated. From this statement, it can be concluded that illustrations played important role in motivating the students. Since the illustrations motivated the students to learn reading comprehension, it can be stated that illustrations could get the students' interest. It means much attention from the students could be attracted by using illustration in text.

Based on the data above, the students considered illustrations as a safe media to learn reading comprehension, felt

motivated while reading activity and could improve their reading skill.

Besides cognitive and affective aspects, there is behavioral aspect which is also important to know students' response toward learning reading comprehension and learning English in further (Figure 3). The data from behavioral aspects showed that the students responded positively toward the implementation of illustrations. Practicing reading by using illustrations has enhanced their motivation to read more English text and learn English in general.

Further, the positive attitude from the students toward the implementations of illustrations in reading comprehension is one of the factor to their significance increase on their reading comprehension learning. As indicated by the result of students' test, the increase of the students mean score of experimental group is +18,7138 (mean score pretest = 60,2379 and mean score posttest = 78,9517). It is different from the increase of the students' mean score of control group is -1, 7242 (mean score pretest = 60, 0759 and mean score posttest = 58, 3517). Based on the comparison, it can be said that there is a significant improvement in experimental group.

During the research, the researcher found some recommendations from the students participated in the class. Besides, this study is still far from the perfect one. There are some recommendations which can be considered by the further researcher those are: 1) when distributing text, it would be better to consider the word length of the text. The researcher also should provide a text with considered density. A text with shorter word length was not too good for adult learner, but a text with too much word length was also not appropriate way to encourage students in learning reading comprehension. 2) When using illustrations in teaching reading comprehension, it would be better if the teacher not only printed the illustrations along with the text but also shows the illustrations in front of the class so that the disadvantage of illustrations can be maintained as well. One of the disadvantages of illustration is about distance. In this case, the teacher are not only supposed to consider the size and color but also to consider the distance. 3) In teaching learning, it would be better when the teacher provides a set of game or fun activity before or after learning process so that the students will be more motivated in learning English especially in learning reading comprehension. 4) The place where the researcher conducted the pretest and posttest also should be considered as

well. From this study, the room where the researcher collected the data was not large enough since the number of students were 29 students. Actually larger room was needed since the students were supposed to sit apart from one to another when they had to participate in pretest and posttest. It was because some rooms were re-constructed so that the researcher could only use provided room and she could not choose another room which is larger.

Summary

In experiment group, there is a difference between mean score in pre-test and post-test, that is +18.7138. While in control group, there is also a difference between mean score in pre-test and post-test, that is -1.7242. From the data, it can be seen that both groups have difference. In experimental group, the difference is positive. The mean score in post-test is higher than mean score in pre-test. It differs from the control group. In the control group, the difference is negative. Besides, the mean score in post-test is lower than mean score in pre-test.

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Based on the data above, the students considered illustrations as a safe media to learn reading comprehension, felt motivated while reading activity and could improve their reading skill. Besides cognitive and affective aspects, there is behavioral aspect which is also important to know students' response toward learning reading comprehension and learning English in further. The data from behavioral aspects showed that the students responded positively toward the implementation of illustrations. Practicing reading by using illustrations has enhanced their motivation to read more English text and learn English in general

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