

**IMPROVING DESCRIPTIVE READING
COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT OF THE TENTH
GRADE STUDENTS OF SMA ISLAM AZ-ZAHRA 1
PALEMBANG BY USING LOCAL CULTURE
MATERIALS**

A Thesis by

AYU APRIYESI WULANDARI

Student Number: 06011381320037

English Education Study Program

Language and Arts Education Department



FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

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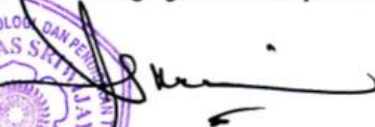


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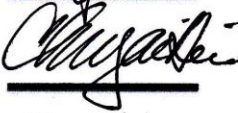
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The Undersigned,


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This thesis is dedicated to :

- ♥ **My parents (Amir Hamzah & Darmayanti) for their prayers, encouragement, love, care and patience.**
- ♥ **My lovely two sisters (Ririn Nopiyanti and Dania Palupi), my three brothers (Andika, Firdaus, and Saka), my sister in law Mardewi thank you very much for your support, encouragement, and everything.**
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Motto

“ Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of people until they change what is in themselves.”

(Surah Ar- Rad 13:11)

“Allah never said the road would be easy. But he said “ I will be with those who have patience.”

.....

“Stars cant’t shine without darkness”

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to find out whether or not there was a significant improvement in descriptive students' reading comprehension achievement and the aspects of reading comprehension after they were taught by using Local Culture Materials. This study also was to find out whether or not there was a significant difference in descriptive reading comprehension achievement between the students who were taught by using local culture materials and those who were not. This study was a quasi-experimental research method that applied non-equivalent control group research design. The population of this study was the tenth-grade students of a private senior high school in Palembang in academic year 2017-2018 and the number of sample was 70 students, who were selected by using convenience sampling technique. A reading comprehension test was used to collect the data which were analyzed statistically by using paired and independent sample t-tests. The results of this study revealed that there was a significant improvement in descriptive reading comprehension achievement and the aspects of reading comprehension after the students were taught by using local culture materials. There was also a significant difference in descriptive reading comprehension achievement between the students who were taught by using local culture materials and those who were not. Therefore, it can be concluded that Local Culture Materials were effective in improving descriptive reading comprehension achievement.

Keywords: Local Culture materials, Descriptive Text, Reading Comprehension.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background, the problems of the study, the objectives of the study, and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background

In Indonesia, English is an obligatory subject for secondary school. The students learn the four language skills of English namely, listening, reading, speaking, and writing. To master all the skills is not easy. According to Krashen and Terrel (1983, p. 131), reading offers a contribution to the overall competence of the four language skills. It means that reading skill can build other language skills. It is in line with Harmer (2001) who states that reading helps provide the opportunities to study such things as vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and the way sentences, paragraph, and text are constructed.

The importance of reading is stated by Komiyama (2009) who says, “Reading is an important skill for English language learners in today’s world; it supports the development of overall proficiency and provides access to crucial information at work and in school” (p.32). It means, through reading students can gain much information to support their learning activities. In addition, Cunningham and Stanovich (2001, p. 147) assert “ people who read a lot will enhance their verbal intelligence; that is reading makes them smarter”.

Nuttal (as cited in Antoni, 2010, p. 40) says that one of very important of reading purposes is to get meaning from a text. Valentine, Rosmalina, and Hayati, (2015) also claim that, in reading the readers are not only simply seeing the word and translating them but also comprehending what is seen and deciphered on the text. It can be said that the idea of reading is comprehending the text because there is no reading without comprehension. This statement is in line with Lakshmi and Rao (2006, p. 7), who say, “reading without comprehension is not reading at all”.

Consequently, as Duran (2013) mentions, reading and comprehension are associated to each other like cause and effect relation. It means reading and comprehension truly have connections because the goal of reading is to gain overall understanding of what is described in the text. To do so, the students need to read the whole text. Additionally, Bulut (2017) says, "reading comprehension is students' act of thinking and constructing meanings in pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading stages". It means to comprehend the text, the readers could not focus on one stage only, but they have to think critically in all those three stages.

As mentioned earlier, English reading skill is important that it can support the learning of the other language skills. However, the fact shows that reading literacy of Indonesian students is considered low. Data from Education First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) (2016) on the adult English proficiency among 72 countries shows that Indonesia is in the 32nd rank. It is categorized as moderate proficiency with the score only 52.91. This data can suggest that Indonesian students' English proficiency is still low.

The unsatisfactory English proficiency can be caused by the difficulties faced by Indonesian students in learning English as a foreign language. English is not used in all aspects of daily life especially in reading. For example, in schools, the language used in form of reading like textbooks which are learned by the students is not written in English except their English textbook. So that, it might be the reason why the students get problem in understanding the English text. Jafari and Shokhpour (2012) describe that students failures in understanding the English texts are because they are lack of English proficiency, unfamiliarity with the content of the text, and less effective reading strategies use. Jayanti (2016) who did a study to examine and compare students' and teachers' perception regarding students' reading difficulties in Bengkulu concluded that some factors that make reading difficult for students are vocabulary knowledge, syntactic and semantic analysis of text, making inferential meaning, strategy use and students feeling during reading.

Reading skill is undoubtedly one of the important factors which should be considered seriously in learning English. According to the Indonesian National School

Based-Curriculum 2006, the senior high school students' learn English on the informational level. In this level, the students are required to be able to get any information in English. The students should also have the ability to understand and create various short functional texts, such as procedure, descriptive, recount, narrative, report, news items, and analytical exposition. In this study, the focus was on descriptive text.

According to Sari (2014), descriptive text is one kind of text that should be learned in the first semester of the tenth-grade students in Curriculum 2013. However, the students still get problems in learning descriptive text. To get more information about the problem, the writer did an informal interview with the English teacher of the private senior high school where the writer conducted SMA Az-Zahra 1 Palembang. According to her, the problems in teaching descriptive text are: First, the students still get confused how to distinguish text types and its features. Second, the students get difficulty to comprehend the texts because they lacked of vocabulary. Third, the students get bored to read because the topic is not familiar. Moreover, the writer also gave a written survey to the students X IPA1 and X IPA 2 randomly. Based on the survey, most of the students were confused to choose the object that they need to describe and they did not have any information on it. Second, they did not have strategies how to describe the thing. Last but not least, they lacked of vocabulary and did not know which tenses are going to be used. Based on these problems, it is crucial to have the strategies and interesting and familiar materials to improve the students' descriptive reading comprehension achievement. Descriptive text is a text which describe a particular person, animal, place or thing (Sari, 2014, p. 98).

To overcome the problems above, the writer focused her study on teaching descriptive text by using local culture materials. Choundhry (2014) says that culture refers to an appreciation of good literature, music, art, and food. Meanwhile, Baker (2003) states Culture is relevant to information with regard to the target or foreign culture, including music, dance, human beings' way of life, festivals, geography, history, and vice versa. In addition, local belongs to or connected with the particular place or area that people are talking about or with the place that people live (Oxford

dictionary, 2010, p. 873). Therefore, local culture refers to the human beings' way of life, festival, historical place, history, art, music, dance, and food which come from particular area. For example, in Palembang, there are Monumen Perjuangan Rakyat (MONPERA) and Siguntang Hill as a historical place, Pempek or Fishcake as the traditional food, and Songket and Jumputan as traditonal fabric from Palembang.

Cahyono (2013) argues that the reason why there are some authors emphasize the use of local culture in teaching of EFL in Indonesian is in order to preserve the EFL learner's cultural identity. In addition, Dalimunte and Tipka as cited in Cahyono (2013) mention that teaching English through local culture gives a number advantages such as activating the students' background knowledge, making the students interested and motivated them to talk about their own culture and providing relevant materials for the needs of many students. refers to the human beings' way of life, festival, historical place, history, art, music, dance, and food which come from particular area.

The use of local culture materials in teaching descriptive text is really beneficial. As explained in previous paragraph, local culture is about the human beings' way of life, festival, historical place, history, art, music, dance, and food which come from particular area. Hence, it is likely helped the students to learn descriptive text. Besides the reading text can attract the students' interest because it is familiar to them, it also will improve their English ability to learn descriptive text. Based on the finding of Estuarso, Basthomi, and Widiati (2016) who did a research on students' reading materials needs at SMP N 5 Ngawen (Yogyakarta), 61% of the students admitted that they needed reading materials about their local culture as learning source materials, 73 like reading English about their own culture in English, and 85 about places familiar to their experience. They also found the most popular topics that the students' needed to learn were about tourism or place of interests referring to descriptive text. Therefore, it can be said that the use of local culture materials is the best way for teaching descriptive text.

However, bringing local culture materials into the classroom teaching still in problems since the existence of local culture which contains local culture materials still limited. It is proved by study done by Syahri and Susanti (2016) who did an

analysis study about local and target culture integration in English textbook for senior high school in Palembang. In this study, nine books series with different publisher were analyzed. The result shows that five of books have higher percentage of Local Culture which presented through reading passage, meanwhile, under pictures analysis, six of them promote more salient in Target Culture. It can be said that the local culture materials is less existence then target culture.

The less existence of local culture materials in English textbook has become the reason for additionally a study focusing on developing teaching materials with local-culture based. For example, Ningtiyas (2016) who was a Magister student at Pasca Sarjana UNSRI focused her study on developing Palembang local culture-based instructional descriptive reading material. Her study showed that the texts created were highly valid in terms content and construct. It was also highly practical and effective for the students of level four reading level as measured by Flesch Grade Level Readability Formula. Another study was done by Monica (2016) who developed local based based-instructional graded reading materials for reading level three based agricultural products from Lubuklinggau. The result of her study also found similar results as Ningtiyas (2015). It revealed that the content and construct was highly validity, the materials development was highly practical, and the field test of the evaluation was effective.

Because the focus of this study was improving descriptive text reading comprehension achievement by using local culture from Palembang, the writer decided to use the materials developed by Ningtiyas (2016) as the teaching materials. Hence, the writer conducted the research entitled “Improving Descriptive Reading Comprehension Achievement of the Tenth Grade Students of SMA Islam Az-Zahra 1 Palembang by Using Local Culture Materials. However, as mentioned in previous paragraphs, local culture materials have many aspects such as historical place, way of life, festival, music, dance, art, and food and in this study the writer focused on teaching local culture materials through art that is Palembang traditional fabric created by Ningtiyas, Diem, and Vianty (2016).

1.2 The Problems of the Study

The problems of this study are formulated in the following questions:

1. Is there any significant improvement in descriptive reading comprehension achievement of the tenth-grade students of SMA Islam Az-Zahra 1 Palembang between before and after they were taught by using local culture materials?
2. Is there any significant improvement in each aspect of descriptive reading comprehension achievement of the tenth-grade students of SMA Islam Az-Zahra 1 Palembang between before and after they were taught by using local culture materials?
3. Is there any significant difference in descriptive reading comprehension achievement of the tenth-grade students of SMA Islam Az-Zahra 1 Palembang who were taught by using local culture materials and those who were not?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems above, the objectives of the study are:

1. To find out whether or not there is any significant improvement in descriptive reading comprehension achievement of the tenth-grade students of SMA Islam Az-Zahra 1 Palembang between before and after they are taught by using local culture materials.
2. To find out whether or not there is any significant improvement in each aspect of descriptive reading comprehension achievement of the tenth-grade students of SMA Islam Az-Zahra 1 Palembang between before and after they were taught by using local culture materials
3. To find out whether or not there is any significant difference in descriptive reading comprehension achievement of the tenth-grade students of SMA Islam Az-Zahra 1 Palembang who were taught by using local culture materials and those who were not.

1.4 Significance of the research

Hopefully, this study can give insight to the students and English teacher and other researchers. Through local culture, first, the students can comprehend the text well and can preserve their cultural identity. Second, the teacher will have new teaching materials that can be applied in teaching classroom. Finally, this study can be referenced for researchers who are interested in the same study.

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