

TEACHING ADJECTIVES THROUGH SHORT-STORIES

AN ARTICLE

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Abstract

The research investigated whether using short-stories as a teaching media was significant to teach students adjective. It was a pre-experimental research with one group pre-test and post-test design. There were 38 students of VIII D learning group who participated in this research. The data were collected by objective tests and analyzed using t-test and effect size formula. The research found that the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. The obtained t-value (8.75) was bigger than the critical value of t (1.678) by the degree of freedom 37. The effect size was categorized high since the ES value was 1.41 and bigger than 0.8. To conclude, teaching through short-stories is significant and very effective to teach adjectives to Year – 8 students of “SMPN 21 Pontianak” in Academic Year 2017/2018.

Key Words: *Short-stories, Adjective, Teaching Media*

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is taught compulsorily in schools. To master English, students need to be skilled in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Besides, students also need to master vocabulary and grammar. Vocabulary expresses meaning and grammar is used as the rule. It is emphasized, “Without grammar very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (Wilkins, 1972, p. 111).

One of the word classes taught in school is adjectives. In reference to Curriculum 2013, Year – 8 students of junior high schools are demanded to learn adjectives and to write descriptive texts. Referring to the pre-observation, the Year – 8 students of “SMPN 21 Pontianak” still got difficulties in learning adjectives. They did not understand the function and the usage of adjectives in a sentence, since they were only taught adjectives in isolation and limited context. Amirian and Momeni (2012) claim that

learning words should be in context to provide students with the examples of how to use the word properly in a sentence. Therefore, it is important to find out a medium that provides the examples of how adjectives are used in a specific context.

There are numbers of media to teach the students adjectives. One of them is children short stories. This type of text is known as the literacy media to teach second or foreign language since the nineteenth century (Erkaya, 2005). Esenwein cited in Colibaba (2010) defines, “A short story is a brief, imaginative narrative, unfolding a single predominating incident and a single chief character; it contains a plot, the details of which are so compressed, and the whole treatment so organized, as to produce a single impression” (p.226). In addition, Najem (2016) claims that a short story as part of contemporary fiction can have 1,000 to 20,000 words.

Therefore, it can be summed up that a short story is a short narrative work which takes shorter time to read than a novel, it includes a single plot, single main character, shorter clear details, and only one theme. This simplicity and the variation of themes make short stories suitable for English learning media in all level of learners. Since children short stories vary in themes, they contain different types of words including adjectives and its function based on the stories' themes. Then, students can identify the usage of adjectives within words from the stories and become more familiar with them. Moreover, Gashemi (2011, p. 265) states, "When the short story is chosen based on the students' level of English proficiency, it can offer them adequate linguistic, intellectual, and emotional involvement and enrich their learning experience."

Similar studies have been conducted. For example, Wijayanti (2008) studied short stories telling to enhance students' vocabulary mastery. She found that short stories' telling was effective to teach students vocabulary. Handayani (2013) studied short stories to teach reading. She found that, even though the level of the text that she used was difficult for the students of a junior high school in Bandung, it was effective. Pardede (2011) reported that a short story was effective to teach four language skills. However, the above studies were classroom action research.

The present research was different from the previous in the objective, the form of research and the chosen short stories that being used as teaching media. This was a pre-experimental research using local children short-stories. Thus, the aim of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of using short-stories to teach adjectives in EFL classroom. The researcher expected that teaching adjectives through short-stories can be effective.

Regarding to utilize short-stories as teaching media, there is a new language teaching method called Short Story-Based Language Teaching (SSBLT) that relies on humanistic literature that supports students' awareness on personality, culture, linguistics,

and aims to refine the four language skills together (Khatib & Seyyedrazei, 2013). SSBLT is promoting the usage of short story as the main material and media, functioning interaction and communication, and helping learners become the critical thinkers by focus on teaching vocabulary and grammar of the target language in the context of the short story.

Since SSBLT derives from text-based learning, the role of short story as text media helps the learner to learn target language through written text in order to acquire words' meaning and their typical language environment (Qian, 2011).

To teach the students adjectives, Brabham and Vilaume (2002) assert that students need a profound commitment to enrich their vocabulary and comprehension like instruction to allow them to deepen their words understanding. Therefore, teachers can help the students to discover the words use, and deepen their words comprehension by giving them contextualized material like short story (Parvareshtar & Ghoorchaiei, 2016).

In EFL or ESL classrooms, a short story also plays an important role in developing vocabulary including adjectives of the learners. It is argued that students who read more have rich vocabulary (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2004). Moreover, Collie and Slater cited in (Bakhodirovna, 2015) support that short-stories can be used in all levels (beginner to advance), all ages (young learners to adults) and all classes.

METHOD

As seen in the background, the research was aimed to find out the significant of the effectiveness of short-stories using to teach adjectives. This research was a pre-experimental design with one group pre-test and post-test design. The purpose of this research was to investigate whether using short-stories as a teaching media was significant to teach students adjective on the Year-10 students of "SMPN 21 Pontianak" in Academic Year 2017/2018.

The research design involved pre-test, experimental treatment, and the post-test

(Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991). The pre-experimental design with one group pre-test post-test design is described by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) as follows:

Table I: One Group Pre-Test And Post-Test Design

<i>Pre-test</i>	Treatment	<i>Post-test</i>
O ₁	X	O ₂

The pre-test was applied to measure the students' basic score of adjectives before the treatment. The post-test was applied to measure the students' outcome after the treatment.

The population of this research was Year – 8 students of “SMPN 21 Pontianak” in Academic Year 2017/2018 which consisted of 254 students. They were distributed into six learning groups from VIII A to VIII F. The sample of this research was taken using random cluster sampling from the seven learning group, since the chosen sample is not an individual but a group (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010). These learning groups shared the same criteria of using the same student work sheet, having the same time allocation, and learning with the same teacher. The chosen sample was the VIII D learning group.

This research applied a measurement technique. To collect the data, the instrument used was a written test consisting of 25 questions about adjectives that was held twice in the pre-test and the post-test. To measure the content validity, the test item was specified as seen in the following:

Table II: Items of Specification

Specifications	Number of Items
Superlative	1,4,6
Comparative	2,3,5,7,8,10
Quality	13,15,18,19,20,22,24,25
Color	14, 21, 23
Time and Condition	11, 16

The collected data were computed using t-test and effect size formula. The t-test formula was used to measure the significance of the treatment. After obtaining the t-value, the effect size was computed. Using ES formula, the obtained result of ES calculation was classified (Cohen et al., 2007) into the following.

Table III: Criteria of the Effect Size

Value	Categories
0 - 0.1	Weak effect
0.2 - 0.3	Modest effect
0.4 - 0.5	Moderate effect
0.6 - 0.8	Strong effect
> 0.8	Very high effect

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings of this research showed that there was a significant difference in students' achievement before and after the treatment. It is shown that the students' post-test score was higher than their pre-test scores ($81.48 > 61.79$).

The obtained t-value was 8.75. At the degree of freedom (d_f) = 37 and significance value = 0.05, the obtained t-value of this research is 8.75, bigger than the critical value of r from the t-table (1.687). It indicates that teaching adjectives through short-stories to Year – 8 students of “SMPN 21 Pontianak” in Academic Year 2017/2018 increased the students' adjectives mastery achievement significantly. Then, the alternative hypothesis (Teaching through short-stories is significant to teach adjectives to Year – 8 students of “SMPN 21 Pontianak” in Academic Year 2017/2018) is accepted, and the null hypothesis (Teaching through short-stories is not significant to teach adjectives to Year – 8 students of “SMPN 21 Pontianak” in Academic Year 2017/2018) is rejected.

The ES obtained is 1.41. The result gained is bigger than 0.8 ($ES > 0.8$) and thus, it is considered as high.

Discussion

The obtained t-value of this research is 8.75, bigger than the critical value of t from the t-table (1.687), while the ES (effect size) is 1.41. They indicated that the use of short stories as teaching media was significant to teach adjectives. Moreover, the pre-test mean score (M1) is 61.79 and the post-test mean score (M2) is 81.48. Regarding to the findings in this research, there is a difference between the pre-test and post-test score.

In treatment, most of the students were participated actively in learning adjectives through short-stories as their teaching media. They read the stories aloud together under the researcher's instruction. Their enthusiasm can be seen when the researcher started to translate the short-stories and ask them to identify the underlined adjectives. They paid attention to the researcher's explanation.

As supported by Parvareshtar & Ghoorchaei (2016), teachers have the advantage of teaching new words in contextualized materials which is short-stories. Short-stories simply expose students to adjectives, its grammatical patterns, and context that share clues in the sentences that may tell them something about the meaning of the word in question. In addition, short stories provide certain pattern and vocabulary items that are repeated frequently, exposing students to language in familiar context (Inal & Cakir, 2014).

The findings about the contribution of short stories in teaching are also emphasized by Saka (2014). He argued that by reading literary text like stories, students face a material written for native and authentic examples of how language is used. In addition, words that presented in story aid students' retention by associating new vocabularies with words they already knew (Klaewharn, Yimwilai, & Chaya, 2017)

Nevertheless, short-story also had some weaknesses such as limitation of text choice and certain language level of a story. In this research, the students had different prior knowledge towards the words of the short-stories. Some of them found that the short-stories were easy to understand while others

barely understood almost every single words of the short-stories. Brabham and Vilaume (2002) assert that students need a profound commitment to enrich their vocabulary and comprehension like instruction to allow them to deepen their words understanding. However, the problem could be covered by teacher's explanation.

In accordance to the discussion above, it can be concluded that the use of short stories as teaching media is effective to teach adjectives to Year – 8 students of “SMPN 21 Pontianak” in Academic Year 2017/2018. Moreover, the obtained effect size of this research was 1.41, and classified as “very high” effect based on Cohen, Manion and Morrison's classification. Therefore the researcher concluded that teaching through short-stories is significant to teach adjectives to Year – 8 students of “SMPN 21 Pontianak” in Academic Year 2017/2018.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

According to the research findings and discussion on the previous chapter in this research, there was a significant difference of students' outcome after getting the treatment. It is proved that the students' post-test score was higher than the students' pre-test score. The sum of O_1 (pre-test) score was 2348 with the mean score 61.79 indicating that most of them did not pass the minimum standard criteria (KKM) 75. Meanwhile, the sum of O_2 (post-test) score was 3096 with the mean score 81.48 meaning that they passed the KKM. This result showed from students' outcome after being treated by treatment that was better than before the treatment was given.

Moreover, since the obtained t-value is bigger than the critical t value of t-table checked for degree of value (df) = 37 and significance value = 0.05 ($8.75 > 1.678$), the students' pre-test and post-test score of the experiment have a significant difference. It is also lined by the computation effect size (ES) result which is 1.41. This level of effectiveness is categorized as a very strong effect size, since it is bigger than 0.8.

Therefore, the prediction of the alternative hypothesis (H_a) of this research is accepted,

since it proved by the result of the treatment effect size (ES). It can be concluded that teaching through short-stories contributed a significant enhancement to adjectives knowledge of Year – 8 students of “SMPN 21 Pontianak” in Academic Year 2017/2018.

Suggestion

According to the conclusion presented above, the researcher would like to deliver some suggestions. The researcher recommends the English teacher of “SMPN 21 Pontianak” to use short-stories as a media to teach adjectives. It helps the learning process as it provides the example of adjectives used in context and the grammatical templates.

Moreover, the researcher recommends the English teacher of “SMPN 21 Pontianak” to provide and utilize more reading text as a media to learn English for students. Short text like short-stories is suitable for the junior high students. They can learn from context and enrich their adjectives along with the other vocabularies.

Lastly, the researcher also suggests other researchers with intention to apply this text medium to teach different English lesson and materials suitable with its characteristic and school curriculum. Therefore, teacher can manage time allocation, share feedbacks, choose or create proper short-stories suitable with the lesson.

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