

USING LITERATURE BASED INSTRUCTION TO DEVELOP STUDENTS CRITICAL THINKING AND READING HABITS

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Abstract:

This study was investigating the use of literature based instruction to develop students' critical thinking and reading habits. Some strategies were incorporated into the procedure of teaching and students were emphasized to think critically using questioning strategy. Sixty students of the fourth semester of English Education Study Program were involved and thirty of them were selected by using purposive sampling technique. This research was conducted for 30 meetings in three months. Non equivalent groups' pretest- posttest-control group design was used in this research. Students took the pretest and posttest in the form of critical thinking test and reading habit questionnaire. The result showed that: 1) there was a significant improvement in critical thinking and reading, 2) there was also a significant mean difference between the experimental and control groups, 3) literature contributed about 98.9 % towards the students' critical thinking and 97.2 % towards the reading habit. Thus, literature helps students to think more critically. However, students need more time and facilities to form better reading habit.

Key words: *literature, reading habit, critical thinking*

BACKGROUND

Good learning is dominantly started by reading. Reading is one of the literacy skills which leads us to broadly and intelligently see the world. Academically, reading helps students a lot to interpret the field they are learning about, because deeper understanding is important to student achievement in nowadays climate of learning standard. The deeper understanding cannot always be gained in the classroom where the teacher's role is as the main actor and the information source provider. However, students don't have enough motivation to find the information all by themselves and to do the self-study. The main reason of disliking reading might goes to the

lack of care for reading. Therefore, after observing the great benefits of reading as precise process of learning, many researchers and teachers have tried many ways to optimize the students' reading habit which is believed to develop the linguistic competence and critical thinking skill.

Critical thinking can be seen as the valuable goal of education. The students are expected to be critical thinkers through the educational process, because being critical thinker students are assumed to be an intelligent decision maker and participant of social life. It helps students to form the ability to analyze and evaluate information. Students are required to ask questions and solve problem, to formulate them clearly, to gather and to access relevant

information, to use the abstract ideas, to think open mindedly, and to communicate effectively with others. Scriven and Paul (1992) described critical thinking as the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing and evaluating information gathered from or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning or communication as a guide to belief and action. More recently Ennis (2004) defined critical thinking has a term that means reasonable and reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe and what to do. In addition, critical thinking has always been the goal that the student must develop to get involved in social problems, and actively participate in complex society with the competence to think reasonably, reflectively, and responsibly.

Recently, critical thinking has become the global issue of higher education. The problem showed up since the graduates' critical thinking skills are still degraded. A common complaint among employers is that graduating college students often lack sound critical thinking (e.g., Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., 2008; Ackerman, Gross, and Perner, 2003). McAllister (2009) conducted a research over 50 developing nations about critical thinking, Indonesia was involved in her report program as one of the developing countries which need to be improved the people's critical thinking. She did the investigation by observing the frequencies of the teacher in introducing critical thinking skills into the classroom as part of the curriculum. She emphasizes that critical thinking as the result of the ideal education will prepare students with their critical thinking to participate successfully in a democratic society. She offered a high standard intervention for critical thinking and gave higher order questioning assessment, the result comes to the betterment of student's critical thinking, but somehow the study needs to be enhancing better in the future. In addition,

the research done by Anshori (2009) ensures that critical thinking is absolutely needed for the students of university and the scholars because in every opportunity they will decide various problem of the field study and social problems. In short, it is really crucial for Indonesian's educational system to improve their graduates' critical thinking.

Critical thinking is the result of good study, meanwhile the reading habit is students' a important habit to be critical thinker. There are many researches done to look deeply up to the problem in our society which have only low tendency of care in reading. The problem might vary and the results are ended up the low score in reading. The research done by Diem (2012) showed on the low rate of students reading habit in South Sumatera, and the result of PISA (2009) shows that Indonesian's students both female and male scored well below the PISA reading mean. These facts become society problem as well as the destructive effect of the next generation because Darmono (2007) has found out that the reading habit is successfully growing the reading motivation and those are significantly affect the reading comprehension skill which is believed as the key to successful learning.

In case of developing the students critical thinking and reading habit, the writer will use literature as the best tool to be applied in English teaching in university level. The reasons in using literature have been proved by some other researchers such as, Llach (2007) states that Literature provides authentic linguistics (also sociolinguistic) and cultural material and it motivates the learners to interact. Literature can be regarded as a rich authentic material, because it conveys two features in its written text; one is "language in use" and the second is an aesthetic representation of the spoken language which is meant to recover or represent language within a certain cultural context. (Cruz, 2010) the importance of literature should increase our motivation to use literature in teaching. Because

if not, students might not be able to obtain the benefits offered by the use of literary text.

Literature has been used as one of the best communicative approaches in language teaching. It is supported by Llach (2007) that using literature to develop linguistic and communicative competence is the best ways of learning a language. Poetry, novel, drama and short stories are the kinds of literature that possible and enjoyable material used in the classroom as teaching material. Interest, appeal, and relevance are also prominent. Enjoyment; a fresh insight into issues felt to be related to the heart of people's concerns; the pleasure of encountering one's own thoughts or situations exemplified clearly in a work of art; the other, equal pleasure of noticing those same thoughts, feelings, emotions, or situations presented by a completely new perspective: all these are motives helping learners to cope with the linguistic obstacles that might be considered too great in less involving material can only be found in literature.

As Obediat (1997) states, literature helps students acquire a native-like competence in English, express their ideas in good English, learn the features of modern English, learn how the English linguistic system is used for communication, see how idiomatic expressions are used, speak clearly, precisely, and concisely, and become more proficient in English, as well as become creative, critical, and analytical learners. By having the enjoyment students are expected to learn with great interest and involvement the students are expected to have good motivation in reading and be more critical.

In developing critical thinking using literature, the open-ended questions enable students to predict outcomes, make comparisons and contrasts, and draw conclusions. Class discussions of each novel event should comprise the main idea and supporting details, including who, what, when, where, and how. Details of various social issues such as sexual harassment and abortion, which are often an integral part of

the plot, can provoke interesting debate. Discussions can also facilitate vocabulary development. Jaffar (2004) stated that through Literature students are encouraged to negotiate different points of view, consider a variety of perspectives and try to analyze how different aspects of a literary text fit in with each other to create a design and world of its own. When literature is approached from a problem – solving attitude, students learn not to say anything without evidence from the text. They learn how to use this evidence to support their point of view. It also ingrains into them the fundamental principle that that nothing is to be taken for granted and that opinions have to be backed by proofs.

Good critical thinking ability of college graduates can be better prepared to compete and exercise their right and responsibilities of citizenship in global community is the belief that inspired Tung and Chang (2009) to conduct the study about the use of short stories as the tools to develop the college students' critical thinking. The findings in their paper showed that literature reading did help the weak thinkers improve their overall critical thinking and especially demonstrate better skills in analysis. Even though, most of them are inexperienced readers who had been rarely exposed to literature reading, but at the end the students are gradually fostered better thinking patterns and habit and some students even make in depth interpretation or interference.

An interesting finding from the research done by Noor (2011), the data are revealed that 36 out of the 52 post graduate learners enjoy reading fiction literature. This finding expresses a positive association attitude toward reading of enjoyment with printed text establish a positive attitude toward reading where despite the academic demands placed upon graduate learners, they still make the time to read fiction type materials. This type of recreational reading or reading of fiction is an indicator of reading achievement (Ogle *et al*, 2003) and can be seen

as a motivating factor toward building their love for books and reading in general (Dent & Yanotta, 2005). Reading these types of materials can benefit the readers in many ways: learn about other places or times, stimulate their imagination, and gain insights into human nature, able to follow their specific hobby or interests as well as acts as a form of escapism from 'unpleasant' realities (Tella & Akande, 2007). In addition, reading these types of materials increases reading ability as students apply more reading skills and strategies often.

To conduct the research of this thesis, the writer chose the fourth semester students of the English education program in IAIN Raden Fatah Palembang as the object of the research to observe the use of literature in developing the students critical thinking and reading habit. The writer has done some interviews to the lecturer of reading subject and some students. The data that the writer obtained are obviously needed to be proceeded in order to overcome the problems. The information about the low rate of students' critical thinking can be seen from the result of their reading test score, TOEFL reading test score, and their score for writing subject. And the information for reading habit is concluded by the data of library visits which show about 46% students visited library during the period January-May 2013. The writer has done the interview to 100 students, and about 79% of them who responded that they read only if they were asked to and for academic reasons. These facts show that the students of IAIN Raden Fatah Palembang need to develop their reading habit as well as their critical thinking. Thus, the writer concerned about conducting her research at IAIN Raden Fatah Palembang.

Those reasons above have turned into crucial part to conduct the study about those problems and finding. The writer has done the observation and analysis as well as the experiment to the fourth semester students of IAIN Raden Fatah Palembang as the sample of this study. And through this study the writer

proposed the study entitled "Using literature to develop students' critical thinking and reading habit to the fourth semester students of English education faculty at IAIN Raden Fatah Palembang".

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This research has been conducted through an experiment, quasi-experimental study that using pretest-posttest design non-equivalent comparison control group design in which this research uses double groups pretest and posttest with having a control group.

In this study, the writer has done the experiment study by giving the treatment to the first group (A), the experimental group using literature by applying critical reading question in developing critical thinking. Then, she used popular literature written works such as, novels, poems, and short stories as teaching material to make the most of applying literature use to see whether it can be effective to develop their critical thinking and their reading habit whereas, the control group was not be taught by using the literature used in group B. Before doing the experiment, the writer has given pretests for experiment group (A) as well as control group (B). The pretest was in the kind of multiple choices. Both of the groups (N=60 students) were asked to answer based on the materials given. The test was used to see the student's critical thinking before getting along with the strategy. Then, after the treatment, the writer gave the posttest for each group, experimental (A) and Control Group (B) to analyze the result whether or not the students make the progress.

In order to collect the data of the student's critical thinking, the writer used critical reading questions that requires students to annotate, outline, summarize, synthesize, contextualize, explore the use of figurative language, identify patterns of opposition and evaluate the logic of arguments before taking a reasoned perspective and arriving at a conclusion will engage students in similar critical thinking processes

(Jonassen & Bosung, 2010; Ramsay et al., 2009; Ikuenobe 2001). In addition, Good questions are those that guide thinking and encourage students to interpret, analyze, synthesize, critique, and reflect. Besides, the writer also collected the data by giving the respondents a questionnaire related to their feeling about their reading habit before and after the intervention. Therefore, the writer used two instruments; critical reading test and reading habit questionnaire.

The writer used four statistical analyses in this study: Dependent sample t-test (paired t-test), independent sample t-test and multiple regressions. Dependent sample t-test was used to find out: (1) the significant difference in students' critical thinking and reading habit in experimental group before and after they were taught by using Literature; and (2) the significant difference in students' critical thinking and reading habit in control group. Meanwhile, Independent sample t-test was used to find out: (1) the significant difference in student's critical thinking between experimental and control group; (2) the significant difference in student's reading habit between experimental and control group.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first calculation was the frequency, percentage and mean score of Critical Thinking Test (CTT) and Reading habit questionnaire (RHQ). The results showed there was a significant difference in student's Critical Thinking in experimental and control groups. In experimental group, the CTT results showed that there were 73.3% students were in high category with the mean score 78.5 and 26.7 % students were in very high category with the mean score 89.7. Hence, it is assumed that the students' critical thinking was in high category.

Meanwhile, the RHQ results showed that 13.33% students were in poor category with the mean score 35.5, there were 36.6% students were in average category with the mean score

52.55, and 50% students were in good category. And the mean score was 65.92. Thus, It is also assumed that the students' reading habit in experimental group were in adequate category.

The result of paired sample t-test showed that the mean difference between pre-test and post-test of critical thinking in Experimental group was 41.60 The value *df* was 29, the value of t-obtained was 24.15 ($>t$ -table 2.042), and the value of sig.2-tailed was .000 (<0.050). As the t-obtained was higher than t-table and the value sig.2-tailed was lower than .050, thus there was a significant difference of students' critical thinking after the intervention given. Meanwhile the reading habit result of paired sample t-test in experimental group showed that the mean difference was 16.14, the *df* value was 29, the value of t-obtained was 13.56 ($>t$ -table 2.042) and the sig.2-tailed was .000 (<0.050). Since the t-obtained was higher than t-table and the value sig.2-tailed was lower than .050, thus there was a significant difference of students' critical thinking after the intervention given. In short, it can be stated that using Literature in experimental group to develop student's critical thinking and reading habit was effective.

In control group, the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test of critical thinking was 2.20. The *df* value was 29, the t-obtained was 1.87 ($<t$ -table) and the value of sig.2-tailed was .071 (>0.050). As the t-obtained was lower than t-table and the value sig.2-tailed was higher than .050, thus there was no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in control group. Meanwhile the reading habit result of paired sample t-test in control group showed that the mean difference was 0.40, the *df* value was 29, the value of t-obtained was 0.22 ($>t$ -table 2.042) and the sig.2-tailed was .982 (>0.050). Thus, the sig.2-tailed was higher than 0.050, it means that the reading habit of control group was not significantly improved. In conclusion, the group

which was taught without using literature improved significantly in terms of their critical thinking. However, their reading habit was not significantly improved.

Furthermore, the writer continued the calculation to find the significant difference in students' critical thinking and reading habit between the experimental group and control group using *independent sample t-test*. The result of CTT shows that the mean difference between both groups was 38.40, the *df* value was 58, the *t*-obtained was 25.76(> *t*-table 2.042) and the sig.2-tailed was .000 (<0.050). Moreover, the result of RHQ shows that the mean difference between both groups was 1.25, the *df* value was 58, the *t*-obtained was 24(> *t*-table 2.042) and the sig.2-tailed was .000 (<0.050). From the data above, it can be stated that there was a significant difference in students' critical thinking and reading habit from both experimental and control group.

INTERPRETATION

In this study, the writer used literature to teach the fourth semester students of English education faculty at IAIN Palembang. The result of this study showed that Literature help students to develop students' critical thinking and reading habit significantly.

Literature could help students' to be more critical. This has been assumed from the calculation of experimental and control group pre-test and post-test where in experimental group the students were given the intervention using literature. The interventions given to students were cultivating their reading habit by using literature reading and questioning strategy.

The role of Literature in developing students' critical thinking can be seen from the result of critical thinking test (CTT). There was an improvement of the students' mean scores between pre-test and post-test in experimental group (20.83 point). The students in the

experimental group who were taught by using literature had higher mean score than the students in control group (81.66>43.26). Fani (2009) supports that literature reading is eminently congenial to the essential traits of critical thinking and to help students to understand and evaluate complex arguments about current issues. Thus, by using literature the students will be able to think critically through a pleasure way. Unlike the other material or media to develop critical thinking, literature adopted from the real life situation which require students to comprehend and reflect the issue to their life. Literature is also enjoyable with its authenticity linguistics. This shows that literature is not only used for developing critical thinking with its varied issues, but also developing students' linguistic competence unconsciously.

According to Rubin (2002) Cultivating reading habit will help them to have better academic performance. Thus, during the intervention the writer gave 25 literature readings for the students to read, enjoy and analyze the question given by the writer as well. The IRA/NCTE standards recommend instruction that nurtures students' critical thinking skills by encouraging questioning. This strategy is essential for students to think critically about the detail information in the text, the comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Furthermore, literature has originality, quality, creativity, and pleasure to cultivate reading habit. The result of the RHQ in this study shows low improvement in students' reading habit. There were only 7.00 points of the improvement between the pre-test and post-test. This phenomenon had been observed by Ogunidipe (2011) that Poor reading habits occur in children and young people because reading is not considered a relevant leisure activity as it does not form part of children's social interaction and reading is considered a solitary pursuit and is not attractive compared with

interactive activity on the Internet. He added that there was also an overriding desire amongst young people to spend more time with their friends than to remain at home reading. Adults and children alike may enjoy television and films as a way of enjoying their leisure instead of reading. Furthermore, after observing the students' reading habit questionnaire, the writer concluded that students (young adults) prefer the similar way in spending their time in than reading books. Another reason might go to the reading access, which obviously refers to the books they read. Most of them have only one book access, school Library. In fact, the books in library are old-fashioned and only for academic reading, which is not enjoyable. Those facts were believed as the cause of low rate in student's reading habit.

Recently, the study conducted by Lally et al (2009) said that habit can be formed in 12 weeks, and the automaticity was form after 66 days of treatment averagely. For that reason, the writer gave the intervention for about three months to the students, she gave 25 literature reading (10 poems, 10 short stories, 4 dramas and 1 novel). The students were required to read all of the literature reading in hope that they will read a lot in the future. But unfortunately, the writer assumed that it needs longer time and efforts to develop student's reading habit.

From the data which were collected for pre-test and post-test from both group showed that the students which in control group who were not taught using literature did not have any significant improvement to be more critical than the experimental group that had been taught using literature. The students who were taught by literature after 3 months scored well in *high* and *very high* categories, otherwise those who were not taught using literature scored lower in category *low* and *adequate*. The writer was simply in line with Tung and Chang (2009) who assumed that the improvement in students' critical thinking was caused by literature which still but this needs a follow-up longitudinal

study with a standardized measure to assess the efficacy.

Likewise, the reading habit percentage of the whole sample (N=60) showed that both group scored nearly the same point. In pretest, here were 35% students were still in poor category, and about 65% of the students were in average category of reading habit. On the other hand, the result of students' reading habit in posttest showed that there were 26% students in poor category, 43.33% in average category, and 30% in good category. Since the students read only the material that the writer provide them to read, the writer analyzed the questionnaire and found that cultivating a habit in reading need hard work and longer efforts. Furthermore, the writer considered to have more reading materials like books, newspapers, novels, and etc., providing a very comfortable library, favorable access to updated books. However, after the intervention the writer found out those students started to like reading literature and hopefully they will be able to cultivate reading as habit.

In addition, the result of the correlation between Reading habit and Critical thinking was $0.141 < 0.361$ (r-table). The writer found out further about the correlation of reading habit and critical thinking, from the calculation using Pearson Product Moment, the result shows that there were no significant correlation between the students' reading habit and their critical thinking. Afterward, it was found out that the reading habit contribution toward students' critical thinking was about 7.6%. It showed that reading habit did not have a significant correlation with student's critical thinking. It was assumed that critical thinking was significantly improved after the students treated by using Literature. The students were assumed not to read when they have time in their leisure time, but they read only when they were asked to.

The highest literature contribution toward the elements of critical thinking was the

knowledge and comprehension. This results was in line with the research done by Williamson & Williamson (1998) that the more they read, the more they increase their knowledge and their comprehension. Otherwise, the lowest contribution of literature toward critical thinking elements was in the evaluation, it contributed only 2.9 %. The reason might goes to the highest level of critical thinking lays on the level of evaluating and judging the information in the text and also they need to be more critical in presenting and defending their opinion after they purpose a new solution.

Furthermore, the highest literature contribution toward the reading habit elements was to the Reading attitude for about 80.6%, this is a high contribution that in line with the research done by Guthrie & Alvermann (1999) whose the result showed that reading literature linked positively to the students' reading attitude. On the other hand, the lowest contribution was to Academic reading (1.3%). This result showed that students prefer reading literary text than reading the academic reading like research-based which support their academic performance. Furthermore, the contribution of literature to the reading access was not appeared on the result.

In addition, the result of the correlation among those elements showed the highest correlation was the time the students spend their time in reading non-academic reading (literature) to their comprehension achievement. And the highest correlation also occurred in the reading attitude and knowledge. This was in line with

Teale and Lewis (2001) who found out that student' attitude toward reading gives a significant impact of their comprehension and their knowledge. The more they read, the more information they get and the better they comprehend.

Additionally, the elements of reading habit which have the significant collate with their improvement in critical thinking was all

the elements of reading habit. However the element of critical thinking which did not correlate with the elements of reading habit was the Application skill. This might caused by the issues and the information found in literature reading were not exactly the same as they have in their life context. But the writer believes that the students will be able to think critically when they encounter the similar problems.

Non-Academic material (like Literature) correlated the most to all the critical thinking elements. Tung & Chang (2009) presume that Literature reading is a complex process that requires readers to recall, retrieve and reflect on their prior experiences or memories to construct meanings of the text, because mental process of literature reading requires critical thinking skills. The writer also believes that Literature really help students to improve their critical thinking skill.

After conducting the treatment of applying literature as a reading material and a device for developing critical thinking and reading habit, the writer analyzed and presumed a reflection that students tended to be more excited to read a short story. This might dispatch from the length of the reading material, and the various story with its issues which is comparable and pleasurable to discuss. Further, the use of drama as one of the reading materials was implemented in such a way to bring the stage way into a reality by acting it out gave a great effect to students to think and experience in various circumstances with a very enjoyable story that stimulates the reader to read more. Peregoy and Boyle (2008) state drama activities provide students with a variety of contextualized and scaffold activities that gradually involve more participation and more oral language proficiency, they are also non-threatening and a lot of fun.

However, the use of poem was assumed to be very intricate, because students did not always get the full picture of the scene or

emotion being described. However, the figurative language provides by a poem helps students to have a deeper thought to get the gist of what the poets trying to tell in their poems. Learning to use figurative language is an important step in developing mature language skills by taking words beyond their literal meaning. However, exposing novel to be one of the materials used to develop students critical thinking was a good idea. In a novel, the problems are varied, it also provides access to authentic materials in real-life context and has literary text containing many linguistic and cultural elements of the target language which may help a language learner to have a deep understanding of the target language and culture. In brief, all of the literature material used to develop students' critical thinking and reading habit played their own parts properly with the different feeling of pleasure and preference.

In short, the interpretation in this study showed that the Literature help students developing their critical thinking significantly and extensively convey their critical thinking level in higher level after the treatment. Meanwhile, the use of literature toward the student's reading habit was significantly developed. However, the result shows that it needs more efforts, motivation and facilities for students to convey or even transform their reading habit to the higher level.

CONCLUSIONS

First, the result of this study showed that in experimental group there was a statistically significant difference in students' critical thinking after giving them intervention using literature. Otherwise, in control group, the result between pre-test and post-test showed that statistically there was no significant difference in students' critical thinking.

Second, using literature is also good for developing students' critical thinking, in this study, statistically, there was a significant

difference in students' reading habit after giving them many literary readings for 3 months. Even the result was not as satisfying as it gives the improvement to critical thinking, but some students in adequate category are now in good category. However, the result of RHQ in control group showed that there was no significant difference in students' reading habit. The students in control group are still in poor and adequate categories.

Third, the results showed that there was a significant difference between student's critical thinking in experimental and control group (38 points). Meanwhile, the results also showed that there is a significant difference in students reading habit (6 points). In short, the students in experimental group scored higher than the students in control group. In conclusion, using literature to develop student's critical thinking and reading habit is effective.

Fourth, it was found out that the correlation between the students' reading habit and critical thinking was 0.141 and this means that there was no significant correlation and reading habit do not give a significant effect to the students' critical thinking. Thus, it was assumed that Literature exposure is the variable which helps students to develop their critical thinking.

SUGGESTIONS

The writer would like to suggest the teachers of English use literature in their teaching as a very beneficial reading material to cultivate their reading habit. Because the writer believes that reading habit would be the major need for students to perform better in their academic study. Since it is not easy to form a habit especially forming reading habit, the teachers and the academic staff like librarians must take and play their important roles in motivating students to read more by providing and exposing more books, facilitate better

reading access and create a convenient learning atmosphere for students

The writer also suggests teachers of English to use literature not only for pleasure reading but also for helping students think more critical. Literature has very original feature, such as authentic language, contextual meaning, figurative language and life's issues that coincidentally facilitate students not to simply think but communicate as well.

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