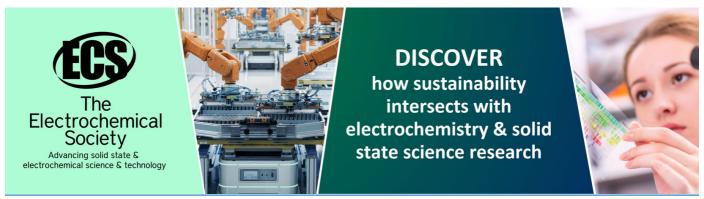**PAPER • OPEN ACCESS**

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Theme-Based Instruction Method in English Reading Comprehension: Using Makassar Local Culture-Based Curriculum Contents

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Abstract. Theme-based instruction is one kind of communicative methods used in the teaching English reading comprehension. Use of Makassar local culture-based curriculum contents as a source of instruction content incorporated in this method is assumed to be able to facilitate English reading comprehension. This study is pre-experiment with the use of one-group pretest-posttest design. Its population was all students of grade 9 of 13 State Junior High School of Makassar in South Sulawesi province, Indonesia. Through the use of cluster random sampling, it took one class as the sample. It aimed to determine students' English reading comprehension achievement level by comparing between the result of pretest and posttest of students' English reading comprehension performance. Besides, the study identified the contribution of theme-based instruction method towards English reading comprehension achievement in the learning of English. Questionnaire and English reading comprehension test as instruments that used to obtain the data, in which they were analyzed descriptively and inferentially. The finding of study showed that the level of students' reading comprehension achievement increased because their post-test reading comprehension achievement was better than the pretest. Furthermore, this instruction method contributed 91.6% towards the learning of the students' English reading comprehension achievement.

1. Introduction

English as an international language is one of the completely important languages known around the world. It is used in various fields such as politics, diplomacy, trading between country and industry, international trade, sciences and technology, education, mass media, informational technology, and popular culture. The decision of the central government of Indonesia has been integrating it into Indonesian education curriculum reasonable to prepare future generations interacting with people in the level of global universe and support development of Indonesian future young generation [1]. Curriculum changes were established by the central government of Indonesia, and certainly also accompanied by the change of instruction method, such as from Grammar translation method to communicative one [2]. The changes of English curriculum that has been always done by the central

government of Indonesia are a way to enhance and develop students' English ability, especially reading skill. This skill has gotten more attention compared with the other skills like listening, speaking and writing. However, English reading comprehension ability that students have is still low. [3,4]. Students are still difficult to comprehend the text and get implicit information in it (Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2014). English teachers, therefore, need the instruction method to employ in learning and teaching process that be able to influence the attainment of the performance of students, in which it could be low or also better. The learning and teaching method as the teacher-adopted instruction concept is capable to affect the students' learning quality [5].

The teachers require teaching method which containing a clear explanation of English reading comprehension. According to Rahman [6] said that in order to teach English in secondary school, students need to be taught explicitly especially in grammar and vocabulary because both have highly important to increase students' reading comprehension. They are hoped to enhance their English knowledge to be able to communicate and interact between countries in the diverse fields, such as education, technology, economy et cetera. Its implication, students are necessary to learn the issues which so much correlate to language and content. One of the teaching methods which be able to combine both is theme-based instruction method (TBI).

TBI method as a foreign language teaching method that researcher applied using the Makassar local culture (MLC) a source of the theme to build up lesson material. It is employed to teach English language that focuses on and improve reading comprehension achievement. TBI method is one kind of communicative methods teaching the reading comprehension that integrated with the listening, speaking and writing skills.

2. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a highly interactive process. It constitutes students' ability to read, process, and comprehend goals that writer conveys. Students that study English in the foreign language context, reading comprehension draws on the ability of students to understand what they have read (Alvermann & Phelps, 2002; Anthony & Raphael, 2004).   Reading comprehension, in English curriculum of junior high school for students of the ninth grade, covers four elements, namely the students' proficiency to determine main idea, identify supporting details, get meaning of vocabulary in context, and assign reference with the aim to make sense functional written text and simple short essay in the procedure form [13].

The teaching of reading comprehension carried out effectively, teachers need to teach and encourage students in the use of reading comprehension strategies that comprise three divisions namely pre-reading, guided reading, and post-reading activities [11]. In pre-reading activity, teacher should adopt several techniques which be able to encourage and enhance students' interest in the learning topic In guided-reading, Students interact with reading text and teacher monitors their learning. Activities aim to help them to comprehend text's content, develop student's linguistic knowledge and rhetorical structure of a text, recognize the meaning of unfamiliar words, build up conscious reading, and train how to employ the strategies of skimming and skinning. In post-reading, a teacher works as an evaluator.

3. Theme-Based Instrukction Method

Theme-based instruction (TBI) method is highly effective in English foreign language class context. It is a communicative method and used to teach the English reading comprehension which is integrated to the listening, speaking and writing skills. This method also provides coherence and continuity across the skill areas and the curriculum, to advance students' language skills. According to [7,14], TBI method is the teaching method of content and language with the language teaching aims. English teacher develops lesson material by considering of students' interest and needs. It is taught by an EFL teacher. Classes are designed to teach about a topic in a foreign language. The syllabus is managed around themes or topics, with the linguistic items in the syllabus. In TBI method, the content is

exploited and its use is maximized for the integrated language skill teaching.   Further, it seems appropriate for all of the educational setting and student proficiency level.

4. Makassar Local Culture-Based Curriculum Content in Theme-Based Instruktion Method

Makassar local culture is a theme source that utilized as an authentic content source to develop reading text purposed as lesson material to conduct the learning and teaching process in this study. According to Snow [15] said that based on the story of foreign language, the word of content in communicative or conventional method has different interpretation. In theme-based instruction method as a communicative method, the content of Makassar local culture constitutes source of authentic to develop the interested and highly important theme-based learning material.

5. Research Methodology

This study is pre-experiment with the use of one-group pretest and posttest design. It aimed to compare the students' English reading comprehension accomplishment before and after conducting the learning process of English reading comprehension with the utilization of theme-based instruction method. It covered two variables, in which theme-based instruction method that contained seven elements (Makassar local culture as source of content, theme, reading text, form and meaning-focused instruction, integrated skill, cooperative learning, and English as instruction language) function as independent variable and English reading comprehension that included four items (main idea, supporting detail, vocabulary in context, and reference) as dependent variable.

Population of this study involved all students of grade 9_1 until grade 9_9 of state Junior High School 13 Makassar in Makassar, South Sulawesi province, Indonesia, in which each class consisted of 40 students. They have the same qualification. So, by using the cluster random sampling, it was chosen students of grade 9_3 as the sample of this study.

In conducting this study, researcher applied the teacher-developed lesson material to teach reading comprehension in the pre experiment class after respondents did pretest. The other two instruments entailed multiple choice questions of performance of English reading comprehension and questionnaires concerning contribution of theme-based instruction method towards English reading comprehension. Those were taken to get data in order to answer the four questions that involving (1) what is the pretest level of performance of students' English reading comprehension before being taught with the use of theme-based instruction method?; (2) what is the posttest level of performance of students' English reading comprehension after being taught with the use of theme-based instruction method?; (3) is there any difference between the pretest and posttest level of performance of students' English reading comprehension?; and (4) Does the theme-based instruction method contribute to the learning of reading comprehension among students?. Clearly, they purpose as the tools to achieve the objective of this study. From this research questions, the null hypothesis was formed, such as (H_01) there was not the mean score difference between the students' pretest and posttest achievement of English reading comprehension, and (H_02) there was not the significant contribution of theme-based instruction method in the students' English reading comprehension learning.

The data obtained from the above first and second questions were analyzed descriptively. To facilitate the researcher in determining the interpretation of the students' pretest and posttest achievement level of English reading comprehension, the score 0 to 100 should be compiled into five categories using the interval of 10 [13] as follows;

Table 1. Value Categories on Pretest and Posttest of English Reading Comprehension

Interval	Categories
81-100	Very Good
61-80	Good
41-60	Simple/Modest

Interval	Categories
21-40	Low
1-20	Very Low

The data of the third question analyzed inferentially with the formula of dependent sample t-test and the fourth question with the formulation of multiple linear regression. Guidance of deciding the contribution of TBI method as follow [16].

Table 2. Determination of Independent Variable Contribution toward Dependent Variable

R^2-Value	Contribution
0.00-0.199	Very Low
0.20-0.3999	Low
0.40-0.599	Simple/Modest
0.60-0.7999	Strong
0.80.1.000	Very Strong

6. Research Finding and Discussion

The result of analyzing data showed that after applying the theme-based instruction method in the teaching and learning process, their achieved posttest mean score (70.21) on the English reading comprehension elements was higher than their earned pretest mean score (44.63). It means that their English reading comprehension achievement significantly went up. Table 3 below contained their pretest and posttest mean score on the five elements of English reading comprehension.

Table 3. pretest and posttest mean score on elements of English reading comprehension

Elements of English Reading Comprehension	Mean score of Pretest	Mean score of Posttest
Main Idea	63.33	82.22
Supporting detail	43.13	67.29
Vocabulary in context	38.0	65
Reference	35.28	68.34

Next, based on the result of analyzed data of dependent sample t-test found that the t-value of 13.12 with the significant value of probability (p) of 0.00. This finding proved that the H01 was rejected because there were the differences between the pretest mean score of the English reading comprehension before the TBI method conducted and the posttest mean score after.

The findings of the multiple linear regression analysis result of Enter method pointed that from only Makassar local culture (MLC) with t-value 5.26 and the reading text (RT) with t-value 4.51 as sub-variables were significant at the level of p .00 < .05. This means that only both sub-variables directly influenced the learning of English reading comprehension for students. From these findings, it can be stated that H02 was denied because there were significant contributions of the TBI method in the learning of English reading comprehension among students. Both sub-variables significantly contributed 91.6% toward the learning of English reading comprehension. These findings were supported by ANOVA test that the regression model was significant with the value of F = 135.23 and p = .00.

7. Conclusion and Suggestion

Theme-based instruction method is a completely effective method in teaching English as a foreign language. It was proved that the TBI method with the use of Makassar local culture as a content source of theme to develop lesson material was successful to improve the students' English reading

comprehension. Besides, this method also contributed the progress of the students' learning of English reading comprehension.

Acknowledgments

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