Igniting Students' Language Study-Skill: An Overview of the Practice of English Literary Material

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Abstract

Detailed English literary materials were selected and processed to establish a course-book to be implemented in Junior-High Schools. The materials were designed to ignite students' language study skills namely inspiration, interactivity and creativity as important aspects in English education. The study was a developmental research and experimental study. The data were collected through (a) an English essay test involving different difficulty levels of questions (cognitive, analytic, evaluative and creative), and (b) classroom observation and interview. Results from this study identified that the learning processes and learning results clearly reflected the three language study skills. By providing and facilitating proper interactive reading materials and a lively atmosphere of classroom discussion, students got inspired to get their own ideas, got free to write their own sentences and this circumstance assigned students to become more creative. Such content of an inspirational, interactive and creative course book must be relevant to the students' preferences like interest and need to induce students think critically by relating things into facts.

Keywords: Igniting; Literary Materials; Study Skill

Introduction

The Act number 20, year 2003 about the system of National Education of Indonesia mentioned that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a better learning and teaching atmosphere, thereby students will be able to actively develop self-potentiality namely religiosity, self-control, personality, knowledge and skills needed for life (life-skill). The effort to obtain those learning objectives is through interactive, inspirational, challenging, motivating but enjoying teaching-learning activities. In addition, motivation in second language learning is considered as the basic force for the long stretch methodology of learning and remaining all variables

in a solitary way (Kumar, 2020). By this way, the students are made active and are provided with a sufficient space for boosting up creativity based on their interest.

Teaching material is basically designed for reading and then acting out the instructions in it. Many reading specialists claimed that an important missing element in the part of most learners is their capability to obtain the effective reading (Shih, 1992). This most probably came to happen since the method of language instruction that the educators or teachers embrace. The ability to read effectively is a kind of reading skill that should be exercised. It is really peculiar if the reading instruction is often delayed or even excluded since the instruction is merely focused on the spoken form.   It is worth noting that reading ability is a gradual process from literal to interpretative reading.

The process of reading instruction should be emphasized on taking each reading text to be language signals describing three different aspects of linguistics situation namely field, tenor and mode (Keenan, 1975). In somewhat brief account, field refers to everything that is talked about in the text like what, who, how or why. Tenor simply depicts how the author relates the text he wrote to his attitude, perspective or point of view, while mode assigns to some kind of format about how the text is written like through written or spoken language, genre of the text, and the pattern of how information organized. Identifying the three situational occurrences will provide a better and comprehensive understanding of the text.

Another viewpoint in relation to attempting good understanding of a text is related to the theory of proposition or ideas. A reader should improve his ability to discover ideas provided by a text and be able to establish or connect between related ideas in the text (Reinhart & van Dijk, 1977). This kind of reading skill is highly related to the cognitive process in the brain. It is the process of linking between the new knowledge or something being learned and the prior knowledge or something already known and understood. This connection cannot be cognitively processed unless by tracking all the related ideas, identifying the meanings and concepts of words and detecting the grammatical rules. This rehearsal process in reading activity is extremely necessary for increasing the mental ability used for reading (Britton, 1994). Ranging from somewhat simple language to greater complicated paragraph or text. The capability to connect the ideas in the reading means the capability to track

between the background knowledge and the new idea or information. It is an attempt to comprehend and create the meaning. So, the ability to read the complex entity of reading text goes with the creativity in using the language. Therefore, a language instructor should continually challenge language learners with reading materials that may initiate students' critical and creative thinking to expand their language proficiency. Hasbaini & Manan (2017) added that the major goal of teaching reading in English is to increase students' comprehension while also assisting them in finding enjoyable reading activities and fostering a love of reading.

Studies on material development have been widely done by many researchers in the world in varied aspects of language learning such as pedagogical, sociological psychological aspects. A Study on a material development under a collaborative project by three similar universities in the USA was done by Morioka., et al (2008) In the project, the researchers developed Japan teaching materials through Content-Based Instruction implemented in the three different levels of students. After being implemented to the students from academic year 2005-2008, the results indicate that the students tended to have a positive response reflected in the questionnaires and classroom observations. Furthermore, the materials given to them could significantly increase the students' critical thinking and autonomous learning that are highly effective for language acquisition. That's to say the teaching materials used for students in the classroom should be well developed in order that the materials designed may function to meet the learning objectives. The materials play an important role to achieve the objectives. If the objective is to increase the critical thinking, for example, the tasks in teaching materials are of course designed to encourage or to induce the skill of critical thinking.

Another study conducted by (Beyer, 2009) also deals with the development of teaching material related to the curriculum competence for teacher candidates. This quasi experiment attempted to examine the effect of treatment associated with educational rather than financial support. There were two sorts of support in this case namely general expository support and specific narrative support. The results of the experiment indicate that the specific narrative support could significantly assist the teacher candidates adapt activities they should perform mentioned in the lesson plan, meanwhile the general expository support might only help the teacher

candidates identify the principles of implementation of lesson plan. Based on the research results it leads to conclude that a teaching material which has been appropriately designed may give a positive effect on the cognitive and affective development of the students or to whom the materials are intended for.

The content of literary works mostly consists of story about human experience catering for science of life (ideas about life). So that individual cognitive process can be detected through understanding how greater the science ideas one knows. Habits of mind in the cognitive process which are constituted in the mind rely on the modes of thinking and reasoning to give meanings of the phenomena in the world. Reading activities or reading exercises for the students should be purposefully designed by the language instructors so that the skill of reflective thinking and reasoning may be gradually improved. Through creative questions in reading, for example, the students are encouraged and motivated to use their reflective thinking and reasoning to answer the questions. By this way, they have to think deeply the information before giving response to the questions posed to them because the answers are not explicitly stated in the reading text.

In language teaching and learning some methods can be critically employed to foster reflective thinking and one of the methods is discussion or collaboration (Dillon, 1994). This method is thought of enhancing the students' opportunity to get together in the process of learning. Thereby, they can actively pose questions of daily concerns to one another, discuss a great deal of topical issues, understand concepts of things, and come to conclusion, decision and judgment. Through this account the students may be more reflective about their discussion practice. Furthermore, Whipp (2003) on this account leads to conclude a discussion that a language instruction employed in the classroom should be preciously designed in order to be richer with the reflective thinking activities. In the process of teaching the teacher should clearly purport the goals or aims of teaching activities and the significance of discussion activities in encouraging reflective thinking.

In sum, teaching material used by teachers is an important aspect to gradually develop the students' reading skill from literal to interpretative. Besides, it also should develop the students' cognitive and affective factor. On the other hand, unfortunately, students nowadays are lack of willingness to read. This fact creates

problems like they judge English is a difficult to learn even before they start to learn it (Frimasary & Syahrial, 2018). Teaching reading is expected to stimulate the development of students' critical thinking. The teaching material becomes so inspirational for the students, by this way; the students are effectively trained to be creative and interactive (able to interact each other). Literary works such as novel, short story, tale, fable, poem, and anecdote are importantly made use in English teaching because they include one of the valuable authentic teaching materials. They may be taken as teaching media for cultural enrichment purposes or what so called cultural understanding. Furthermore, the students' language competence may be enriched with certain language expressions and metaphorical words that are rarely found in other ordinary texts. Therefore, course books based on literary works are needed in teaching English.

Developing English material has been a study for many researchers during these past years (Devi et al., 2021; Ilmi & Madya, 2019; Lukman Syafi'i & Andria Gestanti, 2022; Mubar, 2015; Rohimajaya et al., 2021). However, so far there are inadequate course books which are specially designed for teaching English in junior high schools concocted from literary works that may be accessed easily. Most of the teachers tend to use published materials rather than authentic materials that are unknown whether the materials may largely stimulate the study skills like inspiration, interactivity and creativity or not, useful for English education in creating autonomous English learners. Furthermore, students did not seem to grasp the whole meaning of the information given which created the presence of a large vacuum between the students and the teacher through traditional teaching (Barzani, 2020). Therefore, "English Literature Based-Course Book" used in the classroom is expected to be inspirational thereby it initiates the students to be more interactive and creative.

Research Method

This study mainly concerned the learners' linguistic and behavioral responses when the literature based-course book was being implemented in the process of learning English. The focus of interest was whether the teaching material is inspirational in the sense that it has been inspiring the students to express their ideas, thereby they could vividly interact in the group work activities. As the result, the students understood the task and wrote their own sentences. The research was designed in a

developmental research (Gay, L.R., Geoffrey E, Mils and Peter Airasain, 2006). It developed a teaching material taken from English literary works such as short story, tale, fable, anecdote and poem. The literary genre and theme were selected based on the students' interest as reflected in the questionnaire. 135 students of the third year class from four Junior High Schools were engaged in the questionnaire. By this way, the teaching material was expected to be inspirational since it could easily assist the students and express richly their ideas about the present topics. To stimulate interactivity and creativity, the questions after reading were designed to include not only the literal questions but also the high level like analyzed, evaluative and creative questions. In the implementation the researcher was assisted by four teachers who handled English Subject in each class while researcher acted as an observer to notice and videotaped the ongoing classroom interaction on group work. The results of group work in reading activity were analyzed based on the various words, phrases, and sentences that the students wrote. The activeness of the students in the discussion wass designated with asking and answering questions among the students themselves or between teachers and students. The reading topics applied in the class were proportionally divided based on literary genre, as follows:

- The Frog Prince (tale)
- Story of Rabbit and Bear (Fable)
- Having Money too Much (Anecdote)
- There are Angels God Put on this Earth (Poem)

As usually the case, before implementation it was validated by the one who is an expert in the field. It is worth noting, the material was viewed from relevancy with the learners, students' interest based on the topic, the varied tasks or exercises, staging and grading of the material and glossaries. The data of the research might be broken down into the following table:

Table 1. Students' study skills overview

STUDY SKILLS	METHODS	DATA
Inspiration	Interview	Background knowledge

		relate classroom activities
Interactivity	Classroom Observation	Group-work activities
Creativity	English Competency test	Results of competency test

Findings and Discussion

Commonly English is thought of a difficult subject by most students in Indonesia. It is because English is a foreign language which is rarely used in oral and written communication in the daily life. When the material was implemented, some students of course encountered problems but some others deserve learning facilities from the material.

Findings

Based on the classroom observation, the students' interest and attitude in general assigned to be positive. When "the Frog Prince", for example, was introduced and taught by the classroom teacher, the students looked interested and gave comments and ideas about the topic. Even some of them spontaneously translated it into Indonesian "*kodok pangeran*" or "pangeran kodok". There happened a small talk about different understanding in that situation so that it aroused curiosity about the reading text to be read.

When the video of the "Frog Prince" was exposed in front of the class, the students got more interested. They viewed interestingly the cartoon film. During the show, once in a while a comment from the students about the event or character was heard like "*how beautiful the prince is!, "Ooh, the ball is falling", what a funny frog is it!, " what a smart prince he is!"* . However, some others gave comment just in Indonesia, they most probably can't give comment in English but they still paid full attention to the video. The motion picture equipped with sound that they saw attracted the students. It had made the learning situation more complete. Even the students who sat hindmost kept up and down seeing the film. The film show was then followed by posing three questions about the film.

Before the video show, the pre-reading activity was conducted and it was intended to open up the students' mind about the topic through pre-reading questions. Three questions were posed in this phase and the students were expected to respond orally. The first question posed to students is "What skills does a frog have?" In fact the students replied variously based on the students' experience or background knowledge. The data below depicted the varied responses ranging from word, phrase to sentence.

Table 2: Various Responses by Students (1)

| No | RESPONSES | | |
	WORDS	PHRASES	SENTENCES
1	Swimming	Living in the water and on the land	It has dangerous urine
2	Jumping	Catching small animals	It has a loud voice
3	Singing	Raising front hand	It has a long jump

Most of the answers above were based on the students' experience about a frog because they could see it from their daily activity particularly in the rainy season or they can watch through television. It became interesting when some of the respondents responded "It has dangerous urine". The researcher then further clarifies the answer by asking questions to the students who gave such answers. Renandia stated in an interview:

"I know from my reading experience in biology that a certain species of frog has poisonous urine functioning to protect itself from its enemy or to paralyze its prey". For him, this capability of the frog is included as a kind of capability because by this way it can protect itself and catch the pray.

The second question was "Where does a frog usually live?" This question was asking the place where the students mostly saw a frog in their daily experience. It was all answered in the form of prepositional place but it was various. Their answers were merely based on the factual and common senses. Interestingly, one of them gave the answer with "under the coconut shell". Based on the interview, he clarified that the idea came from the "old adage" saying "*like a frog living under the coconut shell*" meaning a person is not sociable so he doesn't have any friend. This fact clearly

delineated that the material was fairly inspirational because it induced the students to think critically by relating between the real fact and beyond the real fact. The frog under coconut shell was never seen, however it can be stated only from an old adage.

Table 3. Various Responses by Students (2)

No	STUDENTS' RESPONSES
1	In the water
2	In the forest
3	In the lake
4	In the school yard
5	In the room
6	In the class
7	Under the coconut shell
8	In the swamp

Furthermore, the third pre-reading question was "What do you think if a prince is enchanted to be a frog?" This question was intended to boost up the students' imaginative thinking because this question was too imaginative. The concepts of the key words like enchant and princes were most probably understood through film or story. In fact their responses vary based on their feeling and rational thinking.

Table 4: Various Responses by Students (3)

No	STUDENTS' RESPONSES
1	Feel sad
2	Impossible it happens
3	Feel pity
4	Feel unhappy
5	Socked
6	Speechless
7	I don't believe
8	It is impossible in reality

This fact designates that the three pre-reading questions above may encourage the students' heed because they can imagine the various alternative

responses for the questions. For example, when one of the students replied the question "Where does a frog usually live? by saying "in the class". Most of the students burst laugh. The teacher then asked "How come?". He then replied "yes, when the school yard got flood I sometime saw a frog jumping into the class. This material was interesting for the students because it went with their life experience.

After the video show, the class came to reading activity and then it was followed by some questions. They were arranged based on the thinking skills like cognitive, analysis and evaluative questions. There were three questions to be discussed in this phase. The first question was "In what ways are the prince and princess different?". The students replied the question in varied forms based on their own reasons and comments.

Table 5. Various Responses by Students (4)

No.	STUDENTS' RESPONSES
1	Male and female
2	Handsome and beautiful
3	Animal and human
4	Poor and rich
5	Beautiful and disgusting

The responses indicate a binary apportion. The students viewed the different points based on the distinctive perspectives. Male vs. female means different sexes; animal vs. human designated a distinctive type of creature; poor vs. rich was viewed from different social status; beautiful vs. disgusting was viewed from the physical trait. Differently, there was an answer given by students "Handsome and beautiful". Basically it was different however it did not indicate an opposite meaning. They seemed to have a positive stance.

The next open question was "What do people usually do to break the power of enchantment?" It was only answered in three types of responses. From the answers, it leads to conclude that to break the power of enchantment can be through different ways ranging from radical action, that's killing the witch, to very religious and wise action, that's meeting an *uztas* and pray to God.

Table 6. Various Responses by Students (5)

No.	STUDENTS' RESPONSES
1	Killing the witch

| 2	Going and finding another paranormal
3	Going to *udztas* and praying to God

The third question tends to explore more the students' experience about the real condition of a frog. The question is "Why do you think the prince was enchanted by the witch to be a frog rather than other animals?." Breakdown of the answer is as follows:

Table 7. Various Responses by Students (6)

No.	STUDENTS' RESPONSES
1	I have ever read a book; a frog is symbolized as an enchantment.
2	The face of a frog looks very bad.
3	Many people will not believe if the frog is a prince.
4	The face of frog is disgusting.

The students' answers indicate that they could express their opinions in order to answer the questions. In other words they made use their prior knowledge to reply the creative questions. Some commented based on their reading experience; and some others seemed to use their visual experience. The face of a frog is disgusting because it is full of warts and its mouth is very wide. However, some of them also utilize their logical thinking by rejecting the fact that a frog may become a prince. These all could be expressed in English through a vividly interactive discussion in the class. They discussed the existing different ideas through two-ways communication or student-student communication. Sometimes they got involved in a discussion with the teacher to clarify the teacher' language instruction or the classroom task to be done by them. The process of getting the answers can be illustrated as follows:

Figure 1. The Process of Creative Thinking
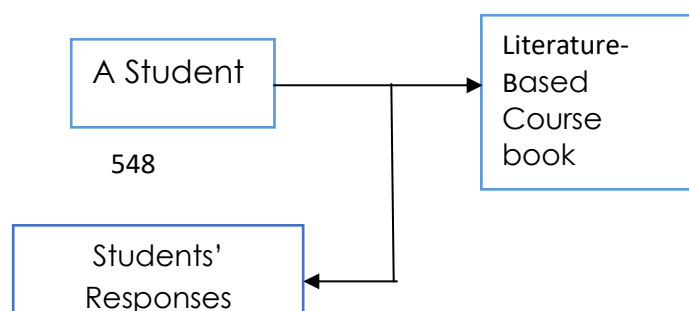
An autonomous learner was assigned by the students could perform their individual assignment given in the process of learning. Performing the individual task is the final objective of all learning. The students were given the individual task like writing activity for example "write a letter of promise written by the princess to the frog that she would keep the promise after she got back her ball". Based on the data taken from the individual task, there were some types of promise written by the students. Here are some exemplary types of promise.

Dear Frog,
My golden ball has fallen into the spring. Please help me to get my ball again. I will do whatever you ask.
So please, I'm begging you. Help me.

Dear Frog,
Please help me, my ball fell into the river and I could not take it. I will promise you if anyone can get it I will make him become king or queen of the castle. I promise please help me. Thank you.

To Frog,
Hi frog, help me to find my ring that fell in the river. If later you can find it, I promise to give you food that much. I'll make a nice pool and I'll take good care.
Please find, because I'm very fond of my ball please. I hope you.

Dear Frog,
I'll love you with sincere soul and my body if you can find a ring that fell in the water.

Based on the several letters written by the students it leads us to conclude that the promises could be classified into three types. The first is related to the text given where the princess promised to the frog to take him as a king, the second was to give love to the frog. This promise tended to be more or less a common sense. The third is the frog was merely viewed as an animal that was assured only with food and beautiful fond. The ways the students gave their answers designated that they were more creative to write their different ideas about the princess' promise to the frog. The video show and the background knowledge had inspired the students to write their own ideas.

Discussion

Motivation is an essential element in the success of learning. To boost up the motivation in reading is the students' interest in reading material must not be neglected in relation to theme of the text, genre of the text and media used in the text. Therefore it is necessary for the teacher to pay attention to the student's interest through selecting the suitable and relevant theme. The good theme is the one which is in accordance with students' life like human characters, environment etc. They will select the available themes based on their need because there is something to be known in the theme. This indicates in the language learning is very essential (Morioka et al., 2008). The content liked by the students will be interesting and motivating for them, thereby the material may induce the achievement of the skill of critical thinking.

The curiosity to the reading theme of the students is expected to arouse the learning motivation by reading the material based on literature. As it is known motivation has an important role in the learning activity. No one learn well without motivation. The student with strong motivation will feel sure to tackle well their task. Motivation in this case is indicated by his willingness to attend actively the English subject, to do all the tasks given to him both individual and group work. The curiosity to know what in the reading text and the condition where the students get free to reply based on the experience will inspire the students to be more creative. That is the impulse that encourages them to do something or something that gives idea about what to do. In the Webster Dictionary, it is stated that inspiration about someone, something, place, experience or idea that trigger someone to do or create something. Therefore, reading and answering the questions in the text are a process

to become a creative student.

Besides reading theme, the pictures in the course book can also increase the students' interest in reading because the pictures can describe at once the context. Through picture the students' imagination may be assisted relating the text context and the outer world. The pictures selected and used in the course book are mostly cartoon pictures that may attract students' attention because looked ridiculous. As asserted by Dijk (1977) that a reader should improve his ability to discover ideas in the text and one of the ways to ease the students discover a meaning is through exposing pictures in the text. The picture is intended to relate the text and the outer world. The abstract things in a literary text can be made a little bit concrete. Moreover, most of literary works contain human experiences such as love, anger, peace etc.

A good teaching material is a material that may take the students into a comfort zone where they feel happy rather than monotonous or too serious leading to the students' boredom. The language used is too high for them so that they become frustrated, however it not too easy for them that makes them bored. This condition can be identified by the students get ignored to do the tasks given by the teacher. Differently, if the text can communicate with the students, they look interested, fascinated, enthusiastic and curious. They are eager to tackle all the tasks given by the teacher. The existing interaction between the text and the students greatly induces the good learning process. Such a condition is really expected to happen in the learning process.

In the teaching process, the teachers should make the students free and relax in relation to his teaching method by triggering the process of exploration, elaboration and confirmation through communication. Even though each students has unique needs and their own abilities (Komaryati, 2020), each of them must be encouraged to express their ideas and feelings through creative learning. The questions posed in the reading text require the students to think based on their own opinions. Through the high level questions the students would explore and elaborate the reasonable answers and then confirm it with other students through group discussion. The discussion is expected to inspire the students to the creative thinking. Under such a circumstance, new ideas will appear and then written in different responses based on their background knowledge or experience. Dillon (1994) states that discussion can

be used to enhance the students' opportunity to get together in the learning process. The students can actively pose questions and get the answers through sharing ideas. They possibly talk about the topical issues, understand concepts of things and then go to the conclusion and judgment.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the research results we lead to conclude that the content of an inspirational, interactive, and creative course book must be relevant to the students' preferences like interest and need. An interactive condition happens when the reading material relates more or less to the students' background knowledge thereby, they become motivated to perform their tasks from the teacher. They become responsible for their own learning because of their high motivation. Through high level question, the students were inspirited to get their own ideas different from what in the text. They got free to write their own sentences, phrases and sentences and this circumstance assigns that the students become creative. The literary materials were thought of quite inspirational since the high-level questions posed to the students had inspired them to make use their background knowledge to find out the various answers from analytic, evaluative, and creative questions. They could freely remind and rehearse the background knowledge from non-English subjects that they had already learned. Through classroom observation, the students were assigned to be good from group-work activities, interchangeable responses from the students widely occurred in most of the existing small groups. As a matter of fact, the materials together with the high-level questions had stimulated them to interactively speak about and find out the possible answers that did not exist in the reading texts. They established teacher-student and peer interactions. Furthermore, the students thought over the questions and got the answers by assembling all the ideas from the group members. Based on the written English test, the students gave the answers in different perspectives. They wrote their various answers using their own English words, English phrases and English sentences independently and creatively. Eventually, by providing proper material to the class, it can helped all educators to ignite students' study skills.

Pedagogical Implication

The pedagogical implication of the study presents the need of considering in the design of a student course book to be based on needs analysis. Students nowadays are different to what it was back then with the exposure of globalization and digital network era. The presents study exposes how students respond to the language learning activities from the course books based on their needs. Furthermore, the study points the critical importance of needs analysis to ESP learners' language courses in Indonesian academic Institutions.

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