

# The Effect of Literary Reading Program in Online Learning on Students' Reading Ability

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## ABSTRACT

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This study aimed to investigate the effect of the literary reading program on students' reading abilities. This study also focused on improving reading skills in inferential and critical context aspects. An experimental design with a one-group pretest-posttest design was used in the study. 100 student from the fourth semester of the Extensive Reading Online Class was used as a sample. The researchers used a purposeful sampling method in choosing the sample in this research. This research was held at UIN Mataram's English Department from March to June 2022. Three types of data were collected during the data collection process: 1) documents, 2) observations, and 3) reading tests. The technique of analyzing data used a t-test with two samples paired. The findings of this study showed that the t-stat value is the calculated t-value, which is 7,886. While the value of  $P(T \leq t)$  one tail is the p-value which is 2.099 and the critical one-tail t is the t-table value which is 1.66. It means that  $t\text{-stat} (7.886) > t\text{ table} (1.66)$ , then  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted. It concluded that the literary reading program had a positive effect on the reading skills of English students. The findings show that literary works can be used as authentic teaching materials in learning to read English, allowing students to understand the meaning of reading not only at the literal level but also at a deeper level based on context.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Reading ability is a complex social phenomenon because reading is essentially a process for achieving social success. Reading entails not only comprehending the text's meaning but also comprehending the phenomenon of people's social lives. The process of comprehending the content of reading is related to how someone comprehends the text's content. The themes in the reading are well-known to the students. As a result, reading skills enable students to comprehend social contexts. As a result, reading skills are important not only for understanding the content of the text but also for learning in general. As a result, the ability to read contributes to people's social lives. This is visible in

everyday human life and is related to the process of understanding reading, which is implemented in the use of email texts, reading activities, reading sources, and social media sites or social networks (Oakhill, Cain, & Elbro, 2015). Reading a lot of books can help students in class or raise students' reading awareness and habits (Iftanti & Shofiya, 2018). However, in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic, there are numerous challenges in providing a variety of authentic teaching materials for reading skills that meet the needs of students or current conditions (Guo, 2012). It means that reading helps students understand the contents of the reading comprehensively. Students' understanding of the content of the text is also related to the information that students have previously. Students can read from various reading sources such as books, the internet or electronic sources.

The preliminary survey results in the Inferential Reading class conducted from September to December 2022 discovered several problems related to reading skills, including 1) students have difficulty understanding the context of reading inferential or critically, 2) academic reading materials are less liked by students, 3) students prefer reading literature over academic reading, and 4) students spend time using gadgets and reading all the time. Furthermore, the definition of literacy has evolved to include digital literacy (Shariman, Razak, & Noor, 2012). Digital authentic materials can improve the learning process and student achievement (Purwaningrum & Yusuf, 2020), such as internet-based contextual teaching materials (Manurung, 2015). Furthermore, technology has encouraged students to read a variety of books, both online and in print (Loh & Sun, 2019). Thus, teachers require a reading-increase program that is appropriate to the level of student interest in reading and does not require students to read academic books. Teachers, on the other hand, must be able to provide teaching materials to improve students' reading skills by using popular readings that students enjoy.

It means that if students already have a hobby of reading, then they enjoy reading any reading material (Gabriel, 2016; Starke, 2020). Several previous studies have shown that literary works present themes, linguistics, cultural contexts, figures of speech, and pragmatic contexts that can provide knowledge in the process of understanding reading (Rahman, 2018). Even literary fiction texts can help you understand topics related to the study of social sciences (Yazell, Petersen, Marx, & Fessenbecker, 2021). The use of simplified literary texts and authentic literary texts instead of general academic texts improves EFL students' reading comprehension (Bakhshizadeh Gashti, 2018), as well as the performance of understanding the content of literary texts (Magulod, 2018).

However, students are still directed to the ability to understand inferential and critical reading texts. This means that teachers must be able to sort out the content and topics of teaching materials taught to students. Research on reading using literary reading programs has not been done much. So, this research is oriented toward implementing literary reading programs such as novels and short stories to improve reading skills during online classes. This consideration was done because the approach to learning activities that touch on the level of student interest in reading will make it easier for teachers to cultivate a love of reading.

The goal of this study was to look into the impact of a literary reading program on students' reading abilities. This study also aimed to improve reading skills in inferential and critical context aspects. As a result, the findings of this study are expected to be useful for the wealth of the scientific repertoire of teachers related to the provision of reading materials that are relevant to students' levels of interest and interest.

## 2. METHODS

An experimental design with a one-group pretest-posttest design was used in the study. The researcher employs the research design to determine the effect of treatment on the research sample (Allen, 2017). This study investigated the literary reading program that was implemented to improve student's reading skills and was expected to have an impact on their level of inferential and critical reading comprehension. 100 student from the fourth semester of the Extensive Reading Online Class was used as the sample. The sample for this study was chosen using the purposive sampling method. It was held at the English Department of UIN Mataram from March to June 2022. Three types of data

were used in the data collection process: 1) documents obtained as a result of learning (students' scores and teaching report), 2) observation obtained to observe the outcome of the literary reading program in an online class that referred to students' activity in explaining the story, it did in the learning process, the researcher wrote the students' activity during reading activity, and 3) test obtained to determine the student's reading skills. Lin and Gronlund's theory was applied to the test instrument (Khusniyah, Rasyid, & Lustyantje, 2017). It describes a list of reading skills that are commonly used to measure students' abilities with several identifications, in the following table;

Table 1. Reading Test Components (Brown, 2004)

Component	Questions	Score
Identify the meaning of the given word	10	10
Identify the meaning of words when used in context	10	10
Identify the words conveyed in the text in detail	10	10
Identify the main idea conveyed indirectly in a text.	10	10
Identify the relationship (cause and effect, time) in a text	10	10
Identify the main idea or purpose in a text	25	25
Identify the ability to conclude a text	25	25

The process of implementing the literary reading program is carried out for 3 months or 12 learning meetings. At each meeting, students are required to be able to finish reading a literary work and reveal the contents of the reading. Teachers will give students the freedom to choose literary reading materials before learning activities. Then, when the class takes place, students will be asked to explain their readings both literally and in context. While the sources of material used are taken from various literary books, mass media, journals or websites. Students are given a reading test before the implementation of the literary reading program and given a reading test after the learning activities for 12 meetings are carried out.

The t-test was used in data analysis with two paired samples (Paired Two-Sample t-Test for Means). This test makes assumptions about the variance of the two populations to determine whether the null hypothesis is acceptable or not. The paired t-test is commonly used to compare population means before and after various treatments (Berman & Wang, 2018). Calculation of data for t-test using excel.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the pre-test and post-test are presented in the descriptive statistics table as the results of the t-test.

Table 1. The result of Descriptive

Statistic Descriptive	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Mean	70,299	79,857
Standard Error	1,566	1,647
Median	71	82,75
Mode	67	100
Standard Deviation	15,669	16,476
Sample Variance	245,548	271,478
Range	66,5	66,5
Minimum	33,5	33,5
Maximum	100	100
Sum	7029,9	7985,7
Count	100	100
Confidence Level (95,0%)	3,109	3,269

Table 1 shows that the average value of reading skills has increased between before and after implementing the literary reading program from 70 to 80. This means that there is an increase of 10. The difference in standard deviation also shows a fairly good difference. Overall, the data in table 1 concludes that the literary reading program has had a positive impact on improving reading skills. While the result of the t-test, is as follows;

Table 2. The result of Paired Two-Sample t-Test for Means

	<i>Pre-Test</i>	<i>Post-Test</i>
Mean	70,299	79,857
Variance	245,548	271,478
Observations	100	100
Pearson Correlation	0,716	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	99	
t Stat	7,886	
P(T<=t) one-tail	2,099	
t Critical one-tail	1,66	
P(T<=t) two-tail	4,199	
t Critical two-tail	1,984	

Table 2 shows that the observations were conducted on 100 people. The calculated t-value is 7,886 for t-stat value. While the value of P(T=t) one tail is the p-value of 2.099, the critical one-tail t is the t-table value of 1.66. When t-stat (7.886) exceeds t table (1.66),  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted. It means that after the literary reading program is implemented, the student's reading skills improve (the results of the test data).

Table 3. The Mean of Reading Skills Components Assessment

Component	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
1 Identify the meaning of the given word	6,5	0,74	7,12	0,91
2 Identify the meaning of words when used in context	7,65	0,84	8,71	1,12
3 Identify the words conveyed in the text in detail	6,94	0,81	7,58	0,78
4 Identify the main idea conveyed indirectly in a text.	5,85	0,73	6,71	0,53
5 Identify the relationship (cause and effect, time) in a text	7,72	1,41	8,87	0,57
6 Identify the main idea or purpose in a text	19,94	2,46	20,57	2,79
7 Identify the ability to conclude a text	21,24	2,69	22,29	2,22

Table 3 shows that there is a change in the average value of each component in reading skills from before and after implementing the literary reading program. From the data, it is known that the lowest average value level identifies the main idea conveyed indirectly in a text, namely 5.85 and 6.71. While the most controlled components are identifying the relationship (cause and effect, time) in a text and identifying the ability to conclude the text. Table 3 shows that reading literary works is not only able to improve reading skills but also skills in reading comprehension, especially for inferential and critical meanings. Thus, students can become competent readers in the 21st century. They can integrate the knowledge, skills and processes needed to develop reading skills (Alexander et al., 2012).

Therefore, this finding provides a different concept from previous research as a form of contribution to the development of English reading teaching materials. The findings show that literary works can be used as authentic teaching materials in learning to read English so that students

can understand the meaning of reading not only at the literal level, but students can understand deeper readings according to context. It means that students can develop their inferential and critical meaning. Thus, these findings provide an understanding that authentic teaching materials must not only be oriented to the level of learning achievement needs, the development of science and technology. Most teachers around the world agree that authentic texts or materials are beneficial to language learning, but they disagree on when and how authentic materials should be introduced and used in EFL classrooms (Kilickaya, 2004; Berardo, 2006). However, the level of students' reading interest in reading materials can be the main consideration for providing authentic teaching materials. Various kinds of literary works can be an alternative to authentic teaching materials because they are not only on the needs of students but also according to the level of student interest in reading.

Another study found that using simplified literary texts and authentic literary texts instead of general academic texts improved the reading comprehension of advanced Iranian EFL students. Furthermore, there is no discernible difference in the effectiveness of simple literary texts and authentic literary texts (Bakhshizadeh Gashti, 2018). They are also thought to be more effective than non-literary texts at increasing students' critical reading interest. This means that literary texts become one of the materials used to teach students how to read critically (Nurrohmah, Suparman, & Sukirlan, 2015). Reading and discussing literary texts in a second language (L2) is an important component of secondary and advanced college language education (Urlaub, 2012). Reading literary works is one of the authentic teaching materials that can be used as a reading source, according to the findings and exposure of previous research. Reading literary works is also frequently requested by students.

So, the results of this study found that there was a big impact on the use of literary works of literature on students' reading activities. This means that this finding increases students' reading interest because the text reads according to their preferences. Therefore, teachers must understand the process of using reading sources that are to student needs, and reading interests. The results of this study are expected to provide the development of reading learning strategies as well. Teachers or researchers can refer to the results of this study as consideration for developing a wealth of reading strategies. This means that a teacher must be able to prepare students to become someone who can connect two things, namely the hope of achieving learning goals in the classroom and learning experiences obtained from real life. Thus, all problems that arise during the learning process can be overcome easily. So, students can achieve these goals through reading literary works. The program for reading literary works in learning to read English found that the ability to understand reading is related to the thinking power of students to understand reading and relates it to the meaning to be conveyed in the reading. So, this ability can be believed by students as a form of effort to learn, both about the meaning and content of reading. Ability is the energy for students in completing the task of learning to understand reading in class.

However, even this power can be done outside like at home, because reading comprehension has a broad relationship with the social context. Every day, students are faced with understanding the context of real reading. In this case, students can understand the meaning of the text as literal and in context so they can be applied their comprehension in real life. Understanding an event is very useful for solving problems. Text is simply a medium through which someone can translate what should be judged and done. Literary texts are important in English learning because they improve communication skills, raise cultural awareness, and motivate students. Different literary texts can help teachers improve their language skills and explain different approaches to teaching literature. It also demonstrates how literature improves the overall learning experience of EFL students. (Shamsur, Khan, & Alasmari, 2018).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The literary reading program has been in place for three months. The calculated t value is 7,886 for the t-stat value. While the value of  $P(T=t)$  one tail is the p-value of 2.099, the critical one-tail t is the t-table value of 1.66. When t-stat (7.886) exceeds t table (1.66),  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted. As

can be seen, the study's findings concluded that the literary reading program had a positive effect on English students' reading ability. Furthermore, each component of the reading proficiency assessment increased significantly. The component of identifying the main ideas conveyed indirectly in a text is known to be the least comprehensively mastered by students of the seven components of the reading skill assessment. This treatment has also improved comprehension of the meaning of reading. It is not only literal meaning that is understood, but also inferential and critical meaning. This discovery also has novelty value in terms of comprehending authentic material from various literary works.

The findings of this study have implications for teachers' knowledge in developing a program to improve reading skills. Researchers' programs, such as reading literary works, can be one type of authentic teaching material based on the student's interests. As a result, reading learning activities become more enjoyable for students, and they can apply these skills to better understand a variety of life problems. The findings of this study, however, are still limited to respondents who learn to read English by reading English literature. As a result, it is suggested that future researchers use the study's findings to create Indonesian literary reading materials so that students can gain learning values related to the cultural context of people's lives in Indonesia. Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that English teachers incorporate teaching materials from this literary reading program into an English reading learning module.

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