THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FICTIONAL STORIES IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' SKILLS IN READING AND WRITING

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Abstract

The research aims to know the effectiveness of fictional stories in improving students' reading and writing skills. The data was collected using Google From filled out by respondents on Thursday, February 9th. The findings showed that 21 respondents, four males, and 17 females, are interested in reading a fictional story. 52,4 % of the respondents are motivated to read because of the fictional story. Also, 61,9 % of respondents claim that writing a fictional story is more accessible than a nonfiction story. Four commonly read genres are family, romance, education, and friendship. The respondents also shared the benefit of reading and writing a fictional story. For respondents, reading fictional stories inspires and motivates them to think more creatively. Reading fictional stories also adds insight and entertains respondents.

Keywords: Fictional Stories, Reading, Writing.

Introductions

Indonesia has an abundance of excellent human resources. Based on data from the Directorate General of Population and Civil Registration (Dukcapil) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Indonesia remains the world's fourth-largest population and the first in Southeast Asia this year. More than half of Indonesian citizens are of productive age, accounting for more than half of the population. Productive age is an approach that emphasizes the positive aspects of growing older and how individuals can make significant contributions to their own lives, their communities and organizations, and society. We realize that the role of children of productive age will have a substantial impact on Indonesia's progress, particularly in the field of education. Indonesia can compete with other countries when its skills are developed and applied.

One of the primary abilities that must be possessed is literacy skills or reading and writing. Hasan (Farihatin, 2013) stated that literacy skills are essential in academics, and language development must be mastered from childhood (Ardhyantama & Apriyanti, 2021). Literacy is not just being able to spell and write letters but also understanding the meaning of reading and writing. Based on a survey conducted by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), released by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2019, Indonesia is ranked 62nd out of 70 countries or is in the bottom ten countries with a low literacy rate. According to Purwanto (Nurdiyanti, 2010), Indonesian society is alliterated; people who can read but do not want to make reading a daily activity, so many people are not used to reading or even understanding a text. Another factor is the school environment, which discourages students from improving their literacy skills. Many teachers are solely concerned with teaching, while students are expected to listen to their explanations. This is known as a teacher-centered learning environment. As a result, students prefer listening and talking to reading. Aside from reading, the ability to write remains low among the Indonesian population. According to the results of an IEA survey on children's reading and writing abilities in Indonesia, approximately 50% of sixth-grade elementary school students in six provinces assisted by the Primary Education Quality Improvement Project (PEQIP) cannot compose. Although sixth graders should be able to write at least short stories, understanding writing will be necessary for students of a productive age to be able to solve a problem and write properly and correctly because it will be helpful in the future.

Based on the preceding statement, people must be able to identify the source of the

problem and provide the appropriate solution to overcome it. There is a solution in this study that is expected to improve the reading and writing skills of students of productive age. Tarigan (2008) stated, "There is a strong bond between writing and reading." When we write something, we hope that it will be read by someone else or that we can reread it later." Using fictional stories is one of the efforts that can be made to improve the reading and writing skills of productive age students.

Fictional stories are frequently depicted as contradicting real-world events. Fiction is a narrative work in which the content does not imply or refer to historical facts (Abrams, 1981:61). The author cannot be held accountable for whether something in fiction is true. Fables, witty fiction, sagas, romance, and other fictional stories abound. Fiction is a literary work in which the content is created by the imagination rather than facts (Milhorn, 2006). Fictional stories are frequently associated with fiction stories.

In contrast to nonfictional works, all characters, events, and locations described in fiction are fictitious. Reading fiction can help readers' imaginations so that they can generate a lot of inspiration when writing short stories or fiction. People can use fiction stories to express their imaginations and ideas in written form. According to (Syarif, 2020), writing is easy if you have writing, willingness, sensitivity, knowledge, creativity, hard work, intelligence, thoroughness, and sincerity. Suppose writing is based on several things conveyed by (Dinanti and Ardiansah, 2020). In that case, writing will be fun and easy to do because no burden will overshadow the writing process. Writing as a language activity cannot be separated from what one gets from listening, reading, and speaking because it can provide valuable input for writing and help writers to develop ideas. Also, according to (Widiastuti, 2017), writing is a language skill that aims to provide all forms of information from the author to the reader.

(Quinn, 2022) Reading fiction books to learn English is one of the most effective ways to improve your language skills because fiction books are the most enjoyable things to read! English storybooks help extend your vocabulary in a "natural way" by entertaining you and engaging your mind in ways many English classes can't. Our experience is that students who read in English improve in every area of language learning more quickly than students who don't read. They learn English through stories, building on what they know in their English classes.

Partoursastro in Subaedah (1999:12) stated that if students are motivated to learn a lesson, they will always try to understand it. In other words, a lack of motivation may influence a decrease in activity intensity. Thus, engaging in fictional stories can inspire students to improve their literacy skills. It can also encourage students to collaborate on the creation of an account. In this study, researchers conducted research on several students to find out the formulation of the problem as follows :
1. Can students easily understand the plot of a fictional story?
2. Do fictional stories motivate students to read more?
3. The advantages of reading fiction.
4. The advantages of writing fiction.

Method

The method used in this research was qualitative. (Moleong, 2017) stated that qualitative research intends to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, and others, holistically and using descriptions in words and language in a particular natural context using various natural methods. This is also clarified by (Hendryadi, 2019), who stated that the qualitative method is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of natural social phenomena. Qualitative research emphasizes quality over quantity, and data is collected through interviews,

direct observation, and other official documents rather than questionnaires. The researchers collected data using the Google platform.

The objects in this study were students of their productive age. The researchers obtained 21 respondents consisting of four males and 17 females who were still productive. In this study, the effectiveness of fictional stories will be recognized to increase students' interest in reading and writing as well as the influence on improving students' abilities in reading and writing.

Findings and Discussions

Researchers conducted this research by conducting research in the form of a questionnaire to the respondents. Data were obtained from 19 respondents, with details of seven elementary school students, eight junior high school students, four high school students, and two respondents who did not answer. The instrument used is Google Forms. From the research results, all respondents stated that they had read fiction through books, applications such as webtoons and Wattpad, and social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and so on.

After conducting sampling, there are four problem formulations to be discussed by researchers, as follows: students' ability to understand a fictional story, things that make fiction easier to read and write, presenting the benefits of reading fiction, and presenting the benefits of writing fictional stories.

Understanding The Storyline of a Fictional Story

Do you understand about the story line of fictional stories?
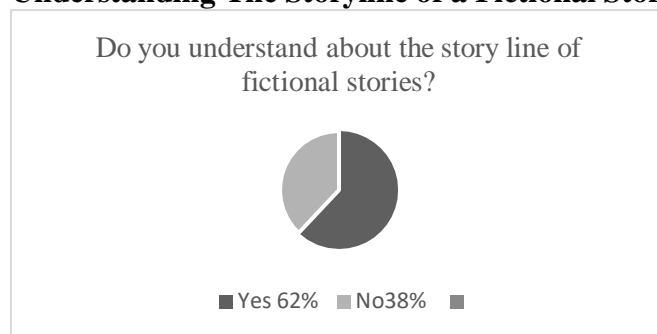
■Yes 62% ■No38% ■

Figure 1. Students Understanding of The Storyline of Fictional Stories.

Based on these data, as many as 62 percent of students could understand fictional storylines easily, and 38 percent had difficulty understanding fictional storylines. Fictional stories are literary works based on the author's imagination. Therefore fictional stories are imaginative. The stories presented are not based on real stories or events. However, some fictional stories can be inspired by actual events or experiences experienced or seen directly by the author. Fictional stories can be in novels, short stories, and so on. Because the language structure is easy and the stories are close to everyday life, fictional stories will be easier to understand.

Fictional Stories are Easier to Understand
Table 1. Description of Students' Reason

	Number
Interesting	7
Light Topic	6
Informal Language	2
Relate to Real Life	6
Total	21

Referring to Table 1, seven respondents are interested in fictional stories. Respondents are interested in the stories presented in fiction in various genres, ranging from friendship, family, love, mystical, and others. Then, six respondents like fiction stories because the topics are light and easier to read because fictional stories are usually used as an option to entertain

themselves. Then two respondents liked fictional stories because the language used was informal language. Finally, six respondents stated that fictional stories are also easy to understand because they are often related to real life, so they can feel what the characters in the story feel.

Fictional Stories are Easier to Write
Table 2. Description of Students' Reason

	Number
Self Imagination	12
Informal Language	6
Self-perspective	3
Total	21

Table 2 shows that 12 respondents stated that it was easy for them to imagine when writing fictional stories. Then six respondents found it easy to write fictional stories because they only needed to use the informal language used in everyday life. And three respondents stated that they could write fiction because it was according to their respective wishes. Fiction stories do not have to be based on accurate information because stories are only developed based on the author's imagination.

Fictional Story to Increase Students' Motivation at Reading and Writing
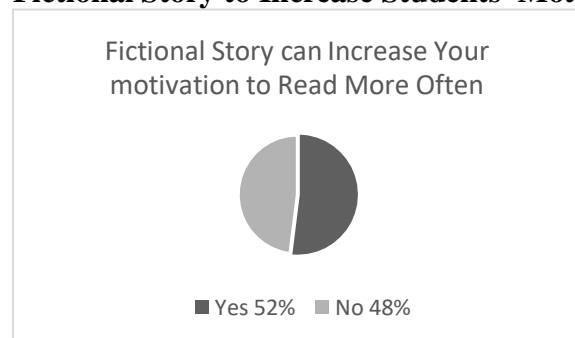

Figure 2. Students' Motivation for Reading and Writing

Based on the data above, it can be seen that 52% of respondents can increase their motivation to read fiction. At the same time, 48% of respondents are still not motivated to read and write through fiction. As previously discussed, students feel many conveniences when writing and reading fiction rather than non-fiction stories or other literary works. This can then increase students' motivation to read and write more often.

Benefits of Reading and Writing Fictional Stories
Table 3. Description of Students' Perception

	Number
Creative, Innovative	6
Increase Knowledge	3
Entertainment	4
Gain Motivation	5
Increase Vocabulary	3
Total	21

Based on data from table 3, all respondents stated that fiction stories could benefit them in improving their reading and writing skills. A total of 6 students said that reading and writing fictional stories could foster creativity and innovation within them. Writing a story based on imagination will undoubtedly foster a creative and innovative spirit in students. In addition,

three students stated that the benefits of increased knowledge could be felt. Currently, fiction stories have overgrown. Many fictional stories are easily found in bookstores, reading apps, and on social media. When reading fictional stories, we will get many new things, and by writing fictional stories, we will automatically get new knowledge which can then be developed into a story. There are still many benefits that we can feel when reading or writing fictional stories, such as increasing motivation to read and write, as entertainment, and increasing vocabulary.

Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that fiction stories can improve children's ability to understand a text, write or compose a story because they are simple to understand, relevant to their daily lives, and align with their imagination. When children do something they enjoy or are made to enjoy doing, it makes it easier for them to understand. Therefore, parents or schools can assign fictional story readings to students. It is certain that with themes and content that contain education, fictional stories can still benefit students' futures.

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