Applying Text Feature Walks Strategy in Higher Education to Improve Students' Reading Comprehension

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Abstract
Reading is prominent aspects in written communications which are commonly used as formal communication, especially for students at a higher level of education. They are required to be able to understand more textbooks and informational texts either in English. Unfortunately, reading in English is still considered as big problem for them because they have lack of vocabulary to comprehend the ideas of the texts and lack of practice given by the teacher. As a result, it is believed that teaching strategy needed to help students in teaching reading. This study was conducted to investigate the efficacy of text feature walks strategy in helping students in higher education to improve their critical reading comprehension through the expository texts. It also explored the feedback from students related to the implementation of Text Feature Walks in the virtual classroom. There were 40 students of English Education Study Program in a private university becoming the sample in this study and they were equally divided into experimental and control groups. To measure their improvement in reading comprehension, all students were given pre- and post-reading tests in the form of multiple choice. The data obtained were analyzed by using paired sample and independent sample t-tests. The results of paired sample t-test showed that there was a significant improvement in reading (Md=33.13, p=0.000) in experimental group. In addition, the result of independent sample t-test indicated that there were significant difference in reading (Md=39.70, p=0.000) of both groups.

Keywords:
reading comprehension, text features walk strategy, higher education

INTRODUCTION

Literacy has been commonly defined as the ability to read and write at an adequate level of proficiency that is necessary for communication, or at a level that lets one understand and communicate ideas in a literate society, so as to take part in that society (Erben, Ban, & Castaneda, 2009, p. 131). Reading is prominent aspects in written communications which are commonly used as formal communication. Tuan (2012, p. 21) states that reading builds the knowledge of diverse kinds to write or to employ in writing; writing reinforces knowledge in a way that builds schemata to read with.

Reading influences students' achievement in learning English. In language teaching, reading is usually taught interactively in the class room to engage students' participation (Ayu, Diem and Viyanti, 2017). Harmer states that reading texts also provide good models for English comprehension (2001). When teaching students to read, teachers should first let them know what kind of text they are going to read. Good reading texts can introduce interesting topics, stimulate discussion, excite imaginative response and can be the springboard for well-rounded, fascinating lessons (Harmer, 2001). However, there are still many English Language Learners across the countries who cannot reach literacy levels because learning activity do not fully reach the educational needs (Erben et al., 2009).

Similarly, reading in English is still considered as big problem for students in Indonesia. The result from Education First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) (2015) shows that although there was an increase in number, but Indonesia English proficiency is still in the 32nd place out of 70 countries, categorized as moderate level and three points behind the neighboring countries, Vietnam. These data provide information about the literacy of native language; it can be inferred that English literacy are probably lower.

Furthermore, when students enter a higher level of education, (i.e., secondary and tertiary levels) they are required to be able to understand more textbooks and informational texts either in English or in Indonesia. However, to achieve that, it is very challenging due to the level of vocabulary and concept-dense content of the text such as found in expository nonfiction (Ayu, 2020). Expository nonfiction contains numerous text features that supplement and present important content that the student must read in order to fully comprehend. Iwai (2007) asserts that unlike fiction or narrative text, expository has multiple entry points, the reader can begin reading anywhere on the page.

Nonfiction text features offer clues to the reader that aid in comprehension. However, there are many students that ignore these elements and think of them simply as decoration, rather than information even though they have been taught their importance (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2008; Spencer, 2003). To help students read or give importance to text features when reading, the writer conducted a research by using Text Feature Walks strategy.

Text features include all the components of a story or article that are not the main body of text such as the table of contents, index, glossary, headings, bold words, sidebars, pictures and captions, and labeled diagrams. The Text Feature Walks is a structure that addresses each of these facets of expository text. These features can be helpful if they are concise, related to the content, and clear, or they can be harmful if they are poorly organized; only loosely related to the content, or too wordy (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2010). The success of the Text Feature Walks is dependent on students' knowledge of text features and the ability to self-scaffold through discussion. Students can be taught to use this structure to help them predict what they will be learning.

In the Text Feature Walks strategy, students work in a small group. They read each feature in the order that it appears in the text and discussing what they think they will be learning. As each feature is read, students must think about and discuss how the information relates to the main idea of the text. As students move through text features, in a given section, they become familiar with the text's organization and access important background knowledge related to the content (Honig, Diamond, &Gutlohn, 2000).

The point of the Text Feature Walks is to help students discover that they can learn about a topic before they start reading the actual text. As students make their predictions and discuss various features, they anticipate what they will read and set a purpose for their reading (Lubliner, 2001).Meanwhile, during this treatment, students were working in group, to neglect their boredom during the writing class (Ayu, 2018). The previous research conducted by the writer in 2013, by applying Text Features Walk to improve the reading comprehension of eleventh grade students showed that the strategy could effectively improve the students' reading comprehension.

Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2008, p. 26) state when students enter the intermediate grades, they are required to read more textbooks and informational texts to learn, but reading textbooks and informational texts can be difficult for students due to the higher level vocabulary and concept-dense content. In addition to these complexities, expository nonfiction also contains numerous text features that supplement and present important content that the student must read in order to fully comprehend.

As Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2008) describe, students enter higher grades, they will find more complicated vocabulary and complex content in textbooks and informational texts. The students are also required to comprehend expository texts and reading the text features in the expository text will help students to catch the significant information so that they can completely understand. Fountas and Pinnell (2006, p. 93) state that Text Feature has five categories. They are: Text divisions. They help readers identify how the text is organized and presented. Some examples include chapters, sections, introductions, summaries, and author information. The next one is organizational tools and sources of information that help readers understand the information. Some examples are titles, table of contents, index, headings and subheadings, glossary, pronunciation guide, and references.

The study done by Clay (1991) and Fountas and Pinnell (1996) found that the five categories of the Text Feature Walks is mastered by students after they werehaving the reading comprehension class by using Text Feature Walks technique. He found that by using Text Feature Walks, the students activate their prior knowledge, make predictions, and set a purpose for reading.

There are some studies which investigated about Text Feature Walks. First study done by Hanson and Padua (2010) conducted on fourth grade students of elementary school in reading and writing an informational text. They introduced text features to the student and use the strategy of Text Feature Walks, at the end of the class they ask students to work together in making an anchor chart to put in front of the class and use it whenever they are lost in reading or writing. The results showed that the students who were continuously being taught by using text features become strategic readers; they used their knowledge of text features and applied the ideas they got to their writing, the participants of the study were elementary school students.

Second study done by Franco (2013) examined the effects of instruction through Text Feature Walks on comprehension of expository text in a fifth-grade classroom.

Twenty-six fifth-graders participated in intentional dialogue structured around predictions, questions, and connections related to informational text features such as table of contents, index, glossary, headings, bold words, sidebars, pictures and captions, and labeled diagrams, intended to help students understand non-fiction reading material 45 minutes a day, 4 days a week. The results significantly improved comprehension of expository text of the participants after the Text Feature Walk instruction.

The third previous study done by Amer (2013) investigated the relationship between explicit instruction in the organizational patterns of expository English and EFL writing performance. The participants were 22 Palestinian EFL university students enrolled in an academic writing course. The data from pre-test and post-test mean scores lead to a direct correlation between explicit instruction in text structure and improved writing performance. Furthermore, from the interview between the researcher and the students revealed that they felt more comfortable and confident about writing when they are explicitly taught the organizational structures of expository texts.

This present research was done at English Education study program in a private university. Based on the informal interview between the researcher and some students, most of the students encountered problems in comprehending English text especially informational texts. They often get confused with unfamiliar words and get lost in reading the text. Moreover, the students have lack of vocabulary and get a little exposure in reading activities. Considering the facts and the importance of Text Feature Walks in teaching reading, the researcher conducted a study to answer the research questions as follows: Was there any significant improvement in reading comprehension and its aspects of students who were taught by using Text Feature Walks and those who were not taught by using Text Feature Walks and what was the feedback from the students concerning the teaching and learning by using Text Feature Walks in the classroom?

METHOD

An experimental research method was conducted in this study by applying pretest-posttest control group research design. Two sample groups (experimental and control groups) were involved in the study. The experimental group was given the pretest, the treatment (teaching reading and writing by using Text Features Walk), and the post-test. Meanwhile, the control group had the pretest and post-test but no treatment.

Participants

In this study, the writer selected the sample by using a purposive sampling technique. Two classes were involved as the experimental and control groups. There were 60 students of English Education Study Program of a private university in Bandar Lampung. Next, IRI test was given to the students of to know the students' reading level and score. The result showed that their reading level was in level 4 and their reading score were varied.

Procedure and Instruments

This research was conducted for 16 meetings including the pre-test and post-test for the experimental group. The control group did not get any kinds of treatment. The allocation time for each meeting was 100 minutes which covered the pre activity, whilst activity, and post activity. In this study, the writer used reading comprehension test as the instrument of the study. For pretest and posttest, the writer used 40 multiple choice

questions for reading test. Describe what, how, to whom the instruments used in the study. A questionnaire was also given to the students in order to know the feedback concerning the use of Text Feature Walks in learning. The questionnaire was in the form of close and open ended questions. There were 4 questions that were answered by the students. For questions number 1 and 2, the writer gave some choices of the answer. Then, the students chose their answer and gave the reason. For the question number 3, the writer asked students opinion about their problem in using Text Feature Walks and their solution. The last question, the writer asked the students' opinion about the strengths and weaknesses of using Text Feature Walks in learning reading skill.

Data Analysis

To see the significant difference in students' reading comprehension both in pretest and posttest, the data were analyzed using the paired sample t-test. Independent sample t-test was used to see the significant differences in reading comprehension in posttest between experimental and control groups. The computation was conducted by using SPSS 21.0. While for the questionnaire, the writer used simple percentage analysis and described the results by using qualitative analysis.

FINDINGS

The Results of Reading Comprehension Test for Experimental and Control Groups
The results of the reading comprehension test were presented in the form of scores. As described in Chapter III, the students' scores were classified into the following categories: (1) A corresponded to "Very Good" with the score interval 86-100, (2) B corresponded to "Good" with the score interval 71-85, (3) C corresponded to "Average" with the score interval 56-70, (4) D corresponded to "Poor" with the score interval 0-40. There were 40 questions in reading comprehension test. The following table displays the summary of students' reading pretest and posttest in the experimental and control groups.

Table 1. The Summary of Students' Reading Test Score

| | Reading Test | | | |
| | Experimental Group | | Control Group | |
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Min	30	58	28	20
Max	60	90	50	55
Mean	42.67	75.80	36.23	36.10
Std Deviation	8.172	8.814	5.237	8.656

As shown in Table1, in the experimental group's pretest, the highest score was 60; the lowest was 30; the mean was 42.67. In the posttest, the highest score was 90; the lowest was58; the mean was75.80. Meanwhile, in the control group's pretest, the highest score was 50; the lowest was 28; the mean was 36.23. In the posttest, the highest score was 55; the lowest was 20; the mean was 36.10. Table 2 shows the students reading scores distribution.

Table 2. The Score Distribution of Students' Reading Achievement in the Experimental and Control Groups

| Score Interval | Category | Experimental Group | | | | Control Group | | | |
| | | Pretest | | Posttest | | Pretest | | Posttest | |
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
86-100	A (Very Good)	0	0	4	13.3	0	0	0	0
71-85	B (Good)	0	0	18	60	0	0	0	0
56-70	C (Average)	3	10	8	26.7	0	0	0	0
41-55	D (Poor)	2	40	0	0	4	13.3	9	30
0-40	E (Very Poor)	15	50	0	0	26	86.7	21	70

As shown in Table 2, the result of pretest for the experimental group showed that there was no student (0%) who was in the Very Good and Good categories. There were 3 students (10%) were in the Average category, 12 students (40%) were in the Poor category, and 15(50%) students were in the Very Poor category. The result of posttest for the experimental group showed that there were 4 students (13.3%) who were in the Very Good and there was no student in Poor and Very Poor categories; there were 18 students (60%) in the Good category, 8 students (26.7%) were in the Average category.

Meanwhile, the result of pretest of the control group showed that there was no student (0%) who was in the Average, Good and Very Good categories. There were 4 students (13.3%) were in the Poor category, and 26 students (86.7%) were in the Very Poor category. The result of the posttest for the control group showed almost similar thing that there was no student (0%) who was in the Average, Good, and Very Good categories. There were 9 students (30%) in the Poor category, 21 students (70%) were in the Very Poor category.

The Result of t-test Analyses

In this research, the writer applied two statistical analyses, namely: (1) Paired sample t-test used to answer the questions research number 1 and 2. Whereas, independent sample t-test was used to answer the questions research number 3 and 4. Table 3 presents the results of the t-test analyses.

Table 3 shows that mean score of experimental group reading pretest was 42.67, and the mean score of students' reading posttest was 75.80. Therefore, the mean difference between students' reading pretest and posttest was 33.13. In addition, the significance level of students' reading comprehension was 0.000. It was lower that the alpha (0.05). These results showed that there was a significant improvement in the students' reading comprehension after the treatment was given. From the reading aspects, the highest mean score was vocabulary aspects with 14.97 while the lowest mean score was sequence with 9.83.The result of reading in the control group pretest was 36.23 and in the posttest was 36.10. It means that there was-0.133 differences in the mean of students' reading comprehension score. The result of the significance level of students' reading comprehension in the control group was 0.943. This result was higher

than the alpha (0.05). In short, the reading comprehension didn't have a significant improvement.

Table 3
The Results of the Paired and Independent Sample t-test Analyses of Reading Comprehension

Variables	Pretest		Posttest		Mean Diff/sig 2 tailed Pre and Posttest Exp within	Mean Diff/sig 2 tailed Pre and Posttest Cont within	Mean Diff/sig 2 tailed Posttest between Expand Control
	Mean Exp	Mean Cont	Mean Exp	Mean Cont			
Reading Comprehension	42.67	36.23	75.80	36.10	33.13 0.000	-0.13 0.943	39.70 0.000
Main Idea	8.17	7.73	12.67	5.93	4.50 0.000	-1.80 0.008	6.73 0.000
Detail	8.43	6.87	12.97	8.60	4.53 0.000	1.73 0.89	4.37 0.000
Sequence	4.33	4.67	9.83	3.20	5.50 0.000	-1.47 0.010	6.63 0.000
Inference	6.87	4.53	13.13	4.33	6.27 0.000	-0.20 0.756	8.80 0.000
Vocabulary	9.50	8.37	14.97	9.10	5.47 0.000	0.73 0.358	5.87 0.000
Cause/Effect	6.63	5.30	13.57	6.37	6.93 0.000	1.06 0.100	7.20 0.000

The Result of Students Feedback on the Use of Text Features Walks
As stated in methodology, the writer administered questionnaire to find out about students' feedback towards the use of Text Features Walks to improve students reading comprehension. This questionnaire consisted of 3 questions which had close and open ended answers. The results of the analyses of the questionnaire are shown in the following table.

Table 4
The Result of the Analyses for Question Number 1

Question	Group		Individual	
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**
In doing the task by using Text Feature Walks, You are more comfortable when working: With a group Individually	26	87%	4	13%

The result of the analyses for question number 1 showed that most of students (26 students (87%)) chose that working with a group was the best way to complete the text features. The reasons behind this answer were because that every student could share and discuss their ideas about the topic. Then, students with high English proficiency could help students to understand the material easily. In the contrary, there were 4 students (13%) who chose to work individually as the best way to complete the text features. These students felt hard to focus when they were in a group. Thus, by working individually, they could focus on finishing the assignment without being disturbed.

Table 5. The Result of Students Problem and Problem Solving towards the Use of Text Feature Walks

Problem	Problem Solving
Recognizing text features in the text Getting used to write an expository text	Working in group is the best way for the students to get used to the text features. Students having a hard time with expository text at first, moreover, when they have to write one.

Table 5 shows that the students found some difficulties in using Text Feature Walks. First, many of them felt difficult when they should find text features in the text. It happened probably because they haven't memorized it all. The solution is, let the students discuss with their group; their peers will help them finding the text features and explain it to them. Second, students were not so familiar with the expository text, they only knew some kind of texts such as descriptive and narrative, so at the beginning of this treatment they spend more time to write an expository text.

The last question in the questionnaire was about the students' comments of strengths and weaknesses to the use of Text Features Walk. Table 6 presents the summary of the students' comments.

Table 6. The Result of Students Feedback towards the Use of Text Feature Walks

Strengths	Weaknesses
The students enjoyed their reading as they already had the prediction.	The students found it hard to memorize all text features at the first time.
Reading with the help of pictures and tables make the students easy to understand the lesson.	Working individually makes it hard for them to finish on time.
The students tried to use Text Features Walk strategy for another kind of text and they think it can help them like in expository text. It helped them to memorize new topic/information	The students depend too much on their notes because they have to look for the text features list.

Finally, as presented in Table 6, there were various responses of the students towards the use of Text Features Walks in learning reading and writing. While there more strengths than weaknesses. Therefore, it showed that students had good perceptions or positive feedback towards the use of Text Features Walk in learning reading.

DISCUSSION

It was found that there were significant differences in the students reading achievements between the students who were taught by using Text Feature Walks and those who were not. This fact indicated that the use of Text Feature Walks in teaching reading to the students had improved the students reading achievements.

In addition, Text Feature Walks helped the students to gain significant improvement in their reading achievements. The results also supported the idea of teaching the language skills integrated. Text Feature Walks could be used to integrate the students' reading achievements. These results are in agreement with some research which found significant differences in the students' reading comprehension achievements when the students were taught by using Text Feature Walks. Hanson and Padua (2010) found out that their students who were given instruction to read and write expository during the treatment showed improvement both in their score and in their motivation to learn. Other studies done by Iwai (2007) also showed that text features instruction could help struggling readers to gain their motivation in reading.

From the posttest of the experimental group, the highest improvement in the reading comprehension was cause and effect. This was because the text features they found during reading help them to organize information in a text. Thus, it increased cause and effect aspect. Kelley & Clausen-Grace (2010) assert that signal words in text features indicate the information in a paragraph is organized as cause and effect: because, as a result, resulted, caused, affected, since, due to, effect. By paying attention to the signal words in the paragraphs, the students could easily getting the cause-effect information, therefore it contributed to their understanding.

Based on the results of the questionnaire, it was found that there were some factors which might cause the improvement in the students reading achievement. First, Text Feature Walks exposed the students to the authentic materials which were relevant to their life. Second, learning through Text Feature Walks is motivating. The students found that the activities and the tasks in the Text Features Walks were appropriate, interesting and meaningful which could attract their attention, increase their motivation, and improve their comprehension. Therefore, they enjoyed learning reading and writing through Text Feature Walks. They believed that Text Feature Walks supported them in improving their reading achievement. These statements inferred that using Text Feature Walks in learning reading and writing had given the students useful and fun leaning experience which led them to have positive perceptions towards the use of Text Features Walks in learning reading. In other words, it could be stated that the students had favorable perceptions toward the use of Text Feature Walks in learning reading because Text Feature Walks was an effective learning tool. It was not only facilitated them in learning reading but also improve their reading achievements.

Third, when the students were motivated, they will put much effort on their study to improve their achievement. During teaching and learning process, the students were exposed to a lot of interesting topics for accomplishing their reading tasks. The exposure to the interesting materials made the students more motivated and got better understanding in learning, thus, it was beneficial for improving their reading achievements. This finding was also supported by Kelley and Clausen Grace (2015) who assert that interesting and well-written text can give students a good example of the feature they are highlighting, those it will contribute to their comprehension.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the analyses and interpretations, several conclusions can be drawn. First, there was a significant difference in reading achievements before and after the students were taught by using Text Features Walks. It means the first null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected and the first alternative hypothesis (H_{a1}) was accepted. In other words, using Text Features Walks could significantly improve students' reading achievement. Second, there was a significant difference in reading between the students who are taught by using Text Features Walks and those who are not. Hence, the second null hypothesis (H_{02}) was rejected and the second alternative hypothesis (H_{a2}) was accepted. In other words, using Text Features Walks could significantly improve students' reading achievement compared to those who are not. Then, the students gave various feedbacks towards the use of Text Features Walks in learning reading and writing. Most of them said that using Text Features Walks in learning was more effective to improve their writing rather than their reading. The students also said that working in group was the best way to increase their knowledge in learning process. Therefore, using Text Features Walks gave positive effects in improving students' reading achievement. In addition, there were still some feedbacks from the students about the lack of Text Feature Walks Strategy which should be solved in order to get a better result.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, some recommendations are offered to English teachers, students, and the future researcher who have interest to conduct a similar research. For English teachers, using Text Features Walks in learning can be an alternative way in teaching reading. The students will collaborate each other in their group to achieve better understanding. For students, the contribution of Text Features Walks is also recommended for better experience in learning. As a result, they will obtain deeper comprehension and they can work in their group work to discuss the topic. Students who face difficulty will be assisted by students with higher achievement. Finally, for the researchers who want to conduct similar research, it is recommended to do a preliminary study about targeted sample to clarify the problem and know exactly what to do for the research.

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