

Influence of Literature Circles Strategy and Cultural Literacy on Students' English Achievement

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Abstract: This study investigated the influence of Literature Circles Strategy (LCS) and cultural literacy (CL) on 7th and 8th grade students' English as a foreign language (EFL) achievement of one private junior high school in Palembang, South Sumatera, Indonesia. The students' EFL achievement was measured by using English tests before and after the three-month intervention using LCS. The results of descriptive statistics showed that although based on paired sample t-test, the students' EFL achievement increased significantly (mean difference =19.46; $p < .000$), it was still on below average level. Then, regression analysis also indicated that students' EFL achievement was influenced by their CL for 98.00% with reading has the highest percentage. The implication of these results should encourage the eagerness of the in-service teachers of English to apply the strategy appropriately and proportionally to enhance students' all English skills and researchers to do similar study by involving students of all grade levels of both private and state public schools.

Keywords: *EFL learning, literature circles strategy, cultural literacy, junior high school students*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini meneliti pengaruh Strategi Lingkaran Sastra (*Literature Circles Strategy – LCS*) dan Literasi Budaya (*Cultural Literacy – CL*) (LCS) pada kemampuan Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL) pada siswa kelas 7 dan 8 di sebuah sekolah menengah pertama (SMP) swasta di kota Palembang, Sumatera Selatan, Indonesia. Hasil kemampuan Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) diukur dengan menggunakan test Bahasa Inggris sebelum dan sesudah intervensi selama 3 bulan menggunakan LCS. Hasil dari gambaran statistika menunjukkan bahwa meskipun berdasarkan uji *paired sample t-test*, hasil kemampuan siswa meningkat secara signifikan (perbedaan nilai rata-rata =19.46; $p < .000$) masih di bawah angka rata-rata. Kemudian analisis regresi juga menunjukkan bahwa hasil kemampuan Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing masih dipengaruhi oleh Literasi Budaya 98% dengan presentase tertinggi dalam membaca. Implikasi dari hasil ini seharusnya mendorong kemauan para guru untuk mengaplikasikan strategi ini secara benar dan proporsional untuk meningkatkan semua keterampilan Bahasa Inggris, dan bagi peneliti agar dapat melakukan penelitian serupa dengan melibatkan siswa dari semua tingkat baik sekolah negeri maupun sekolah swasta.

Kata-kata kunci: *pembelajaran EFL, strategi lingkaran sastra, keaksaraan budaya, siswa SMP*

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As a global language, English plays an important role and has been taken up by a lot of countries around the world. Almost one fourth of the population in this world speaks English (British Council, 2013). It is used as the official language, as a medium of communication in governmental offices, law courts, the media, science, information technology, business, entertainment, diplomacy and educational system (Crystal, 2003)

In Indonesia, English is seen by many as people give a certain degree of prestige. A large number of people think that having the knowledge of English is perceived of as either important or essential (Lauder, 2008). English skills are required by many types of employment and seen as a symbol of high education. The history of English language teaching in Indonesia was long started since its independence, which was followed by the development of the curriculum and the methodology of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Indonesia. According to Act Number 20, year 2003 English is taught formally as a foreign language in the Indonesian education system from junior high to higher education level. It also be used as a language of instruction in the specified educational units to support the language skills of learners. The English language teaching in Indonesia was impacted by the changing of the curriculum since 1945 until the current curriculum 2013 that was amended in 2014. The current curriculum, however, reduces the English teaching period in the classroom from junior to senior high school level (*SMP* and *SMA* and the like) and alters English as the core subject at primary level into the local content subject, which based on the school privileged. It is also one of the subjects tested during the National Examination (Ministerial Regulation No. 23, 2006).

The impact of globalization has shown that the ability to use English for day to day communication becomes one of the most important skill in education as well as in the professional world. It is a great challenge for

Indonesian students to improve their English achievement and be able to compete with people from other countries academically and professionally.

The results of some surveys on English literacy achievements showed that the English literacy achievement of Indonesian was still low. The data from Education First English Proficiency Index (EF-EPI) showed that adult English proficiency of Indonesian ranked 32nd out of 70 participating countries (EF EPI, 2015). A similar result affected the students' reading literacy. A triennial assessment on PISA (the Program for International Student Assessment) by the OECD shows that Indonesian students are still struggling with their reading literacy level in their own national language. For the last three PISA results (2012, 2015, 2018) Indonesian position has not increased. PISA results in 2012 dropped where Indonesia was in the ranked 64th out of 65 participating countries. When the OECD average increased from 493 to 496 in contrast Indonesia's reading score average dropped to 396 (PISA 2012), 100 point lower than the OECD average (OECD, 2014). A lot of works remains to be done to improve student performance in literacy (OECD, 2016).

The achievement of Indonesian students in their own national language, as perceived by their own teachers, may be even lower than the existing data suggests. The research by Diem and Atmanegara (2015) and Diem and Pratiwi (2016) show that the English comprehension achievement score of Senior High students is still on average level, while Diem, Vianty and Mirizon in 2016, found out that the English comprehension achievement score of 355 junior high school students of the different state public school is only 67.5 while the minimum completeness criteria (*Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimum*) is 75.0 as stated by one of the state schools in Palembang City (Sudarmi, 2017/2018).

To minimize this problem, it is necessary to make some changes in teaching

strategies. It is believed that the teaching strategies are one of the key factors that determine satisfactory learning outcomes (Fischer, 2004, Tompkins, 2009). English should be taught and learned in a better approach to have better acquisition. The teaching methodology that was stated in 2013 curriculum gives the room for improvement in teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia (Ministerial Decree 65, 2013). Despite the minimum English period allocation, the teaching methodologies on curriculum 2013 has paved the way of changing the paradigm in English language teaching and learning in Indonesia.

The objectives of the study were to find out whether or not there was a significant (1) mean difference in students' general English (total or partial of Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking skill) achievement between before and after they are taught through Literature Circles; (2) difference in each aspect of every English skill (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking) achievement between before and after they are taught through Literature Circles; (3) influence of Cultural Literacy on students' English achievement after they are given a treatment using Literature Circles.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many teaching strategies that are suitable to the needs and culture of Indonesian students. Communicative language teaching is similar to the learning method reflected in National curriculum 2013. The goal of communicative language teaching is the teaching of communicative competence (Richard, 2006). It is necessary to know how to vary the use of language according to the setting and participants.

Daniels (1994) introduced Literature Circles strategy that explained well the communicative language teaching. This strategy was believed to be a way out which could make a difference in students' English literacy achievement. Literature Circles are

small, temporary discussion groups who have chosen to read the same book. The members perform different roles for discussion. While reading, each member does the reading assignment, bring notes on their reading and discusses the text according to his or her assigned roles. The roles assigned to the members allow them to function productively and to help them remain focused on the chosen book/reading text. The roles rotate in each discussion so that every student can experience the same roles as their friends (Daniels, 1994). Even though Literature Circles start from the book club and their activities based upon the fictional texts, they are then successfully modified for use with nonfiction text as well (Tobin, 2012).

Literature Circles engage the students in reading, writing, speaking, listening and critical thinking. It also makes them work in a group setting. These practices support the sociocultural theory that was proposed by Vygotsky (1978) which states that learning is social or influenced by interaction with others. The idea is to create a "community of learners" through social interaction (Tobin, 2012). It leads the students actively involved in knowledge construction while immersed in a social learning context (Meyer & Schendel, 2014).

Literature Circles Strategy helps students to be engaged in the peer-led discussion group. After selecting the reading materials, they read the text and discuss the reading materials. Literature Circles Strategy also improves the students' responsibility and critical thinking skills as they read, discuss, write and report the reading materials (Daniels, 2006). Since Literature Circles Strategy includes all these activities, it allows for all the language skills, both productive and receptive, to be practiced.

Literature Circles Strategy could also motivate the children to do the reading activities, improving their writing and speaking skills and also promote love of reading in their daily life in the future (Diem & Atmanegara, 2014). Motivation is one of

the key factors that has been widely accepted by teachers and researchers to the success of second/foreign language acquisition (Dornyei, 1998). Students' performance will also improve because they read materials and engage in discussing them. It also helps to change the classroom environment to be more cooperative, responsible and pleasurable while encouraging growth in reading (Barns, 1998).

The teachers' duty in Literature Circles Strategy is to assist the students with the wide range of reading materials that suitable for their age and assist them during the reading and learning process. They guide the discussion; however, in some level, students can take turn moderating the discussion. As Literature Circles Strategy allows each student to have his or her own reading experience, students then decide how much they want to read and how they want to participate in the discussion (Daniels, 2006).

Cultural Literacy

The term Cultural Literacy (CL) was first introduced by Hirsch (1987) through his book *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*. During that time, he feels that there is no alignment in history/culture and the English subject in the school. Hirsch stated that literacy is more than the actual mechanics of reading (1987). Kern (2000) explains the principle of literacy development for language teaching and learning which include the interaction with the content of text through language use, genre-specific conventions, and cultural knowledge through the learning process of collaboration, interpretation, and problem solving.

The key concept of cultural literacy is not about the reading, but the understanding of the meaning of the words based on a background of common knowledge that enables ones to make sense of what is read (Naqeeb, 2012). The cultural literacy, then becomes the cultural awareness of students

who learn a foreign language. Krasher (1999) states that learning a foreign language means to learn the culture of the target language. This awareness is important not only in real-life situation also to help students to understand that there are different cultural frames in language learning. This is in line with Peterson and Coltrane (2003) who state that students will master a language only when they learn both its linguistic and cultural norms. However, it is important that students do not lose their identity and culture because of observing another culture. Students should understand their own culture and interact politely within it (Pishghadam & Navari, 2009). It is the teachers' duty to teach them to be proud of their own culture and to enrich them all the time. In a more specific way Nakamura (2002) emphasizes that while learning English, one does not need to become more western or change his or her moral value to use the language in the international situation.

METHOD

Time series design involving 49 students from a public junior high school in Palembang was chosen in this study. Participants included students from grades 7, 8 and 9. The sample of this research was selected by using the stratified random sampling technique. During the treatment, 17 students from Grade 9 were pulled out from the research to prepare for their national exams. At the end of the treatment only 30 of 32 students from grades 7 and 8 were eligible to be measured.

During the treatment, modification in the practice of Literature Circles Strategy was applied so that it could be adjusted to the students' need. Instead of reading books, the choice of texts given in the practice was mostly short stories. At the beginning of the treatment, the students were not given the opportunity to choose their own piece of reading. Class discussion was led by the researcher and worksheet questions were given to guide the students during the

discussions. Upon seeing the students' readiness to choose their own group member and reading selections, the researcher then gave opportunity for the students to independently choose their group member and reading selection. The applied teaching procedures are as follows: (1) students of each group were given the same reading materials (short stories), (2) the students listened to and/or read either silently or aloud the short stories with peers in their own small group, (3) the students completed their own work based on their assigned roles, (4) in each group, the students discussed the reading materials they read; each student shared what she/he had found based on the role assigned, (5) the students wrote the results of their group discussion and were ready to share the result, (6) each group presented the result of their discussion to the whole class. And (7) as a closure, the teacher wrapped up the discussion. In order to make the students become productive, it is important to assign different roles to the students. According to DaLie (2001), these roles have supported all of his students in acquiring behaviors, skills and vocabulary of readers. The role that was modified by DaLie (2001) includes: discussion director, illustrator, literary luminary, vocabulary enricher, connector, travel tracker and summarize and investigator. It is useful to provide a list of these eight roles to groups consisting of four or five members so that the members of group have choices. Having a choice allows students to find roles that are best suited to them. Every group must have a Discussion Director. All the other roles are optional.

In collecting the data, a preliminary test was given to the population in order to select the students as a sample of the study and classify them into three different groups, they are below average, average and above average. This test was in the form of comprehension tests taken from *Wrancke Informal Comprehension Assessment* (WICA) instruments. Eighteen assessments with 12 passages were given to the students.

The passages covered six aspects: main idea, detail, sequence, inference, cause and effect and vocabulary. An English test covering the EFL literacy skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) and cultural literacy questionnaire were applied to the sample before and after the treatment. The listening and reading tests were in the form of multiple-choice questions with narrative passages of five graded levels (Level 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6). The 32 questions covering the understanding of Main Idea (MI), Detail (Det.), Sequence (Seq.), Inference (Inf.), Vocabulary (Voc.) and Cause and Effect (C/E) were given to the students. The scoring system for listening and reading was done based on how many items could be answered correctly. For the writing test, the students were asked to write a short descriptive text of generic structure, namely identification and description in 40 minutes. The text covered five aspects of descriptive writing as developed by Brown (2007). They are developing ideas (DI), organizing ideas (OI), grammar (Gr.), vocabulary (Voc.) and mechanics (Mech.). For the speaking test, the students were asked to tell what they had written. Two raters were asked to evaluate the students' writing by using rubrics developed by Brown (2007) and iRubric (2016) for speaking test. Those raters have three criteria such as having graduate (master's or *magister's* degree) from English Education study program, having more than 2 years of teaching experience, and achieving at least 550 TOEFL score.

Students were given a questionnaire to do the self assessment by identifying their own perception of cultural literacy. The questionnaire was developed based on the rubric of the Metiri Group in cooperation with NCREL or North Central Regional Education Laboratory (2016) prepared in Bahasa Indonesia to make it easier for students to understand. Students self-rated their own cultural literacy and monitored their progress. There were thirty-two questions based on ten indicators in the

rubrics. Some indicators had been adapted to suit the local content and the Indonesian historical background and culture. The indicators, then, were categorized into aspects of culturally literate students: they are knowledgeable and appreciative of the way that culture and history – their own as well as those of others - impact behaviors, beliefs, and relationship in a multicultural world. Those criteria then were categorized into the following aspects: Awareness, Stereotyping and Bias, Tolerance, Language Proficiency, and Resources and Technology. The maximum raw score for the questionnaire was 128. The scores were converted into 100% form to make them easier to calculate.

In analyzing the data, the paired sample t-test was applied to see whether there were significant differences in students' English

as a foreign language (EFL) achievement as a whole (coded as $EFLA_{Total}$) and each of the English skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) and the CL_{Total} and each aspect of CL before and after the students were given the intervention using Literature Circles Strategy. Then a regression analysis was applied to see the influence of CL and contribution of each English skill to the $EFLA_{Total}$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The treatment using LCS was a successful attempt to improve all of the four skills of students ($EFLA_{total}$) and each of the English skills and also the CL_{total} and $CL_{partial}$. The score distribution of the students' $EFLA_{Total}$ can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Score Distribution of the Students' EFLA and CL (N=30)

Variable		Mean	Frequency	%	SD
EFLA					
Above Average	76 – 100	-	-	-	-
Average	61 – 75	65.625	8	26.67	6.535
Below Average	0 – 60	52.090	22	73.33	5.065
Total		55.600	30	100	8.798
CL					
Advanced	76 – 100	78	19	16.33	2.41
Proficient	51 – 75	74	11	36.67	1.43
Basic	26 – 50	-	-	-	-
Novice	0 – 25	-	-	-	-
Total		76.56	30	100	3.11

The score distribution of $EFLA_{total}$ as illustrated in table 1 shows that the English Achievement Total ($EFLA_{Total}$) among students (N=30) was below average (Total Mean Score = 55.7). In detail, no student was above average, and 22 students (73.33%) scored below average. There were few students who obtained an average score: 8 students (26.67%). The mean of the $EFLA_{Total}$ comprised of four English skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking).

CL results in contrary were different. The students' CL measurements were already advanced with a total mean score of 76.56. It is clear that 66.7 % of the students' CL levels had already been advanced with a mean score 78, only 36.7% or 11 students scored in the proficient level.

Furthermore, a pair sample t-test was also used in order to see the EFLA and CL improvement between before and after the treatment. The result shows that there was a

significant improvement between before and after the treatment as can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. Mean Differences of Pretest-Posttest of Students' EFLA and CL (N=30)

Variable	Mean Score		Mean Difference Pretest and posttest	t-value	Sig
	Pretest	Posttest			
EFLA	36.1	55.700	19.500	26.658	.000
Listening	27.97	50.03	22.066	13.348	.000
Reading	34.33	52.30	17.966	10.986	.000
Writing	37.87	55.87	18.000	7.25	.000
Speaking	49.26	64.76	15.500	14.249	.000
CL	68.93	76.56	7.633	15.428	.000
Awareness	73.46	78.93	5.466	6.557	.000
Stereotyping and Bias	64.16	70.33	6.166	8.729	.000
Tolerance	77.83	84.83	7.000	6.770	.000
Language Proficiency	48.43	66.63	18.200	15.130	.000
Resources and Technology	69.93	76.80	6.872	6.610	.000

It is clear that even though the students' mean score in EFLA is quite low, there have been improvements in all English skills between before and after the treatment. The mean difference between pretest and posttest is 19.466 with a t-value of 24.907; $p < .000$. The highest mean pretest and posttest difference involves listening: 22.066 with a t-value of 13.348; $p < .000$. The second highest mean difference (Mean = 20.416 with t-value 11.406; $p < .000$) involved speaking.

The total mean score of students' CL was 76.56. The mean difference between before and after the treatment is 7.63 with a t-value of 15.42; $p < .000$. All aspects of CL show improvement between before and after the treatment. However, *language proficiency* has the highest mean difference 18.20 with a t-value of 15.130; $p < .000$. *Tolerance* also shows improvement with a mean difference of 7.00 with a t-value of 6.770; $p < .000$.

A stepwise regression analysis was used to acquire the information about the statistical contribution of each English skill to EFLA_{Total}. The results showed that among four English skills, reading (77.7%) gave the highest contribution towards students' EFLA_{Total}. The other contributions were

speaking with 11.5%, writing with 5.8% and listening with 4.9%.

Detailed contribution of each aspect to each of the English skills can be seen in table 4. In listening, it is clear that inference contributes 57.6% to the total listening achievement. Cause and effect contributes 22.6%, while other aspects of listening (details, sequence, vocabulary, and main idea) contribute 19.8% to the listening_{Total}. In reading, the cause and effect aspect contributes 49.6% and inference 29.0%. Other aspects (main idea, details, sequence and vocabulary) contribute 21.4 % to the total reading achievement.

While the organizing idea aspect in writing contributes 78.2% to the total writing achievement, grammar and the other remaining aspects, such as developing idea, mechanics and vocabulary, contribute 21.8 % to the total writing achievement. In speaking, fluency contributes the highest (87.8%) to the total speaking achievement, while the other aspects of speaking contribute 8.05%.

It is clear that awareness contributes 41.0% to the total CL achievement, followed by Resources and technology with 23.6%. Other aspects (stereotype and bias,

tolerance, and language proficiency) 98.0% to the improvement of EFLA, as can contribute 35.4% to the total CL be seen as follows in Table 5. achievement. Moreover, CL also contributes

Table 3. Contribution of Each of English Skills to EFLA

Variable	Model	R ²	Change Statistics	
			R ² change	Sig. F change
English Achievements	Reading	.777	.777	.000
	Reading +Speaking	.892	.115	.000
	Reading +Speaking +Writing	.950	.058	.000
	Reading +Speaking +Writing + Listening	.999	.049	.000

Table 4. Contribution of Each Aspect of Each Skill to Each of the English Skills (N=30)

Variables		R ²	R ² change	Sig. F change
Listening Skill				
<i>Aspects of Listening</i>	Inference	.576	.576	.000
	Inference +Cause and Effect	.802	.226	.000
	Inference +Cause and Effect + Details	.878	.076	.000
	Inference +Cause and Effect + Details + Sequence	.918	.040	.002
	Inference +Cause and Effect + Details + Sequence	.962	.044	.000
	Inference +Cause and Effect + Details + Sequence + Main Idea	.999	.038	.000
Reading Skill				
<i>Aspects of Reading</i>	Inference	.496	.496	.000
	Inference +Cause and Effect	.786	.290	.000
	Inference + Cause and Effects +Main Idea	.887	.101	.000
	Inference + Cause and Effects + Main Idea +Details	.937	.050	.000
	Inference + Cause and Effects + Main Idea + Deatails + Sequence	.980	.043	.000
	Inference + Cause and Effects + Main Idea + Deatails + Sequence + Vocabulary	1.000	.020	.000
Writing Skill				
<i>Aspects of Writing</i>	Organizing Idea	.782	.782	.000
	organizing Idea+grammar	.929	.418	.000
	organizing Idea+grammar +developing idea	.968	.039	.000
	organizing Idea+grammar +developing idea+mechanics	.983	.015	.000
	organizing Idea+grammar +developing idea + mechanics + voc	1.000	.017	.000

Speaking Skill					
	Fluency		.878	.878	.000
	Fluency + Background Knowledge		.923	.045	.000
	Fluency + Background Knowledge + Pronunciation		.958	.034	.000
<i>Aspects of Speaking</i>	Fluency + Background Knowledge + Pronunciation + Vocab		.977	.019	.000
	Fluency + Background Knowledge + Pronunciation + Vocabulary + Grammar		.987	.010	.000
	Fluency + Background Knowledge + Pronunciation + Vocabulary + Grammar + Comprehension		1.000	.013	.000
Cultural Literacy					
	Awareness		.410	.410	.000
	Awareness + Resources and Technology		.646	.236	.000
<i>Aspects of Cultural Literacy</i>	Awareness + Resources and Technology + Stereotype and Bias		.803	.157	.000
	Awareness + Resources and Technology + Stereotype and Bias +Tolerance		.932	.129	.000
	Awareness + Resources and Technology + Stereotype and Bias +Tolerance + Language Proficiency		.992	.059	.000

Table 5. CL Contribution to the Improvement of EFLA

Dependent Variable	Model	R²	R² change	Sig. F change
English as a Foreign Language Achievements	1	.980	.980	.000

Discussion

The students' below average English achievement is surely not yet satisfactory since it is far below the English standard score in the school where the study was conducted, which is 75. However, from this study, the Literature Circles Strategy (LCS) has proven to be effective to improve the students' overall English achievement.

Applying LCS in the class has helped to make a significant improvement in all English skills from pretest to posttest. Students' listening achievement results show the highest mean difference among the other skills. It is likely due to the involvement in the learning process using LCS with various reading materials and discussions. In general, the inference aspect

of listening gives more contribution than the other aspect of listening. The students learned to find answer from clues and from prior knowledge during conversation. The use of English as a medium of instruction in the class during the treatment has helped the students to improve this skill. As the students speak and listen to others, they are starting to get used to with the English conversation and learned to follow the instructions and start to gives ideas to others. This is in line with the results of a study done by Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016), according to which it is necessary to provide the students with different types of input like listening texts in everyday conversation to improve their listening skills. However, the reason why the students did not make

any significant improvement in the *vocabulary* aspect of listening is presumably due to the lack of motivation of the students to clarify word meanings during conversation/listening or they were not prompted by the teacher to check word meanings.

Applying LCS in the classroom where reading, discussion and presentation were taking place simultaneously helped the students to get used to speaking English in the classroom. The roles assigned to the students made it possible for them to express their opinions and thoughts orally in order to report their findings during discussions, while at the same time limiting their focus to the role assigned. This result is similar to the study done by Lestari (2016) that the students' speaking ability was improved after they are taught using LCS. The discussions have made students eager to talk and share ideas since there was no fear and threat preventing them from talking. In other words, the group discussions helped to improve the students' confidence in speaking. Students' fluency also improved along with their ability to speak. However, the researcher did not really correct the students' grammar mistakes while speaking with the thought or assumption that the writer needed to improve the students' confidence to speak in English first, rather than to correct their mistakes immediately. This is in line with the results of a study done by Tuan and Mai (2015 p. 18) which suggested that teachers of English should decide carefully when and how to correct their students' mistakes so that they are not afraid of making mistakes and the conversations' flow is not destroyed.

In general, a stepwise regression analysis shows that reading has given the highest contribution to the EFLA_{Total}. It might be due to the reading materials used during the treatment. As reading texts were suitable to students' level and age, they didn't find many obstacles to accessing the texts and as a result, they could enjoy reading. Moreover, grouping the students based on

the readability of the reading materials they were interested in indicates that interest is another factor which helped their reading skills improve. Similar results were obtained in a study conducted by DaLie (2001) that LCS has improved the students' reading ability.

Writing skill also shows improvement in mean difference. However, writing contribution to the EFLA_{Total} is not that high. The low contribution of writing to EFLA_{Total} can be explained by the fact that writing was not really practiced during the treatment. The practice of writing mostly on how to develop the sentences from difficult words found by the vocabulary enriched role in LCS. The writer assumed that the students learned English through grammar translation method. The characteristics of the learning are similar to the study conducted by Elmayantie (2015, p. 130) that the classes mainly taught in mother tongue (Bahasa Indonesia), grammar provided the rules for putting words together and the instructions often focus on the form and inflection of the words. The teacher might find it easier as most of the students' English level was still low. Despite the low improvement in this area, the stepwise regression shows that organizing idea gives the highest contribution to the total writing achievement. It can be concluded that, the students were able to organize their writing well and putting their ideas clearly in writing form.

In general, CL is also new things exposed to the students and in between using LCS and cultural rich materials, there is improvement in students' CL. The highest improvement in language proficiency identifies the students' interest in learning English. However, the stepwise regression shows that awareness and resources and technology give bigger contribution to the CL_{Total}. Reading materials given during the treatment helped to improve the students' cultural awareness. This is similar to the study done by Diem and Atmanegara (2015) that reading materials also used to have a

smooth discussion in a relaxed manner also to have the cultural knowledge, not only about their own culture but also others. That is also the reason of the improvement in the awareness aspect of CL. As some of the resources were found from the website, the students' *resources and technology* aspect in CL is also improved. The students' aware that technology has to be used wisely to find the resources needed for their learning. They also learned about the polite ways of expressions and manner to use the media such as SMS and emails.

The CL and LCS are interconnected to each other. Krasher (1999) implied that to have the linguistic competence, learners need to be aware of the culturally appropriate ways to address people, express gratitude, make requests and expressing their agreement or disagreement with someone. To learn a language one has also learned the culture of the target language. The result of regression analysis also shows that the improvement of the $EFLA_{Total}$ is not only for the treatment using LCS, but also from the students' CL. The results also revealed that there is a significant contribution of CL to the improvement of EFLA. Students' awareness of culture and history also improved during the cultural rich discussion of the text. Students shared their experience of visiting different places and discussed with their group about the cultural diversity that they have found. By then, the students' awareness of other cultures and beliefs are improved. Constantine, Cohen-Vida and Popescu (2015) mention that it is important to make the students understand the difference in cultural value and by understanding the difference, their tolerance level can be enhanced. At some extent, the students were told that some of the cultural value of the target language was similar to the culture that was used in the society. This kind of comparison helped them to understand the value differences and again will improve their awareness. As previously said by Nakamura (2002) and Pishgadam and

Navari (2009) that it is important to expose the students to the culture of the target language, however, without leaving their own culture behind. Finally, there is a consistency of the results of this study with Diem and Atmanegara (2015), Diem and Lestari (2016) have found that LCS and CL could benefit the improvement of EFLA as a whole and each English skill of the students.

CONCLUSION

Either from observing the students during the intervention or the mean difference between the pre and posttests in this study, it can be concluded that Literature Circles and Cultural Literacy are significantly influential on students' EFL achievements. Their achievements were improved in all the four English skills and the aspects of each. These show that having collaborative work in a group setting and independently do the activities in the learning process using LCS have made students learn better. Literature Circles Strategy has empowered them to be actively involved in the group or class discussions and in making predictions or inferences about the selected reading materials. This setting helps the students to share their agreement and disagreement with one's opinion which at the same time make them learn somewhat appropriate ways to express their minds in the target language. Meanwhile, the culturally-rich selected reading materials could also develop students' Cultural Literacy which eventually enhances their understanding of various cultures around them and world.

We strongly suggest that teachers of English apply the Literature Circles Strategy in their EFL classrooms to improve students' English literacy in general and some specific aspects related to the language skills in particular. However, to achieve more satisfactory results, English teachers need to appropriately select learning materials that arouse the students' interest in either receptive or productive skills and also make them culturally literate through their daily English activities in various forms.

Thus, using English as a medium of instruction during the learning process is very well encouraged to help students understand the culture of the target language faster and at the same time uphold and share the cultural values of the native language (Bahasa Indonesia) in English.

Finally, to some extent, group discussion embedded in LCS is also challenging for some teachers to manage their students in English class, especially when the students are not used to working in a group setting. However, if the roles in the LCS are made restrictive, students could be more focused doing their assigned roles and the opportunity to be assigned to different roles is also beneficial to make students respect each others' opinion.

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